

UNIVERSITY OF TARTU

Faculty of Social Sciences

School of Economics and Business Administration

Furkan Abdulilah Yesiler

EVALUATION OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC EFFECTS ON RESTAURANT MANAGEMENT IN  
ESTONIA

Bachelor thesis

Supervisor: Associate Professor Krista Jaakson

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This paper conforms to the requirements for a Bachelor thesis

..... (signature of the supervisor)

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I have written this Bachelor thesis independently. Any ideas or data taken from other authors or other sources have been fully referenced.

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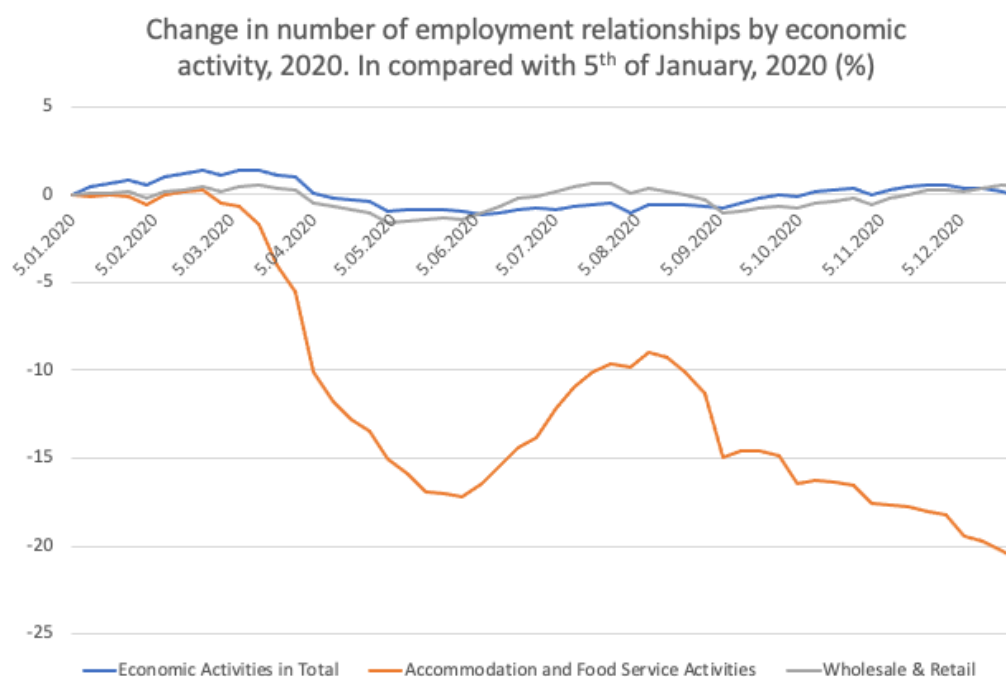
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## 1. Introduction

Before 2019, “pandemic” was not the one of the most used words in our daily lives. Today, many aspects in our lives have changed with the current pandemic - such as but not limited to our methods of social interactions, ways of accessing services and change of priorities for daily living. In this Bachelor thesis, the aspects including changes in the socioeconomic status of employees and customers; customer behavior, logistics and effects of restrictions are evaluated from previous studies and supplemented with Estonian references.

When an ideal basic food service system is pictured, the essential needs are basic goods, appliances to form the final product, employers to utilize goods with appliances, and finally, customers that are in demand of the final product. With the current pandemic, changes in all four of these elements are seen. For example, to start with the issue of employees, how employment relationships have changed in Estonia before and after the pandemic is seen in the “Short Term Labor Market Statistics” released by the Statistics Estonia (Statistikaamet, n.d).



*Graph 1. Change in number of employment relationships by economic activity, 2020. Adapted by Author from original graph in Statistics Estonia (Statistikaamet, n.d).*

In Graph 1, it is possible to see that the number of people involved in accommodation and food service sectors have decreased drastically in the year of 2020, which is the first year of pandemic for Western World, including Estonia. As seen, significant change has occurred after the declaration of emergency situation in Estonia, starting from 15 March 2020. The cause

of changes can be many, including the psychological effects of pandemic on employees and changes in need of logistics (for example, less workers are permitted and needed due to changes and restrictions).

Unlike the other business models, restaurant business is not able to transform to a fully remote setting, due to its nature of serving to the customer. The final product should be prepared by employees on site, and a fully automated system is not commonly in practice worldwide. Therefore, it's inevitable to state that the restaurant businesses are being affected majorly from the COVID-19 pandemic. To adapt the restaurant businesses in accordance with the changing trends of the business environment, the problems brought up with the COVID-19 pandemic must be characterized. Afterwards, how the businesses get effected from these problems can be analyzed to find adaptive solutions.

This bachelor thesis aims to evaluate the effect on COVID-19 pandemic on restaurant business management trends in Estonia, as well as to identify the most important changes what the business owners had to undertake for the survival of their enterprise. The author of this thesis believes that findings of this research could be a beneficial example from the Estonian market considering the huge research gap in the field; and furthermore, studies in broader setting can indicate the situation in restaurant businesses all around the world.

The research tasks set for this paper are:

- To study the different changes brought to restaurant businesses by COVID-19 pandemic
- To create an overview of the literature for the COVID-19 pandemic managerial challenges in restaurant business
- To interview restaurant managers-owners in Estonia regarding the effect of pandemic situation to their businesses
- To suggest possible solutions to mitigate the problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic situation for restaurant managers whose businesses are affected in a negative way

In the theoretical background part, four important changes driven by the COVID-19 pandemic were analyzed. These four main changes are presented as socioeconomic impact of the pandemic on employees and restaurant managers, change in the customer behaviors, effects of restrictions on restaurants and logistics for restaurant businesses. Furthermore, the current

literature is reviewed under the title as “Empirical Literature Overview”. This section mainly presents the effect of COVID-19 pandemic on restaurant businesses all around the world and supplemented with Estonian data as much as possible.

Afterwards, in the empirical part of the thesis, information synthesized in the theoretical part is assessed via set of interviews done with restaurant managers in Estonia. With completion of such study, the author believes that the needs of restaurant businesses can be identified and measures for adjusting to the new business environment can be generated in the Estonian context.

## **2. Theoretical Background**

### **2.1. Characteristics of Restaurant Management**

When the word “restaurant” is mentioned, a wide range of establishments are though. Majorly, foodservices are divided into three main categories, depending on their method of service and target customers (Payne-Palacio, 2016):

- **Commercial:** These businesses include any type of restaurants, snack bars and food chains.
- **Non-commercial:** These businesses include any organization that operate foodservice, in order to provide food their employees or target customers (students) – for example workplaces, schools and universities
- **Military:** These are institutions where food services are targeted towards the military personnel of a country, which utilizes different equipment and technique for preparation and storage off food material.

Each food service business is formed of different subsystems, which those complement each other to form the chain of food business, also called as the life cycle. The elements of these operations can vary from establishment to another, but usually compromise the elements of food procurement, food storage, food preparation & cooking and food service & additional support (Baldwin,2011)

#### ***Food Procurement***

Food procurement phase involves purchase of goods that are needed for the restaurant, and the logistics needed to bring the goods to the food businesses. The goods that are needed for the restaurant are the result of a “food supply chain”. This chain is comprised of retailers,

wholesaler, primary producer and industrial producers. In this chain, primary producers are the source of the raw materials, and industrial producers manufacture the needed good from the raw material itself. These materials are stored in wholesalers and then sold to customers by retailers (Entrup, 2015).

Each element of this structure influences the restaurants, as they can acquire their goods from any part of this system depending on their method of work and content of the menu. For a successful restaurant management, it is essential that the managers ensure adequate purchase of goods that are dependent and independent of the restaurant function (Koco, 2018). An example model on how restaurant managers can optimize the purchase of essential goods will be shared in the *Food Storage* subsection.

Also, optimization of freight time and cost of the goods is essential for restaurant businesses as well. The goods differ in nature, and their method of transportation should also be adequate. For example, perishable goods such as chilled or frozen items (meat, fish, vegetables...) must be logistically managed by correct cold chain systems (Salin, 2003).

Finally, after the selection of goods and their correct method of transportation is chosen, logistic firms should guarantee the delivery of correct amount of goods in a within a pre-agreed time. Also, locations of warehouses are important as ideal location of warehouses decrease the freight costs significantly. As a final remark, the goal for all restaurant managers in procurement phase should be the acquiring of maximum volume of goods with minimal transportation costs (Sert, 2020).

### ***Food Storage***

Food storage involves the inventory management of the goods and purchasing in accordance with the demand. Therefore, inventories of a restaurant and stocking of goods is essential for restaurants to function. Stocking is bound by a delicate balance of understocking, which can cause business failure or stockpiling, which can cause future losses of essential goods, due to space (Agarwal, 2014). In general, inventory should hold the maximum amount of one kind of an asset, to facilitate an increase in total value of the organization (Morris, 1995).

After the selection of products are made, a planning should be done to include when – how much – how the items should be ordered (Agarwal, 2014). A tool, which was initially published in 1913 and been revised multiple times by Ford Whitman Harris named

“Economic Order Quantity Model” (EOQ) can be beneficial in inventory management. EOQ includes the ordering cost, holding cost and the average number of units needed in the inventory. (Erlenkotter, 1990). Calculation of EOQ connects the aspects of purchase and inventory management, and includes these aspects:

- $Q$  = result of calculation of EOQ
- $Co$  = ordering costs  $\rightarrow CoD/Q$  = annual ordering costs
- $Cc$  = carrying costs  $\rightarrow CcQ/2$  = total annual carrying cost
- $D$  = annual demand  $\rightarrow D/Q$  = number of orders per year
- $Q/2$  = annual stock

Total inventory cost (TC) should be equal to total carrying cost and total ordering cost.

- Total cost (TC) =  $CcQ/2 + CoD/Q$

The “ideal” order quantity is when the total cost is minimum. To find the minimum, the first derivative of the total cost equation should be taken and must be equated to zero. ( $dTc / dQ = 0$  - when the TC is the minimum). The result of the calculation is the result of EOQ model, which the total cost is minimum for the depicted amount of orders.

- $dTc/dQ = Cc/2 - CoD/Q^2$  and  $dTc / dQ = 0$  (is when the TC is the minimum)
- $Q^2 = 2DCo / Cc$  is the final formula, when total costs are minimum.

(Adapted from *Moven, 2015*)

Yet the use of EOQ is not essential for small-scaled food businesses to determine their needs to satisfy the demand for goods, the method of calculation can be used to estimate how the space in the inventory should be divided for optimal management of the storage space. Also, it should be noted that the EOQ does not include the parameter of perishability of goods, which is essential for restaurant businesses and should be taken into consideration during purchase and inventory management process (Ibraheem & Murata, 2009).

### ***Food Preparation & Cooking***

Food preparation and cooking phase is one of the central processes in restaurant management, at the same time is the most hazardous one. The risk depends between food businesses, but a foodborne outbreak risk is always present. Main risk factors are the food source, methods to prepare them, storage conditions of food and duration of time between



cooking and serving the product (Bryan, 1990). Therefore, the importance of all elements of the life cycle of a business is amplified during the food preparation process.

The most important chain to break to prevent the possible foodborne infections is going through the education of the food handlers. It's important to mention that among the four stages that are explained in this chapter, food preparation and cooking is the final step before serving the product to the customer. Therefore, food handlers (cookers, chefs) should take utmost care to inspect the goods and follow hygiene guidelines, which are learned during food safety certification process (Park, 2010).

In addition, from the risks in food preparation process, the cooking section is also important as the product is finalized to be served to the customer. It's known nowadays that the customer behavior is changing drastically. It was shown that the menu, pricing, and the content of food gains utmost importance in the issue of gaining the interest of customers (Abdullah, 2011).

Finally, above all the risks that the food production and cooking bring, a meal that is remembered well by the customer is the main factor for the return of the customer. Taste of the meal is the key attribute in restaurant businesses, and it is found to influence the customers' decision and future behavior (Kivela, 1999).

### ***Food Service & Additional Support***

In the life cycle of a restaurant, service of food is the final process. Changes in service quality depend on type of restaurant and service method (such as take-away, multi-course dining). Even though the taste of the food is important, it was found in previous research that the most important factor ensuring the return of customers is the quality of service (Namkung and Yang, 2007).

Food service and additional support is tightly connected with the customer experience. Customer experience in a restaurant starts from the door of the restaurant and influences the ordering behavior of the customer. This experience includes multiple aspects such as the menu, service of food and payment. (Takenaka, 2020)

Menu design is an important aspect in restaurant management as it shows what the restaurant offers to customers, and it is a tool to communicate to customers. A successful menu design should offer enough information to customers to make informed choices, and

restaurant managers should update the menu with attractive offers and offer information on the value, quality, taste and healthfulness of the food products that are being sold (Ozdemir & Caliskan, 2015).

Service quality of a restaurant is measured by the judgement of the customers post-dining, and it is measured by an SERVQUAL analysis which was initially prepared by Parasuraman, 1988. SERVQUAL analysis assesses five dimensions in the service quality of a restaurant which are the reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance and tangibles. After answering of questions, each “dimensions” are calculated a score with computation. As a summary, SERVQUAL analysis helps businesses to find out areas where managerial attention and action is needed in service quality of the restaurants (Parasuraman,1988).

As a summary, service of food includes not only the presentation of food, but also the quality of the food itself and the atmosphere of the eating area of restaurants. It was shown that with higher levels of food quality, service quality and the environment, customer satisfaction and loyalty increase. Therefore, restaurant managers should also put importance in the post-production phase of food (Ha & Jang, 2010).

## **2.2. Changes Seen in the Management of Restaurants During COVID-19 Pandemic**

In many different industries, employees have shifted their workspaces to a remote setting with the help of online tools. Despite measures like practicing social distancing and avoidance of unnecessary travel are endorsed by World Health Organization (WHO) and national authorities - the food industry is still one of the only ones that on-site production is essentially needed. At the same time, as a part of the service sector, it is one of the most afflicted one. The unforeseeable restrictions and lockdown measures do strongly affect the employees, who are providing the first-line service to the customers (Narayanamurthy, 2021). In the United States, data indicates that around 8 million employees have lost their jobs, meaning two-thirds of all restaurant workers (National Restaurant Association, 2020).

Data from the recent studies indicates that main stressors for the employees during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic were contracting the viral infection- the possible need of a sick leave, financial instability and burden to keep up the safety rules for the customers. (National Restaurant Association, 2020) (Lippert, 2021). As the employee’s psychosocial wellness is directly proportional to the quality of the service, the effects of pandemic on employees should not be underestimated.

The psychosocial effects are completely valid for restaurant managers as well. On the other hand, there are many other factors that restaurant operators must take into account, conceivably acting as additional stressors throughout this situation.

Overall, since the start of the pandemic; restaurant businesses remained on-site unlike other sectors. However, the data from other countries, as well as from Estonia (*Graph 1*) indicate that a reduction in the number of employment agreements. The decreasing demand for the services and the risk of contracting the viral illness acts as an additional stressor over the employees and restaurant managers, which are understudied in Estonian context.

### **Change of Customer Behavior**

The psychosocial effects that are explained in detail above, significantly changed the customer behavior and consumption trends (Di Crosta, 2021). One of the major changes that co-emerged with the process is that customers were initially obliged, then got used to home-delivery of food in compliance with the restrictions. This has escalated the need for broadening of delivery services and radical changes in the workflow of the restaurant (Li, 2021).

Compliance with the local regulations made it necessary for individuals to stay more at home and reduce social contact as much as possible. Research shows that individuals were actively searching for home-cooked meals in search engines, which could also decrease demand for some specific businesses (Mayasari, 2020). Additionally, the food hygiene and hygiene of the physical environment have been an important aspect for customers after the controlled-normalization process has started (Yang, 2020).

### **Operational Redesign**

Firstly, restaurants had to reconstruct their infrastructure according to the high demand of home delivery. In one study, the changes in restaurant businesses during COVID-19 pandemic were extracted from data coming from OpenTable, which is a table reservation company operating in Australia, the United States of America, Ireland, Canada, Mexico, Germany, and the United Kingdom. As a result, with the social distancing and lockdown measures taken by states, a large decrease of sit-in guests was observed, regardless of state. According to article, 90 to 100% decrease of sit-in guests was achieved within 15 days when WHO declared COVID-19 as a pandemic in 11.03.2019 (Dube & Nhamo, 2020).

Making plans considering the extra need of packaging material and alternating the workup in a take-away oriented manner has been a common challenge for restaurant businesses. Another aspect of this radical change in serving was to also reorganize the promotions and advertising campaigns for the “take-away” option, and completely cut back the visit-encouraging ones instead (Graham, 2021).

Therefore, the expectations of the customers have changed within the period of pandemic. This led to changes in the workflow such as conversion of service to mainly take-away option, adjusting promotions and additionally thriving to keep up the quality of the home delivered version. The trends in customer behavior needs to be analyzed in order to adjust the managerial adaptations for the restaurant businesses.

### **Logistics**

The effects of restrictions on the logistics and supply chain is definitely worth to mention. As stated in the press release of Estonian Central Bank (*Eesti Pank*), exports and imports of Estonia were down in the second quarter of 2020 (the first year of pandemic) as the exports of goods and services were 21% lower than in the same quarter of last year, and imports were 24% lower (Eesti Pank, 2021).

Loss of revenue has also caused managers to adjust the resources adequately to allow the normal compensation of employees, which is another factor that increases the managerial pressure. This trend is also seen in the *Graph 1* in Introduction section, how employment relationships are the most affected in accommodation and food service activities among all other business activities in Estonia.

Upcoming research indicates that such exertion of restrictions cause consumption displacement and attitude of stockpiling. Practically explaining, as the uncertainty for supply of goods rises, individuals as well as business owners in the food sector are prone to increase the food products reserve more and more (Hall, 2020; Dyason, 2021). This can impair the availability of basic food products that are in higher demand due to their multifaceted use in different food sectors.

### **Restrictions**

Restrictions are a set of orders that are executed by the authorities, in this case with the power of state. The meaning of “restriction” is stated as “a rule or law that limits what you can

do or what can happen” in the renowned Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (Hornby & Cowie, 1995). These set of orders does not necessarily need to be taken to restrict the individual rights and freedoms - but taken to protect the rights and well- being of citizens of a state. An example of these kind, restrictions imposed by governments during COVID-19 pandemic can be given.

As it can be clearly followed from the *Appendix A*, the restrictions in Estonia were initially introduced strictly, where all public gatherings are banned, and restaurant services were limited to just take-away service in a designated time constraint. This completely unlike change in the service, especially in cafe's, fast-casual, casual and fine-dining restaurants (Drummond, 2021), induced many abrupt adjustments in the workflow.

Quick response towards vaccine research enabled vaccinations to be available to first high-risk occupational groups like healthcare workers, then expanding to the general population starting from the elderly to younger. Throughout the globe, many countries nowadays are asking / used to ask for proof of vaccination for indoor dining, including Estonia (Government of Iceland, n.d; Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, n.d; Kriis.ee, n.d; Ministry of Health-Ontario, n.d; NYC Health Agency, n.d). The requirement of controlling the vaccination certificates is extensively depending on business owners, and in Estonia -businesses which fail to comply with the Communicable Diseases Prevention and Control Act can face an administrative coercive penalty up to 9600 Euros (Government of Estonia, 2021).

Considering that around 62.0 % percent of the population of Estonia have completed vaccinations that qualified for indoor dining in December 2021 (Terviseamet, 2021), it has been an additional stress for business owners to act as “policing” in the community and find ways to reach the remaining 38% of potential customers (Brizek, 2021).

It is worthwhile to mention that the pandemic is still an ongoing process with few publications are done on the effects of restaurant businesses. Therefore, a small literature overview regarding the changes in restaurant management in the world and specifically in Estonia are presented below.

### **2.3. Empirical Literature Overview in Restaurant Management Challenges Caused by COVID-19 Pandemic in the World and Estonia**

Number of studies being published on the topic of managerial challenges what COVID-19 pandemic has brought has been surging drastically. Therefore, it is important to assess the studies retrospectively to understand the dynamics of the changes what the pandemic situation has created, in particular with restaurant management.

In one study conducted by Kim et al. (2021), information from 86,507 restaurants over 9 cities in Mainland China were collected. This amount of large data was compiled from the website of the largest MDS in China. By creating a model taking many different variables into account (restaurant rating, delivery time, average fees etc.), it was shown that with increased infection rate, demand for take-away services increased. This is very important for businesses as preparedness to the changes require additional planning, and optimization of the operations. Supporting this, it is possible to state that the type of restaurant also influenced the financial performance of the businesses. Fast-food restaurants and fast-casual dining restaurants had higher sales in comparison to fine dining restaurants. Also, a correlation was seen between the delivery service and financial outcome of the restaurants, but the time for delivery per order has also increased due to increased demand (Kim, 2021). Clearly, the businesses that were more well-adjusted for switching their operations in a remotely accessible setting, had higher sales with the help of meal delivery services (MDS).

In another study, the changes in restaurant businesses during COVID-19 pandemic were extracted from data coming from OpenTable, which is a table reservation company operating in Australia, the United States of America, Ireland, Canada, Mexico, Germany and the United Kingdom. As a result, with the social distancing and lockdown measures taken by states, a large decrease of sit-in guests was observed, regardless of state. According to article, 90 to 100% decrease of sit-in guests was achieved within 15 days when WHO declared COVID-19 as a pandemic in 11.03.2019 (Dube & Nhamo, 2020).

Furthermore, the direct effects of COVID-19 pandemic on tourism and hospitality industry in England is studied. The study included a questionnaire which provided data for an original scoring system, called Business Resilience Composite Score (BRCS). This scoring system allowed the equalisation of different industries that form the correspondent group. 81.8% of respondents claimed that they faced an 80-100% decrease and 72.9% of correspondents stated that their financial backup could last up to 4 months, in respect to the restrictions taken by the

state. As a result of the objective BRCS scoring of 1016 businesses located in various British towns, tourism-dependent businesses are more affected with pandemic than other sectors (Ntounis, 2021). Considering these previous studies, sectors dependent on customer hospitality have faced huge challenges with the pandemic situation than other food-businesses.

In the literature, there is an apparent skyrocketing of articles being published concerning the restaurant industry on the perspectives of managers, workers, and customers: after such deteriorating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic process. Initially, the author of this thesis found 5 articles that are constructed in a qualitative assessment manner with the help of interviews. The overview of these studies are presented in Table 1 below, where information regarding the mode of study, participants, and main themes of the respected interviews are shown.

*Table 1. Examples of Similar Interviews Conducted in Different Countries*

<b>Author</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Country - Region</b>	<b>Mode of Study</b>	<b>Participants (amount)</b>	<b>Main Themes</b>
<i>Lakshimi &amp; Shareena</i>	2020	India – Mangalore and Kasaragod	Structured questionnaire	Restaurant owners (6)	Sustenance of business Personel lay off Private loans PPE (personal protective equipment use)
<i>Elshaer</i>	2021	Egypt - Cairo	Interview	Restaurant managers (39)	Perception of COVID-19 Crisis coping Recovery activities
<i>Lippert &amp; Furnari</i>	2021	USA – Chicago, Illinois	Interviews	Restaurant workers (16)	Workplace as a support system Stress related to loss of community Protection from SARS nCoV-19 virus and fear of getting infected Wage, Paid Time Off
<i>Li</i>	2021	China – all over the country	Interview	Fast-food restaurant managers (60)	Comparison of pre-post pandemic revenue, operating costs Market value of restaurants Challenges in operations
<i>Zeb &amp; Hussain</i>	2021	Pakistan - Lahore	Interview	Restaurant managers and street vendors (30)	Proper sanitation Reduction in staff Governmental laws Seating capacity
<i>Dybedal &amp; Wiger</i>	2021	Norway	Interview	Restaurant executives and education sector (6+6)	Collaboration Leadership, Planning and crisis Management, Marketing and communication Future planning

Compiled by the author

Considering the data from different countries, the restrictions changed the nature of restaurant businesses similarly. From the Table 1, it is possible to observe similar changes being stated by business owners in different parts of the world. Majorly, these changes include the cessation of indoor dining and increased demand for take-away services, and the validity of them in Estonian context should be further assessed considering the change in local regulations.

In the period when no in-restaurant dining's were allowed in Estonia, many changes in the business model of restaurants occurred, which needed prompt adjustment. For example, with the restrictions only allowing take-away service, the need for disposable cutleries have increased. With the increased demands of all businesses at the same time, also the cost per product increased. From a different aspect, the whole workflow has changed in the kitchen - as the personnel is being more used to serve in-restaurant clients than take-away packages. With the reduced workforce as seen in the *Graph 1* on the Introduction chapter, remaining employees went under bigger stress (than they used to be - affecting one of the most important elements in the workflow of an ideal food service system: employees using appliances with goods to form the final product).

As seen in the Appendix A, the restrictions taken effect by the Estonian government have changed drastically within almost 2 years since the start of the pandemic. With the change of trends in cases per capita, restrictions concerning the catering premises have also rigidized (for example, between 24.03.2020 to 17.05.2020, when only take-away service was allowed with no in-restaurant dining option) and relented (in summer months of 2020 and 2021, when only 2+2 rule and COVID-19 vaccination card or certificate of COVID-19 test / healing was enough to take part in such activities).

When all these factors are combined, the managerial pressure is increased on the employer. Not only have these factors affected, but also revenue has decreased due to the restrictions' nature - requesting to stay home and if only needed step outside etc. This decrease of revenue has not been assisted by the companies offering meal delivery services, too. In Estonia, only a few restaurant businesses have their own meal delivery service, and mostly this service is provided by secondary affiliates. These companies work with platform-to-consumer model (Baden-Fuller, 2015), where restaurants join the "apps" for a fee and restaurants get listed. Besides, also 20 to 30% of order value is cut in each sale done through the secondary



affiliate channel. When all the aspects of MDSs added, increased fees of joining and the loss of profit per product due to cut-off of commission has increased the management pressure.

Another burden that restaurants start facing with declaration of new restrictions is redesigning the restaurants in accordance with COVID-19 guidelines imposed by governments. As similar with other governments, the Estonian government also took the “2+2” rule in effect in the early months of the pandemic, to limit the amount of people in a restaurant and the distance how people should be located etc. In addition to the lost space to host customers, also the expenses of periodical disinfection, personal protective equipment (including masks) and disinfectant offered to customers have been added as a burden to expenses. Also, with increased take-away orders, the demand for single-use packaging have been increased and the need to purchase several kinds of shields (to be placed on cashier points, order picking-up areas and in some cases, between the seating areas of the restaurant, which also increase the managerial pressure.

Finally, the current standings of the Estonian catering sector should be reviewed, to see how the state of emergency has affected the restaurant business. In an Estonian national news page, the Tax and Customs Board of Estonia also published some data on how the turnover of the catering sector changed pre-pandemic and currently (ERR, 2021). In August 2019 (pre-pandemic), the Estonian catering sector turnover was €65.2 million, which fell to €57 million in August 2020. In August 2021, the total turnover declared was €62 million (approx. 5% below pre-crisis levels). However, it should be remembered that an upward trend of inflation is seen in Estonia. In the statistical data released by Eurostat, EU’s official statistics agency, inflation rose to 6.4% in Estonia in September 2021 (Eurostat, 2021), which might be the cause how increased turnover has not ended the complaints of the restaurant owners.

Overall, restrictions are important measures taken for protection of the public health, but they also bring newer challenges to restaurant management in Estonia such as increased expenditures on commissions to MDS providers and single use packaging. Bearing in mind the prompt changes in the content of restrictions, further effects on restaurant management are needed to be identified for enhancing the adaptation of services.

### **3. Assessment of COVID-19 Pandemic Effects of Restaurant Management in Estonia with Interviews**

#### **3.1. Research Process – Sample**

As previously stated in the Sections 2.1. and 2.2. above, there is a significant research gap on the matter of pandemic situation effect on restaurant management in Estonia. Therefore, this current research intends to study these possible consequences with a scientific approach that is reproducible in future, to expand the knowledge in this specific area.

Interviewing is still a gold-standard method for assessing individuals' point of view on a subject matter. Bowling (2005) suggests that a larger response rate is obtained in face-to-face interviews compared to questionnaires. Also, it is stated that level of engagement and quality of data is much more reliable in the setting of face-to-face interviews compared to web-based video interviews. (Haan, 2017) Regarding the interviewing method, author of this thesis finds the “semi-structured interviewing” most suitable for this study. Semi-structured interviews are a unique type of interviewing where a predetermined order is followed, but both for the interviewer and the participant, flexibility is present. (Longhurst 2003) Additionally, it is proposed to support the interview outcomes with a summative index like rating scale, especially when information requested is more conceptual. (Bernard 2018). Considering all these factors, author of this paper will be conducting set of semi-structured interviews and rating scales with restaurant managers in Estonia.

To gather necessary data for identifying present research, the author prepared questions and discussion topics referring to the areas discussed in the “*Theoretical Background*” chapter of this study. Also, the studies from Lakshimi & Shareena (2020), Elshaer (2021), Lippert & Furnari (2021), Li (2021), Zeb & Hussain (2021) and Dybedal & Wiger (2021) were great examples for the author of this article in the process of creating the questions.

The details of the questions and discussion topics will be further elaborated in the “*Current Evaluation of COVID-19 Pandemic Effects on Restaurant Management in Estonia*” section. The target group of the interview for this research is Estonian restaurant business owners and managers, who have been working at the same workplace since the start of the pandemic (March 2020). The interviewees were sent an invitation e-mail by the author, and if they accepted to continue with the interview, arrangements on where and how the interview will take place were clarified.

The selection criteria were the following:

- a. Owner or manager in a restaurant
- b. Have been in the restaurant management business continuously from the start of the pandemic
- c. The restaurant business is in active service, regardless of cuisine served, with dine-in and take away service options served
- d. The restaurant is located in Tallinn or Tartu

The selection criterion B is added to ensure that the managers have the enough experience and expertise to discuss topics related to COVID-19 and managing restaurants. Criterion C is also added that the managers have commentary on the change of the demand on their services and elaborate on the possible shift occurred from dine-in service to take-away service, or vice versa. Criterion D is added due to fact that Tallinn and Tartu are the biggest 2 cities in Estonia (one city from Northern Estonia and one city from Southern Estonia). Also, the author was able to travel between aforementioned cities more conveniently as this was a self-funded research project.

After identifying the selection criteria, sending 9 invitations to appropriate restaurants, and collecting the replies, six interviews were completed with restaurant managers. Details regarding the position of the interviewees, the location of their restaurant business, previous experience in restaurant business and predominant service at their restaurant and detailed information about the characteristics of interviews are presented is shown in *Table 3*.

Table 3.

*Details About Interview Participants and Interview*

<b>Interview Number</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Business Location</b>	<b>Experience</b>	<b>Predominant Service</b>	<b>Interview Duration</b>	<b>Interview Date</b>	<b>Interview Location</b>
1	Restaurant manager (A)	Tallinn	7 years	Dine-in	32 min	14.02.2022	At restaurant
2	Restaurant owner (B)	Tallinn	13 years	Dine-in	30 min	14.02.2022	At restaurant
3	Restaurant owner (C)	Tartu	3 years	Take-away	25 min	18.02.2022	At restaurant
4	Restaurant manager (D)	Tartu	6 years	Dine-in	40 min	19.02.2022	At restaurant
5	Restaurant owner (E)	Tallinn	4 years	Take-away	27 min	14.02.2022	At restaurant
6	Restaurant owner (F)	Tartu	16 years	Dine-in	43 min	19.02.2022	At restaurant

min – minutes

Compiled by the author

Considering the main themes that are set as a boundary during the interviews, four main ones are emphasized. The first theme was regarding the COVID-19 pandemic situations effect on “customer behavior and consumption trends”. Second main theme was “redesign of operations” in the restaurant. Following main theme aims to obtain data about the “effects of restrictions”. The last theme was related to “changes in logistics” and consequences it brings to the restaurant management. For structuring the interview, author of this article prepared open questions under each general theme, but the participant and interviewer were free to talk within the frame of these questions but not certainly follow the order. The questions that have guided the interviewing process is presented in Appendix B.

The interviews took place in face-to-face setting, on the premises of the restaurant where manager or the owner was present during the work time. Initially, general description regarding the interview structure, information about the purpose and use of the research is presented to the participant. As the interviews include questions on financial well-being of the establishments, comparison of gross revenue made by establishments currently versus pre-pandemic, and the assistance given by the Estonian state for the business continuity, confidentiality agreement was made prior each interview. Then, open questions related to these four main themes are directed, and follow-up questioning is also used to gather further data about the matter or to get back to the main theme once unrelated information is given.

All of these interviews were recorded with the mobile phone of the author and transcribing is completed on the Microsoft Word program. The results from the rating scale analysis are converted into a “box-plot” graph for better presentation with the help of an open-access online web program Boxplot Grapher from imathas.com . Interviews lasted between 25 to 43 minutes. In total, 3 hours of audio is transcribed into 30 pages of text.

All managers were very delighted to be approached by the author of this article, for the study of miscellaneous effects of COVID-19 pandemic, so that their thoughts and ideas can be presented in a useful setting for future considerations.

### **3.2. Results**

The interviews started with a set of general questions to assess the participants knowledge about COVID-19 disease, and their overall thoughts about the consequences of this pandemic situation. All restaurant managers-owners had a decent knowledge about the coronavirus disease and how it is being spread with the social interactions. Regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their businesses, participants had similar judgements.

*“Indeed, it has changed a lot. I remember the day where first cases started to appear – I thought this would be something easily controllable, and never thought it would initiate changes drastically all over the world, in almost all sectors. We just woke up to a new world, and I am afraid that it will take some time to get back to the old setting.”* (Interview 2)

*“ We were not prepared, because it was beyond everyone’s expectation. This pandemic situation has been a nightmare for many – but its good to see that slowly we are all recovering”* (Interview 5)

#### **Change of Customer Behavior**

Unfortunately, changes in behavior of customers are not attributable to a single problem, and the modification of social behaviors has multifactorial etiologies including the fear of infection and lack of mobility with restrictions in power (Perez, 2021). As the customer behavior is directly related to the continuity of the restaurant businesses, identification of changes is essential for businesses to survive and operate. Some business are affected with the changes of preferences of their customers, such as the Restaurant Owner (F):

*“With our orders shifting from in-restaurant to online, we lost the human connection that is essential in our business, in my opinion. Ensuring satiety is not the only purpose how food businesses work, there is also a pleasure component that creates the connection between our meals and our customers.”* (Interview 6)

On the other hand, in interview 3 and 5, restaurant owners did not observe a significant change in the preferences of their target population, which maintained similar during the pre-pandemic times and currently.

*“Our fast-food model worked pretty well in these unfortunate times. We get the order, prepare quickly, pack and deliver in person or to courier. As long the waiting times were reasonable and our products reached to customers quickly, neither us nor our customers had complaints.”* (Interview 3)

Matching the demands of customers is essential in food service operations, as it is heavily influenced by fast-changing customer preferences (Abdullah, 2011). In all interviews, it was noted that the change of customer behavior has taken part in shaping of the offered food menu according to participants. However, the method of how these changes were different between interviewed restaurant managers and owners. In Interview 1, the manager observed their most preferred meal sold in the first month after the arrival of COVID-19 in Estonia and discussed with main chef on how to make this meal more suitable for packaging and home delivery without changing the quality and taste experience.

On the other hand, Restaurant Manager (D) and Restaurant Owner (E) adhered to the feedbacks of the customers and tried to tailor the needs of their target population by reading their comments from online platforms of meal delivery services.

*“We try to optimize our plates served in our restaurant and take away services with the feedbacks. Sometimes, we read that our starter dishes were cold and sometimes, the sauce was all over the place until food arrived if ordered. Within time, with addressing problems promptly and changing, we found the perfect combination to make our customers happy.”* (Interview 4)

Finally, some of the restaurant owners/managers did find benefit in changing the menu, whereas some restaurants found benefit with incorporating new items to their menu. For example, in Interview 2 the owner mentioned the benefits his business experienced with incorporation of daily offers and special offers. It's worth mentioning that interviewees who

own or manage restaurants focused on take-away services (Interview 3 and 5) did not mention the need of changing menu for customer satisfaction.

### **Suggestions for changes in customer behavior:**

Restaurant managers should give importance to understand the changing dynamics of customers, as which occurred with COVID-19 pandemic. Once the changes are identified correctly (for example: afraid of dining very close with other people, staff hygiene concerns), managers should take prompt action. Author believes that actions to reach potential new customers and satisfying their new needs should be a result of an internal and external evaluation. Internal evaluation can be done by analyzing the most sold food products and following trends in competitors. External evaluation should include the customer component, with feedbacks collected in-person or through meal-delivery services' online platforms. Author underlines the importance of feedbacks, as a tool to assess the extent of changes implemented to tailor the demands of the customers.

### **Redesigning of the Operations**

This category is important to mention in the context of COVID-19 pandemic effect on restaurant businesses, as many restaurants had to change their workflow considering the new normal with different dynamics compared to the pre-pandemic state. Generally, it is possible to state that restaurants had to mostly move to a “take-away only” service for many months – at least 11 months in Estonia which can be followed from *Appendix A* and this indubitably led to many adjustments, including the packaging material use, advertisements and promotions. (Filomanou 2021) (Graham 2021)

*“We didn't need many service personnel (waiters) anymore. Nevertheless, the need for kitchen personnel increased right after the first weeks of restrictions, and we needed to change positions of our employees. These changes all need time, but there was really no time.”* (Interview 1)

*“The pandemic process and social isolation forced us into making new campaigns almost every week; and additionally add mini treats like chocolate or thank you card to the regular orders. Considering the expenses for all the extra packaging we have been using and all these additional promotion campaigns, it is really difficult to prioritize what expense is more important than the other.”* (Interview 4)

Depending on the restaurant's predominant service type, the responses from the restaurant managers have also been very different. For example, the for restaurants manager-owners (C) and (E) where the take-away service is prevailing, the current pandemic situation had distinct effects than to other restaurants manager-owners (A), (B), (D), (F).

*“We were already used to the take-away service, so it has not brought extreme changes in our work-flow. Still, being unable to take the order directly from the customer and providing the product directly to customer has been difficult for us. (Interview 3)*

As the previously predominating service for these restaurants (A), (B), (C), (F) were indoor dining; facility changes had to be additionally done as well. Three out of four restaurant managers stated that majority of their food is best served on a regular cutlery (on porcelain plates) and served in directly from kitchen to the table fashion, right after from cooking process. This need is exceptionally difficult to satisfy if orders are prepared in a “take away fashion”, and when its delivered to customer with courier service – the product is not presented as its supposed to be on the restaurant setting.

### **Suggestions for the redesigning of the operations**

Regarding this suspected issue, author of the article underlines the importance of necessary needs of education for both managers and employees, to better adjust to the changes imposed with the change of operations and keep up the food safety and service quality standards. However, there are some factors which is impossible to change; regarding the MDS use and technicalities with the food products, however there are some changes what policymakers might consider applying for the businesses. As the demand for disposable cutlery and packaging materials increase, the waste due to their consumption can be a huge threat for future generations. Higher prices for environmentally friendly disposable products can be problematic for businesses where already economic status is not feasible. As a solution, governments can make partnerships with the eco-friendly packaging industry and help businesses integrate these practices from the first-hand, by reducing the costs of these products as well as encouraging its wide-spread use.

### **Restrictions**

A detailed overview of the restrictions imposed in different countries are presented in Theoretical Background part of this study, and a detailed overview about the history of



restrictions is shown in *Appendix A*. All restaurant managers reflected that they didn't find the help from state and community (like the property owner) enough.

*"It is really funny, where us, restaurants, are almost legally shut down to continue our services, but we had to still pay the same rent, same electricity – water fees and wages to our personnel."* (Interview 2)

*"The need of restrictions are understandable, but the effectiveness is the question. One time we are asked to close before 22, so does this mean that infectivity of virus just starts after 22 o'clock? The prolonged stay of restrictions have very negatively affected our business."* (Interview 6)

Also, not only the restriction on operating times but also on the capacity of the restaurants had an impact on the restaurant businesses. All 6 restaurant owner-managers have confirmed that they needed to make necessary changes imposed by the law, and businesses with already smaller capacity practically lost majority of its abilities to serve indoors.

*"We have a capacity of 6 tables, in total of 24 customers. As a considerably smaller business, with the 2+2 distancing and 50% capacity rule, we could only serve to three tables. If we couldn't just host people anymore, we would kindly ask them to order as take away – but its difficult to reach an agreement when someone is very hungry and approaches to an open restaurant!"* (Interview 5)

Additionally, it has been also suggested that the restriction measures resulted in more creative and flexible work, more investments to communication platforms. ( Norris & Taylor 2021)

*"There were some days, where we were brainstorming with our staff about how to engage more customers to order food or come eat indoors, in the very limited space. We decided to serve tea, coffee or soft drinks free of charge; and also tried being more active in social media that we never needed before."* (Interview 3)

### **Suggestions for the effects of restrictions**

The importance of the restrictions and social isolation are undeniable, but all of our respondents in these sets of interviews indicated that the restaurant businesses were left out in the decisive processes, and also the support expected to be given is below the expectations. It is important for restaurant managers-owners to relay the requirements of the

restrictions not as a form of “punishment” but an critical measure to protect the public health. Also, increasing the cooperation of communities and local governments are found to be very effective in the context of pandemic related changes in restaurant businesses. (Norris & Taylor 2021)

### **Logistics**

Logistics are another essential component of a successfully running restaurant business chain. Restaurants, which are individual and unique by nature, also have specialized business partners to supply their demands, which are also individually unique. With COVID-19 pandemic’s unstable nature, stockpiling of goods quickly led to stockouts (Panzone, 2021), which is also applicable to restaurants.

The interview on the topic of logistics yielded many discussions including current inflation rates, increased demand on essential products for restaurants and changes to satisfy the needs of restaurants with the changing competitive environment.

*“I remember, when we first heard about the approaching restrictions, we were afraid of how our deliveries will continue. Without any goods, you can’t cook – and when you can’t cook, then you lose. Restaurants always have a stock – how long can you offer full range of service with those?”* (Interview 1)

Also, the restaurant owners or managers possessed similar complaints on the COVID-19 pandemic effects on the global supply chain, and 5 out of 6 owners stated that they were concerned about their promptness of their weekly deliveries at the beginning of the pandemic.

*“In the beginning, we didn’t know how our partners would be affected by the changes with COVID. It took some time for everyone to adapt to the changes. But we knew that problems with supplying our goods wasn’t only our headache, but it was more of a phase everybody went through. What we did? We increased our stocks of goods with longer date of expiry, and increased the purchase frequency of our essential short-date of expiry-lived goods like meat.”* (Interview 4)

### **Suggestions for logistics:**

Logistics of food products depend between countries and even cities in the same country, and it’s important for restaurants to optimize their pathway in accordance with their needs. Therefore, author believes in a case-by-case approach for management of logistics in

restaurants instead of a generalized approach. However, the evidence from all interviews come to a common point that keeping the stocks in sufficient amounts and having a regular schedule for the supply of the goods is essential for managers. Also, author believes that managers should prepare and be ready to contact substitutional business partners (e.g. in acute events, like the COVID-19 pandemic) to satisfy their need of goods.

### The Rating Scale Analysis

As mentioned in earlier parts of this chapter, the author of this article decided to include rate-scaling questions at the end of each sub-section of interview. Many advantages what this approach brings can be stated as reproducibility, easier visualization, and presentation. The disadvantages are the subjectivity of the assessment, and inability to measure all aspects associated with the study question.

In order to guide the participant well and make the interpretation easy, author of this article decided to use the scale between one to ten and asked one rate-scaling question for each sub-section of the semi-structured interview. The results obtained from the scales are presented in *Table 6*.

*Table 6.*

Results from the rating scale analysis

	<b>Change of Customer Behavior</b>	<b>Redesign of Operations</b>	<b>Effect of Restrictions</b>	<b>Logistics</b>
<b>Scale</b>	1 – no changes 10 – noticeable changes	1 – no changes 10 – noticeable changes	1 – government support not enough 10 - sufficient	1 – difficult to supply goods 10 – easy to supply goods
<b>Interview 1</b>	8	6	1	4
<b>Interview 2</b>	7	8	2	6
<b>Interview 3</b>	9	3	2	6
<b>Interview 4</b>	8	7	3	5
<b>Interview 5</b>	6	2	2	6
<b>Interview 6</b>	10	7	2	3
<b>Mean</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5.5</b>

Compiled by the author

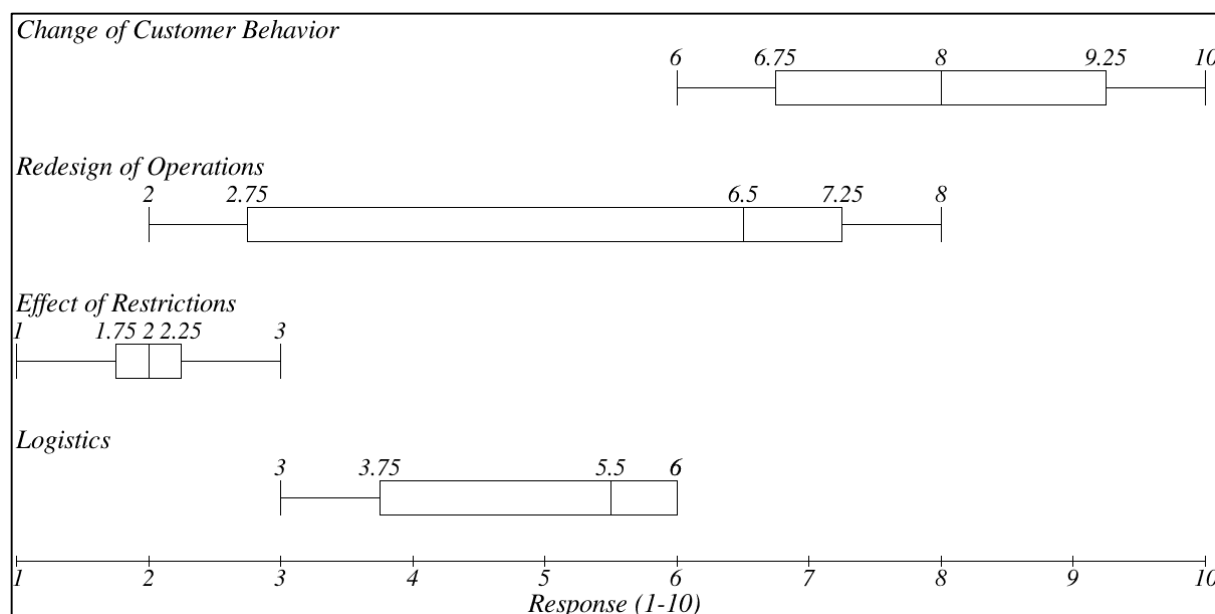
In the first section, participants are asked to rate whether the behavioral change was well noticeable in customers or not. Average plotting on the scale was calculated with mean as 8, which means that the restaurant owners-managers overall state that there is a significant change in the customer behavior that affects their operations.

In the second section, participants are asked about the changes required for continuing their services during the pandemic situation. Here, as it can also be observed on *Table 6* and *Figure 1*; the answers changed variably, most probably due to the predominant service of the restaurant (either take away or dine in). Overall mean from there answers were 6.5, indicated that there was a need to redesign the operations.

In the third section, the restaurant owner-managers were asked to rate the support they have obtained from the government during the time of restrictions and social isolation. The overall mean of the answers given were 2, which means that participants have rated the support from the government with very low grades.

In the final section, participants are asked to grade their access to supply-chain on a scale 1 to 10, and here, like in the second question – more distributed answers are provided. Authors believe that this could be related to the differences in restaurants' essential needs and capacity- correlated with the urgency to keep the stocks of good.

Figure 1. Respondents' answers on a box-plot graph



Boxplot indicates the mean, minimum and maximum ratings given on the scale.

Compiled by the author

#### 4. Conclusions

COVID-19 pandemic, started in China and traveled to almost all human-habited lands on earth has changed our habits fundamentally. Regardless of business type, scale, or area of operation, one of the areas majorly affected was restaurant businesses. COVID-19 pandemic brought new challenges to restaurant managers as the environmental variables changed abruptly. As a trending topic, this thesis aimed to identify the changes in restaurant management with COVID-19 pandemic. Literature is reviewed to identify challenges all around the world. The identification of the challenges and worldwide situation were used to design an interview with Estonian restaurant managers, as there is no previous study that estimates the challenges of hospitality management during pandemic in Estonian context.

Following the Theoretical Background material, details on the methodology of this study is explained (e.g. inclusion criteria, selection of questions for the interview). After the completion of interviews and analysis of answers, author of this study concludes that Estonian restaurant businesses were affected by the pandemic with substantial challenges, including the change of customer behavior towards restaurants and redesign of operations in accordance with the restrictions in force and logistic chain disruptions.

With this study, author achieved the aim by providing an assessment of challenges in restaurant management, specifically in Estonian context. Once the challenges are identified, preventive measures and suggestions are discussed by the author. Initially, and internal and external assessment of customer expectations can be beneficial to accommodate with the pandemic-induced social behavior change. Also, implementing usage of reusable material instead of the disposable cutlery and packaging material can decrease the managerial costs and pressure. Adequate stocking and logistics management of a restaurant and preparation of secondary business partner lists are attainable. Finally, restrictions are not avoidable but with cooperation of local authorities and businesses, their negative effects on restaurant management can be minimized.

Future recommendations for this topic could be an extended interview with higher number of interviewees, specify the research into regions and conduct a quantitative analysis on how the restaurant businesses were affected throughout this pandemic. However, this paper will serve as a basis on the future explorations on the topic, as a review material and an initial insight from the real business environment.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

*Restrictions and Contents regarding the catering industry obtained in Estonia. Data obtained from kriis.ee (Website created by Scientific Advisory Board and the Health Board).*

<b>Date of Restriction</b>	<b>Content of Restriction (parts concerning the catering establishments)</b>
24.03.2020	Shopping center eateries are only allowed to sell food as take away.  Restaurants and bars should be closed at 10 pm in the evening, only take-away and home delivery will be allowed after that time.
17.05.2020	Catering establishments and public spaces of shopping centers, the owner of the establishment must ensure compliance with the 2+2 rule.  Catering establishments need to close from 22:00 but take-away purchases are allowed. After July 1, catering establishments can be open without restrictions.
12.11.2020	Catering and entertainment establishments must close their doors to visitors from midnight to 6 a.m. from Monday, 16 November. Take-away food sales and purchases are allowed.
29.01.2021	In catering establishments, up to six guests may be seated at one table and there must be at a distance of at least two meters from other people. For on-site dining, catering establishments must close their doors from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. No restrictions will be established on the time for take-away sales.
03.03.2021	From 6 March, customers may be in sales or service halls of catering establishments only on business days from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. The occupancy of the room may not exceed 25 per cent. On weekends, catering establishments must be closed to customers for eating and drinking on site. Take-away food sale is allowed at any time.
22.04.2021	From 3 May, eating in the outdoor dining areas of catering establishments is permitted until 9 p.m. Tables must be arranged in accordance with the 50% occupancy restriction and the 2 + 2 rule applicable to outdoor dining areas. The maximum amount of diners per table is 10. Customers are still not allowed to eat and drink indoors in the sales and service halls of catering establishments. Take-away sale of food is allowed.
11.05.2021	From 24 May, indoor dining will be allowed at catering establishments at 50% occupancy. The maximum number of people allowed at one table is 6. Doors must be closed to customers at 10 p.m.

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- 17.06.2021 In the indoor premises of catering establishments, up to 50 per cent of the indoor space can be filled and dispersion must be taken into account when seating people.
- 23.08.2021 All participants (from the age of 18) must present the COVID certificate for evidence of vaccination, proof of recovery from COVID-19, or showing a negative test result in most organised activities.
- 01.11.2021 Opening hours' restriction is introduced to public indoor spaces between 23:00-6:00. The restriction does not apply to the opening hours establishments selling takeout.
- To eat on the premises of restaurants, cafes and other public catering establishments, people over the age of 18 have to present a valid COVID certificate proving vaccination or recovery from the disease. All guests 12 years of age and older must wear a mask if the nature of the activity allows.
- 15.03.2022 The restrictions on opening hours of public indoor spaces are lifted.
- Valid COVID vaccination certificate or recovery certificate requirement is lifted.
- 05.04.2022 All restrictions related to the public indoor spaces are lifted.
- Use of a mask is recommended but not compulsory.

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Compiled by the author.

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## Appendix B

## Interview Questions

**Evaluation Of Covid-19 Pandemic Effects on Restaurant Management In Estonia**


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<u>Introduction</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are your thoughts about COVID-19 disease?</li> <li>• How would you evaluate the overall impact of COVID-19 pandemic on your business?</li> </ul>
<u>Change of Customer Behavior</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How would you describe the change in the behavior of your customers, with the onset COVID-19 pandemic?</li> <li>• What adaptations were made in the menu of the restaurant to satisfy the needs of your customers, since the onset of COVID-19 pandemic? Did these adaptations work for you?</li> <li>• What were the feedbacks given on your food quality by your customers in general, since the onset of COVID-19 pandemic? What were the changes between previous feedbacks and the feedback taken during COVID-19 times?</li> <li>• On a scale 1 to 10; 1 meaning that there were no changes and 10 being noticeable and important changes - how would you rate the change of customer behavior?</li> </ul>
<u>Redesigning of the Operations</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What were the challenges in changing the work-flow of your restaurant when social isolation requirements came to force?</li> <li>• Did your restaurant have to change the method of service since the onset of COVID-19 pandemic? If so, what were those changes?</li> <li>• How different is it to serve food in regular and disposable cutleries?</li> <li>• On a scale 1 to 10; 1 meaning that no changes were needed and 10 being distinct changes had to be done- how would you rate the change in your operations during the pandemic situation?</li> </ul>
<u>Restrictions</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What kind of support have you obtained from the state when indoor dining was not allowed?</li> <li>• Did your restaurant have to change the seating order or make adjustments in the premises in respect to the restrictions?</li> <li>• How would you rate the support from the government on a scale 1 to 10 – 1 meaning that the support was not enough and 10 meaning that it has been sufficient during the pandemic situation?</li> </ul>
<u>Logistics</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In comparison with pre-pandemic times and today, what has changed in terms of supplying the essential goods needed for the function of your restaurant? (e.g wholesale markets etc.)</li> <li>• How would you comment on the stockpiling of the goods since the onset of COVID-19 pandemic? Have you done stockpiling in your own establishment?</li> <li>• On a scale 1 to 10 – 1 meaning that it is difficult to supply essential goods for your business and 10 being very easy; how would you rate the supply-chain during the pandemic period?</li> </ul>

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## Estonian resume of the thesis

### COVID-19 PANDEEMILISTE MÕJUDE HINDAMINE RESTORANIDE JUHTIMISELE EESTIS

Furkan Abdulilah Yesiler

COVID-19 pandeemia oli palju mõju meie igapäevaelule, sealhulgas tööle ja ärisuhetele. Lisaks muudele ärimudelitele ei saa restoraniäri oma klientide teenindamise olemuse tõttu täielikult eemalduda. Seetõttu on COVID-19 mõju Eesti restoraniärile teema, mis väärrib edasist uurimist. Käesolevas uurimistöös käsitletakse aspekte, sealhulgas muutusi töötajate ja klientide sotsiaalmajanduslikus staatuses; klientide käitumist, logistikat ja piirangute mõjusid on hinnatud varasematest uuringutest ning täiendatud Eesti viidetega. Käesoleva tööga soovis autor luua ülevaate restoraniäri juhtimisalaste väljakutsete kirjandusest, intervjuuerida restoranijuhte-omanikke Eestis ning kogutud andmete põhjal pakkuda välja võimalikke lahendusi COVID-19 põhjustatud probleemide leevendamiseks restoraniäris. .

Käesoleva uuringu väljaselgitamiseks vajalike andmete kogumiseks koostas autor küsimused ja aruteluteemad, mida esitada Eesti restoraniettevõtete omanikele ja juhtidele, kes on pandeemia algusest alates töötanud samal töökohal. Intervjuudest valgustatud on välja toodud autori ettepanekud pandeemia mõjude leevendamiseks. Restoranide juhid peaksid pöörama tähelepanu klientide muutuva dünaamika mõistmisele ning koguma piisavat sisemist ja välist tagasisidet. Et vältida ühekordselt kasutatavate söögiriistade liigset kasutamist, peaksid valitsused võtma meetmeid, et luua partnerlussuhteid taaskasutatavate pakendite ja restoranide vahel. Piirangute osas peaksid restoranijuhid-omanikud esitama piirangute nõudeid mitte kriitilise meetmena rahva tervise kaitseks. Lõpuks peaksid juhid valmistuma ja olema valmis võtma ühendust asendavate äripartneritega, kui logistikaga tekivad probleemid. Pärast intervjuude lõpetamist ja vastuste analüüsi järeldab töö autor, et Eesti restoraniäri mõjutab pandeemia oluliste väljakutsetega, sealhulgas klientide käitumise muutus restoranide suhtes ning tegevuse ümberkujundamine vastavalt kehtivatele piirangutele ja logistikaahelale. häired.

Kuna varasemaid uuringuid COVID-19 mõju kohta Eesti restoraniäridele ei ole tehtud, täidab käesolev lõputöö selleteemalise uurimislünga ja loob loodetavasti alguse diskussioonist, kuidas saaks pandeemia tingimustes restorane tõhusamalt majandada.



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**12/05/2022**