
**GUEST RELATIONS POSITION IN THE HOSPITALITY
INDUSTRY – THE GUESTS' POINT OF VIEW**

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Abstract

Currently, Guest Relations Management in the Hospitality industry faces a substantial investigation gap. Despite this matter being known and thoroughly studied relating to the owners' or companies' perspective, the customers' and guests' point of view has been neglected.

This study aims to minimise this literature gap and value the guests' perspective – those who determine the success or not of the Hotel – by investigating the Research Question “What advantages would you see in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function?” and further details regarding this matter.

In this context and to address this research question, an online questionnaire was distributed among Douro41 Hotel guests. Online interviews were made to head departments to check whether the department managers' points of view were aligned with the guests. The results showed that certain groups with determined characteristics are more prone to see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to Guest Relations.

These results show that each Hotel must consider its target to determine if there is a need to have a Guest Relations position.

Keywords: Guest Relations Management; Guest Relations Position; Hospitality; Guests.

Resumo

Atualmente, a Gestão de Relações de Clientes no setor da Hotelaria enfrenta uma lacuna de investigação substancial. Apesar de este assunto ser conhecido e exaustivamente estudado na perspectiva dos proprietários ou empresas, o ponto de vista dos clientes e hóspedes não é estudado nem valorizado.

Este estudo visa minimizar essa lacuna na literatura e valorizar a perspectiva dos hóspedes – aqueles que determinam o sucesso ou não do Hotel – através da investigação da Questão de Pesquisa "Que vantagens veria em ter alguém exclusivamente dedicado à função de Gestão de Guest Relations?" e mais detalhes sobre este assunto.

Neste contexto, e para estudar a questão de investigação, foi distribuído um questionário online aos hóspedes do Hotel Douro41. Foram realizadas entrevistas online às chefias de departamento para verificar se os pontos de vista dos gerentes de departamento alinhavam com os dos hóspedes. Os resultados mostraram que existem determinados grupos com determinadas características que têm mais tendência para ver uma vantagem em ter alguém exclusivamente dedicado à função de Guest Relations do que outros.

Esses resultados sugerem que cada Hotel deve ter em conta o seu público-alvo de forma a determinar a necessidade de ter a função de Guest Relations.

Palavras-chave: Gestão de Relações de Clientes; Função de Guest Relations; Hotelaria; Hóspedes.

Acronym List

GRM	Guest Relations Management
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
GR	Guest Relations
RQ	Research Question

Index of contents

Abstract.....	ii
Resumo	iii
Acronym List.....	iv
Index of contents.....	v
Index of Tables	vii
1. Introduction	1
2. Literature Review.....	3
2.1 Customer Relationship Management	3
2.1.1 CRM connection with Guest Relations.....	3
2.2 Hospitality	4
2.2.1 Hotel.....	5
2.3 Who is the Guest Relations?	5
3. Methodological Considerations.....	8
3.1 Research Question	8
3.2 Methodology Selected	8
3.2.1 Case Study.....	9
3.2.2 The Researcher.....	9
3.2.3 Study Participants	9
3.3 Data Collection.....	10
3.4 Procedures Followed	10
3.5 Ethical Concerns	10

4. Data Analysis	11
4.1 Online Questionnaire	11
4.2 Interviews.....	33
4.3 The absence of the GR	35
5. Conclusion.....	36
6. Appendix	38
Appendix A – Crosstabulation Age * Background studies	38
Appendix B – Crosstabulation Gender * Background studies	40
Appendix C – Crosstabulation Employment Status * Background studies.....	41
Appendix D – Crosstabulation Children * Background studies	43
Appendix E – Crosstabulation Education Level * Background studies	44
References.....	45
Annexes.....	49
Annex A: Extracted Variables	49
Annex B: Interviewing Method.....	51
Annex C: Consent Form	52

Index of Tables

Table 1 Guest Relations' Duties Own Elaboration, according to Hermans et al (2009).....	7
Table 2 Age * Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays? Crosstabulation. Source: Own elaboration	18
Table 3 Gender * Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays? Crosstabulation. Source: Own elaboration	19
Table 4 Education Level * Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays? Crosstabulation. Source: Own elaboration	20
Table 5 Age * Background studies Crosstabulation. Source: Own elaboration.....	21
Table 6 Employment Status * Background studies Crosstabulation. Source: Own elaboration	22
Table 7 Education Level * Background studies Crosstabulation. Source: Own elaboration	23
Table 8 Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays? * Background studies Crosstabulation. Source: Own elaboration	23
Table 9 Age * Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function? Crosstabulation. Source: Own elaboration	29
Table 10 Gender * Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function? Crosstabulation. Source: Own elaboration.....	29
Table 11 Employment status * Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function? Crosstabulation. Source: Own elaboration	31
Table 12 Chi Square Test - Employment Status. Source: Own elaboration.....	31
Table 13 Children * Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function? Crosstabulation. Source: Own elaboration.....	32
Table 14 Human touch * Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function? Crosstabulation. Source: Own elaboration	33
Table 15 Head-Departments Summary. Source: Own Elaboration.....	33

Index of Figures

Figure 1 Age. Source: Own elaboration	11
Figure 2 Nationality. Source: Own elaboration.....	12
Figure 3 Gender. Source: Own elaboration.....	13
Figure 4 Employment Status. Source: Own elaboration	14
Figure 5 Children. Source: Own elaboration.....	15
Figure 6 Level of Education. Source: Own elaboration	15
Figure 7 Work Field. Source: Own elaboration	16
Figure 8 Do you feel there is a need for a “human touch” nowadays? Crosstabulation. Source: Own elaboration.....	17
Figure 9 Studies’ Background. Source: Own elaboration	20
Figure 10 “Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function?”. Source: Own elaboration	25

1. Introduction

Boundaries are breaking in today's world. Some of them are between countries and nations, others in between value, heritage, and technology. As a result, borders get slimmer as every day goes by and exploring a new region or country is part of everyone's life nowadays. Host-guest encounters in tourism figures are a perfect example of cross-cultural exchange. Hospitality is set to be one of the biggest businesses in the world.

To complete the Masters in Management by the Faculty of Economics of Porto University, the idealisation and development of a dissertation was chosen, among other options. The choice was based on the Bachelors in Hotel Management and Administration already hold by the investigator and the fact that several extracurricular internships have already been carried out within hotel management and customer service.

The choice to investigate this topic arises because it is still very little addressed in scientific investigations, and most studies are based on the owners' or company's perspective, not the customer s' or guests' point of view and opinion. Furthermore, results from this research can help the hotel industry reconsider the important role of Guests' Relations Managers.

In Portugal, hospitality represents the fastest-growing sector since 2010. The relationship between the company and its customer is significant, but it is indeed a crucial part of its success when it comes to the host and guest relationship in hospitality.

The north of Portugal represents 13,88% of total overnight stays, totalising 10 800 000 stays in 2019 (INE, 2020). This study will be performed in Castelo de Paiva, having as a basis a case study performed in a five-star hotel, during an internship for three months.

Many studies about the role and profile of guest relations officers have been conducted from the perspective of the company and/or owners. This case study addresses a gap found in the literature – the customers'/guests' point of view and opinion, which, surprisingly, has not been much worked on – since guests are what makes the success of the hotel, it is, therefore, important to gain an in-depth understanding of their opinion, so that the company can keep on with continuous improvement.

Additionally, this development may lead other authors to study this matter and come to wider conclusions – ones that could be generalised to hotels in one region or country.

In this way, the focus of this dissertation was to address the following research question: from the customers' viewpoint, "What advantages would you see in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function?"

At the same time, a more detailed study was made through other questions to answer, for instance: "what is the role played by guest relations manager in hospitality?"; "what tasks are performed and what skills are required to perform them successfully?"

Some limitations were found and most of them were linked to the Covid-19 pandemic, not making it possible to collect data as intended. One way to overcome this was through online interviews and questionnaires instead of face-to-face ones.

The empirical study was performed by using a sample of Douro41 guests and employees. Moreover, due to Covid-19 restrictions and availability concerns, all information was gathered online through the online questionnaire or online interviews.

The empirical evidence described in this study suggests that the GR job is essential to most of the respondents, which will affect their experience at the hotel and therefore determine the success or failure of their stay.

The dissertation is organised as follows: Chapter 2 it is presented the theoretical framework and the empirical studies related to concepts such as Tourism, Hospitality and Accommodation, Public Relations and Guest Relations; Chapter 3 describes the methodology chosen to conduct the present study; Chapter 4 reports the data gathered in the study; then, Chapter 5 includes the major conclusions drawn from this study and the recommendations to improve the Guest-Relations function, according to guests' point of view.

2. Literature Review

In this chapter, it is presented the literature review concerning the hospitality industry and its environment. First, the theoretical framework of Guest Relations (GR), Customer Relationship Management (CRM), and the link between them is presented. Next, an explanation regarding who is the GR and what does he/she do inside the hotel is provided.

2.1 Customer Relationship Management

In the corporate world, namely in the high competition of the hospitality industry, organizations and managers recognize that customers are the core of the business, and their loyalty is a powerful asset to survive in the business. This loyalty issue has forced hoteliers to seek out any potential competitive advantage to differentiate themselves from competitors. One approach to do so is by implementing CRM.

There is no agreed definition of what CRM is (Ngai, 2005; Kevork & Vrechopoulos, 2009; Hamid, 2009), given that, and according to Mohammad et al. (2013), CRM can be defined in different ways – this means that it will have a different connotation depending on context and other contingent factors. At the same time, it has been strongly proved that CRM can be viewed from multiple perspectives (e.g., people, process, technology, strategy).

For some researchers, CRM also can be defined as the use of advanced technology involving a database, data warehouse and data mining informed by enterprise's strategies and philosophies to increase customer retention rates and profitability (Xu and Walton, 2005; Nguyen et al., 2007).

2.1.1 CRM connection with Guest Relations

One of the significant factors of the hospitality business' success is the strategy implemented to fulfil its customers' needs and develop a competitive advantage over its competitors. This strategy is something inimitable and intangible, so, even though it may be copied in the future, it provides the company with a competitive advantage over the others. This means that constant research and innovation is necessary to survive and to be better than competitors.

CRM enables the company to differentiate itself from others, using many tools that are at their disposal, with the primary goal of keeping the guests happy and make them loyal to the brand (Mitussis et Al., 2006). At the same time, Mohammed and Rashid (2012) define CRM as a tactical method that allows organizations to use internal resources to cope with the

relationship with customers during their life cycles, having as a final goal the creation of a competitive advantage and improving the organization's performance.

“GR’s methods of personalization, customization and networking allow the management to explore value creation for clients and guests through e.g., non-core services and social CRM, and such before, during, and after their actual stay or booking.” (Hermans et al, 2009, page 26)

2.2 Hospitality

There are several definitions and concepts from different authors and there is not a consensus about what is the “true” definition of hospitality (Ariffin & Maghzi, 2012; Brotherton & Wood, 2007; Hepple et al., 1990), being incorporated in the tourism industry.

According to the Oxford dictionary (2020), hospitality provides two main meanings: the first one, related to the friendly and generous behaviour towards guests; and the second one, which is the focus of this dissertation, concerned with food, drink or services that are provided by an organization for guests or customers.

Brotherton and Wood (2000) offer a definition of hospitality: ‘A contemporaneous human exchange, which is voluntarily entered into, and designed to enhance the mutual well-being of the parties concerned through the provision of accommodation, and/or food, and/or drink’.

Slattery (2002) identifies hospitality in the same sense that Oxford Dictionary does in its second meaning but adding the consumer-supplier relationship, which was missing in the previous definition, that is ‘Hotels, restaurants, bars and the other hospitality venues are businesses where the critical relationship is between sellers and buyers. The buyers are not guests, they are customers. The relationship is not philanthropic it is economic.’

Lastly, a more philosophical definition, where the guest-host relationship emerges, Lashley (2000) states that ‘hospitality requires the guest to feel that the host is being hospitable through feelings of generosity, a desire to please and a genuine regard for the guest as an individual’. In conclusion, hospitality might have different meanings according to the perspective under which it is being studied or evaluated. However, it is important to note that it is a dynamic phenomenon that comprises two parties, that might be only the “consumer-supplier” – having a more economic meaning in this case – or the “guest-host” – where the relationship between them is more important than in the previous one and satisfaction/feelings are considered important.

2.2.1 Hotel

Hotel' definition has evolved since the ancient times, from only providing accommodation to providing every service the guest may need.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary (2021), an hotel is the place where one person pays to stay when he/she is away from home. However, this definition is limited. Gilje (2004) defends that hotels provide not only accommodation, but also meals and other services to travellers and other paying guests. Collins (1997: 817), affirms that an hotel is an edifice where people stay when away from home for work or recreation reasons, and they pay a fee for accommodation and meals.

The tasks performed by a Guest-Relations in hospitality/hotels will differ subject to the hotel category and service provided. However, they all have a common goal: the overall the overall well-being of the customer and the satisfaction of his/her needs throughout its stay.

2.3 Who is the Guest Relations?

The concept of Guest Relations is still considered recent in the world of hospitality. In general, the role of Guest Relations is to establish a relationship between the management (host) and the customer (guest).

Wójcik (2017) affirms that the Guest Relations position is not limited to just providing information but also coordinate numerous activities, ensuring the excellent image of the company they represent and satisfying guests' needs.

As stated by Untari (2010), a GR needs to have a few critical soft skills: patience, while handling guest's requests, problems and complaints; creativity, to take the initiative when it is expected to and think unmistakably and prudently before making any decision; well-groomed, as part of its job is about appearance, and he/she is the front line of the hotel; communication, since language is essential to build a relationship with the guest.

According to Gonçalves (2013), a Guest-Relations has many tasks, such as: he/she is in the front-office, being one of the first to contact the guest at arrival; is responsible for providing an excellent service to the guest, assuring its experience at the hotel will be positive, from arrival to departure; establish and maintain beneficial relationships between the host and the hotel; anticipate and fulfil customers' needs; among others. Additionally, Marques (2018) declares three vital components (in the soft skills field) for an excellent hospitable: comforting, insurer, and reassuring.

Nonetheless, GR do not end in the Guest-Relations function itself – relationship bonding with guests is part of the job of all the staff members inside the hotel, even if indirectly.

According to Hermans et al. (2009), as the main conclusion of their study, seven different perspectives may be associated with the guest relations duties, as the following table explains.

Duty	Explanation	Duty	Explanation
Making the genuine relationship part of the brand values.	Trust and recognition in relationships building	Replacing unprofitable marketing efforts	Grow through co-creation and networking.
Promoting the brand loyalty program	Individualized attention and rewards to frequents guests program joiners.	Managing spill-over effects and spin-offs	Hospitality companies can explore value creation outside the core business, offering unreached levels of personalization and customization.
Living the brand service standard	Staff's accountability for the relationship, they become brand of the brand.	Reversing the order of the brand development process	By first starting to understand individual customers, experiencing the path of relational growth and opportunity and guests.

Substituting unprofitable marketing efforts	Grow through co- creation and networking.	
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Table 1 Guest Relations' Duties

Own Elaboration, according to Hermans et al (2009)

As it is possible to confirm, there is an endless number of company/owner's points of view on how to perform a guest relations job. Nevertheless, in this relationship, where is the guest opinion accounted for? There are not many studies that aim to understand the customers' expectations about the role of guest relations officers. This dissertation aims to contribute to filling this gap.

3. Methodological Considerations

This chapter aims to introduce the research methodology for this case study regarding whether guests at Douro41 would rather or not have some person performing a Guest-Relations function. This path allowed for a deeper understanding of Douro41' guests' experience. It provided a way to develop theory from the data to understand what motivates guests to prefer to have someone as a GR or not and the guests' expectations from their role.

The applicability of the case study and a constructivist approach are discussed in-depth in this chapter, where the research plan will be detailed.

3.1 Research Question

This study aimed to develop a theory in answer to the following research question (RQ):

RQ – What advantages would you see in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function?

To answer the research question, a set of questions were made. For instance, it was asked for respondents if they valued the “human touch” in interpersonal relationships at hotels. At the same time, it was asked which soft skills and which background studies guests valued the most in the GR. Then, it was requested for guests to rank the tasks that the GR should perform, in terms of personal importance.

3.2 Methodology Selected

According to Lincoln (1985), qualitative research is a form of investigation that analyses information conveyed through language and behaviour in natural settings, being used to capture expressive information not conveyed in quantitative data, such as emotions, ideals, and motivations behind behaviours. It facilitates understanding environment, exploring new phenomena, finding new research questions, and finding new models of change (Keggler et al., 2018).

Other authors consider that qualitative research collects data using a naturalistic approach (Denzin and Lincoln 2005; Creswell 2009), focusing on the meaning actors ascribe to their actions.

3.2.1 Case Study

According to Yin (2003), a case study approach should be considered when:

1. The goal of the study is to answer “how” and “why” questions;
2. It is not possible to manipulate the actions of those involved in the study;
3. There is a will to evaluate contextual conditions;
4. Or the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context.

Furthermore, in case studies, data may be collected through various means: questionnaires, interviews or observations.

3.2.2 The Researcher

The researcher holds a Bachelors in Hospitality Management and Administration, having worked, and having had internships in Hospitality and Customer Service for two years.

No respondent had a personal relationship with the researcher that represented a conflict of interest that biased the research study.

3.2.3 Study Participants

The sample was drawn from a population of the total number of Douro41 guests. All participants fulfilled some requirements: only guests from Douro41 Hotel; participants had to understand English fully, but it was not mandatory for English to be their native language.

Participants were recruited through different adjusted methods and asked to answer a questionnaire, as shown in appendix A.

At first, consent and email to send the questionnaire were asked at check-in, noted in the Excel file and afterwards the access link was sent. However, this process from asking email to sending the access link was slow and the response rate was low.

Considering the previous situation, multiple cards with a QR code to access the questionnaire were printed. This card was delivered to the guest at check-in, speeding up the process. However, the response rate kept low.

As a final adjustment, the QR code card was delivered at check-out. In this way, the response rate became much higher.

3.3 Data Collection

This case study used multiple data collection means. First, an online questionnaire was distributed among Douro41 guests – this questionnaire involved the consent, a demographic section and a Guest-Relations related section. Data was collected over a three month period, during an internship at Douro41 Hotel.

Second, an interviewing method, found in Appendix B, was applied. The interviews were recorded electronically using appropriated software. The interviews began with a small talk to get to know the interviewee and his/her experience on the job, followed by open-ended questions about the participants' opinion on the Guest-Relations job.

3.4 Procedures Followed

Approval from the Faculty of Economics of Porto and Douro41 management team was aimed to implement both the online questionnaire and the interviews.

Once approval was given, the researcher began to distribute online questionnaires (all processes and adjustments in more detail in section “study participants”) and schedule interviews. Potential participants were screened considering their willingness to comply with all procedures. As displayed in Appendix C, an informed consent form was mandatory for each participant prior to participating.

Questionnaire' respondents had the freedom to answer at any time and any place of their preference. To gather data, the Google Forms tool was used. The questionnaire was available to answer, only after confirming the written consent of the respondent.

Participants were interviewed using a video call software. As part of the interview introduction, the researcher confirmed that the participant would consent to share their answers anonymously. No interview was conducted without confirming the verbal informed consent of the participant. The transcribed interviews were sent to the interviewees for review once, and even though it was possible to make changes, that was unnecessary.

3.5 Ethical Concerns

The investigator guaranteed that ethics remained a top priority throughout the empirical study. Following the methods mentioned in this chapter was vital in ensuring the authenticity and trustworthiness of the study.

4. Data Analysis

It is important to emphasise that this exploratory study attempted to highlight the guests' opinions on this matter, and it is an object for future research. It was not the purpose of the study to generalise the conclusions reached to all guests that stayed in the hotel throughout the internship duration. Therefore, this study only highlights the various perceptions of this study's sample – 110 guests were selected from the total number of guests. This was considered to be an acceptable sample size for the study, representing a heterogeneous population of Douro41' guests.

4.1 Online Questionnaire

The age distribution of the respondents who participated in the study is provided in Figure 1.

The sample included only guests who were eighteen years and older. The youngest group (18-24) represents 35.45% of the whole population, and it is also the most extensive group, counting 39 respondents. Next, the 25-34 age group represents 24.55%, the 35-44 age group represents 15.45%, the 45-54 age category 16.36% and lastly, the 55-64 age category represents only 8.18%. No respondents were over 65 years old. The current location and the hard access to the hotel might explain why it is more searched by the younger age groups.

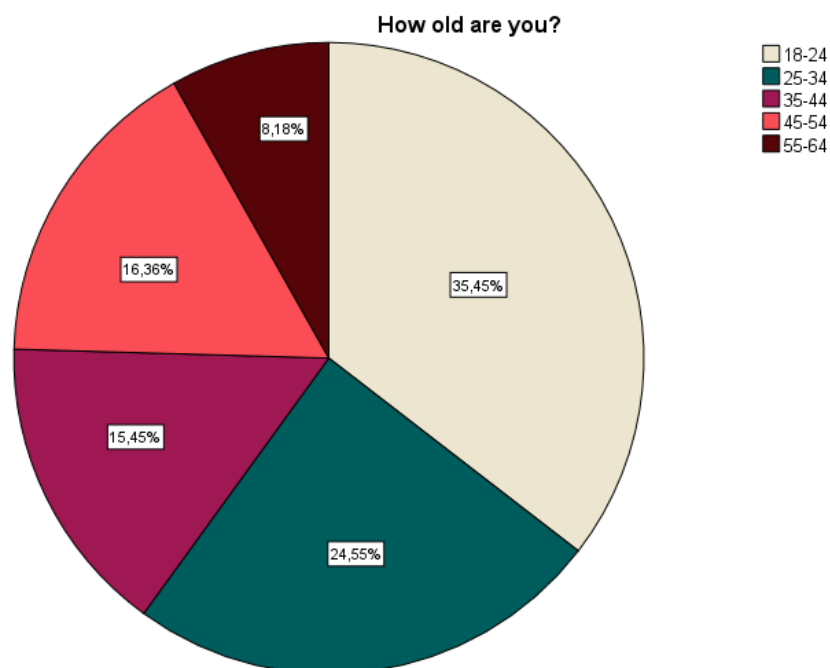


Figure 1 Age. Source: Own elaboration

Regarding the respondents' nationality, 98 people were from the European Union, one from Australia, seven from America, two from Africa and two from Russia. All nationalities are represented in Figure 2. It is important to note that, from 98 people from the EU, 80 people were from Portugal, representing 72.7% of all respondents. Travelling restrictions because of the Covid-19 pandemic at the time of the questionnaire is the probable reason for this results distribution, since travelling was not allowed and people tended to explore they own countries.

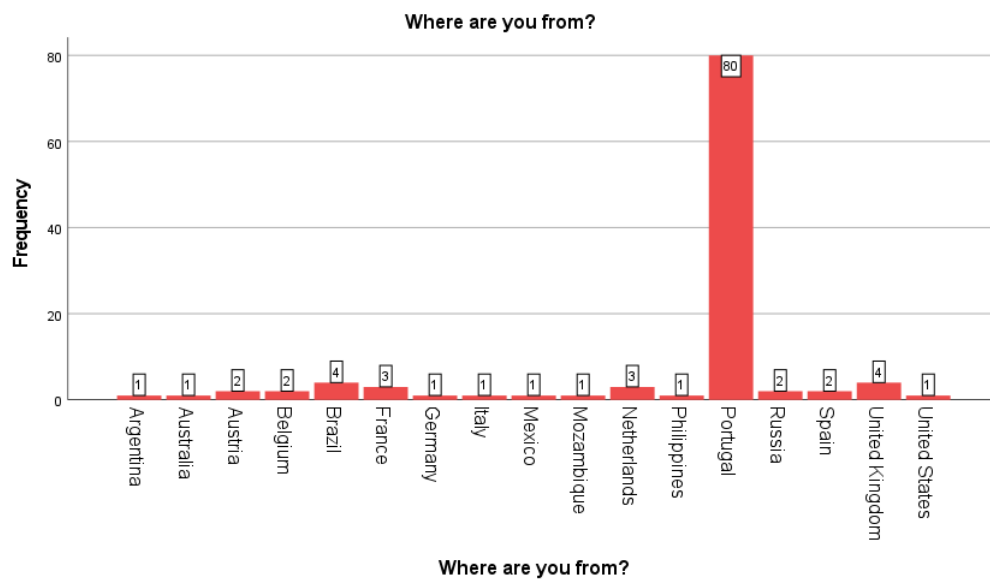


Figure 2 Nationality. Source: Own elaboration

As shown in Figure 3, from 110 respondents from Douro41 Hotel, 69 were female while 41 were male. No respondents chose other gender possibilities. This might be explained by the safe location and nearby experiences available at Douro41 hotel.

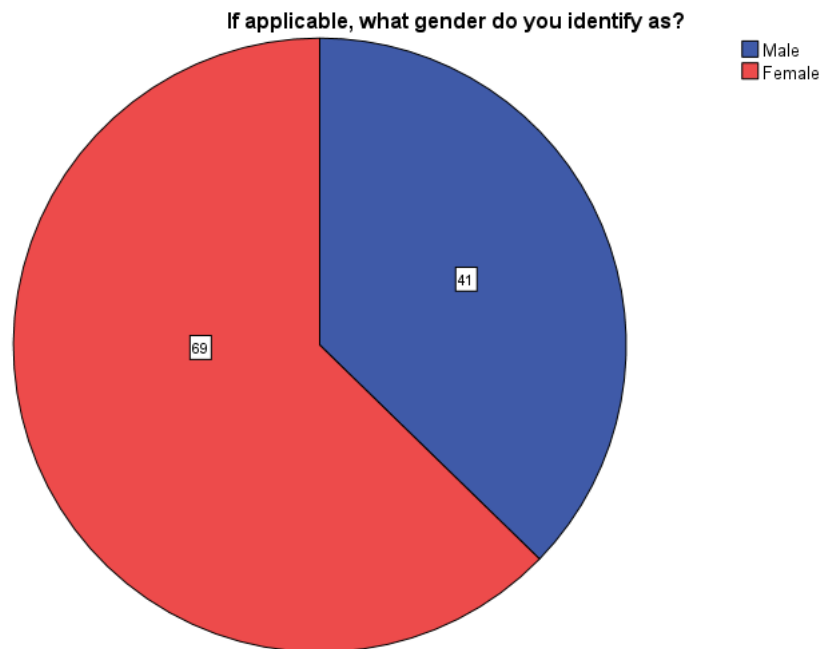


Figure 3 Gender. Source: Own elaboration

As observed in Figure 4, at the time of the survey, almost sixty-four per cent (63.6%) of all respondents reported they were working for a third party (employees). Additionally, 8.2% reported they were employers; 10.9% were self-employed; and 17.3% of respondents reported they had another employment status – including students, unemployed and stay at home.

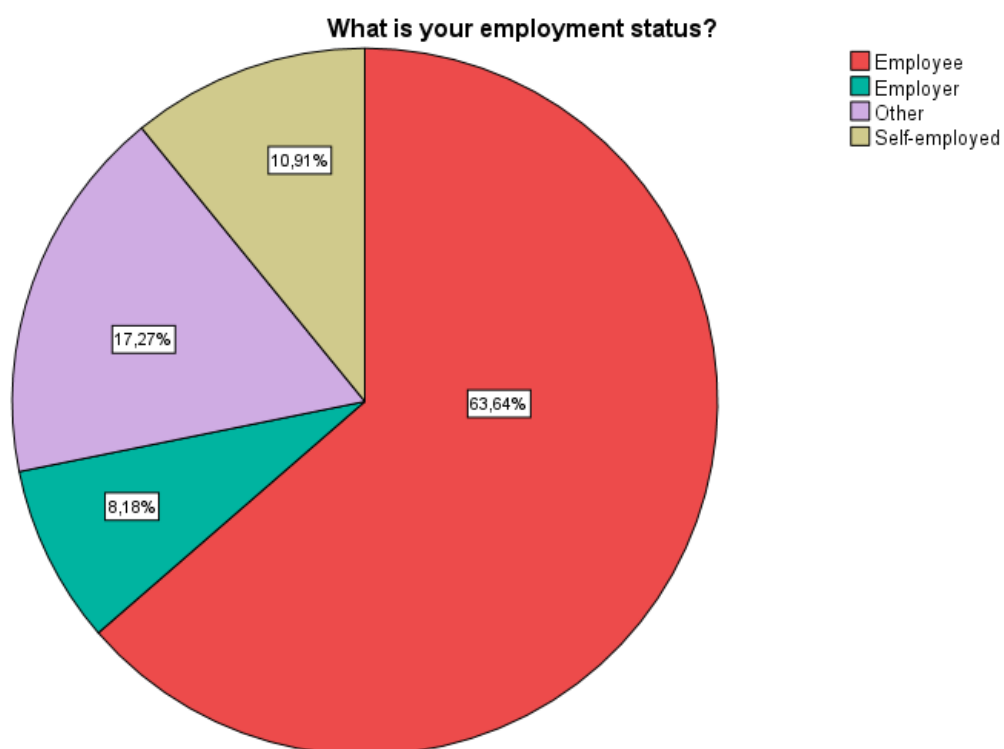


Figure 4 Employment Status. Source: Own elaboration

Douro41's guest profile does not have children, as shown in Figure 5. Of all respondents, 81 people do not have children, whereas 29 people do. This fact might be explained due to the hotel's characteristics: its design, layout, activities, and environment are more targeted for adults, and if the parents want to take their children with them, they usually chose other hotels that can offer other types of experiences.

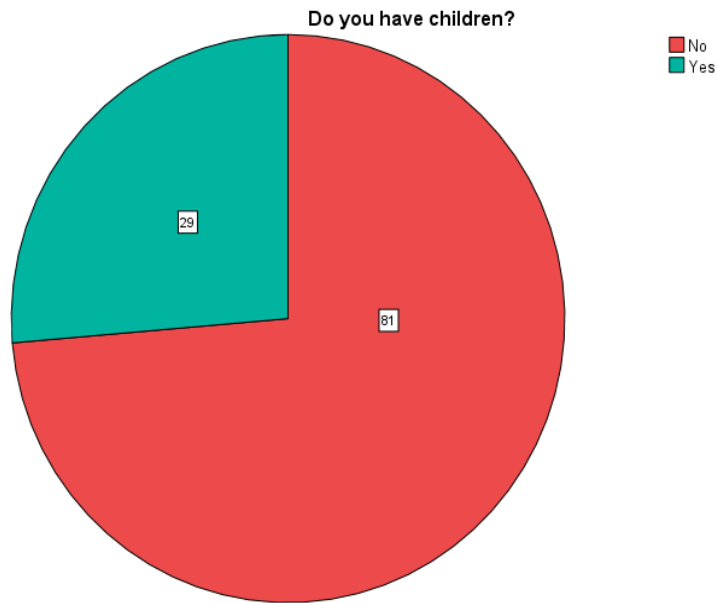


Figure 5 Children. Source: Own elaboration

Regarding the educational background of the respondents, Figure 6 indicates that one person had some kind of secondary schooling, 51 people had completed a bachelor's degree, 33 had a Masters or equivalent, and eight people had a Doctorate. No respondent had only completed primary schooling or no schooling, as exhibited in Figure 6.

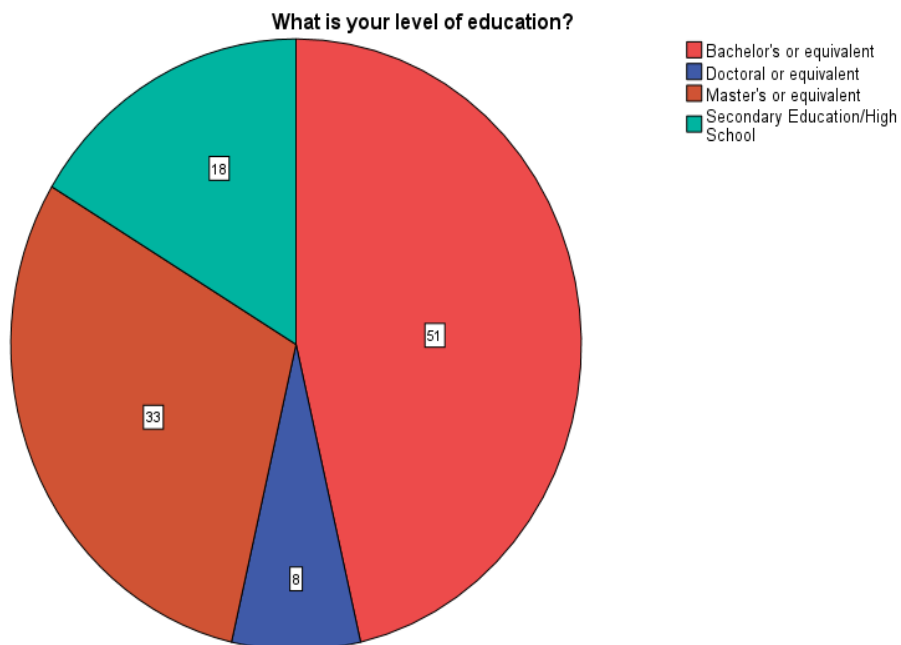


Figure 6 Level of Education. Source: Own elaboration

Concerning the work field, there is a broad background. The most significant sectors found on Douro41 Guests' profile are Tourism/Hospitality (21,8% of all respondents), followed by Accounting/Management/Finance (20,9%), Teaching (16,4%) and Sales (10,9%). There are also other minor sectors employing Douro41 guests, such as Entertainment, Health, Legal, and others. More detailed information may be seen in Figure 7.

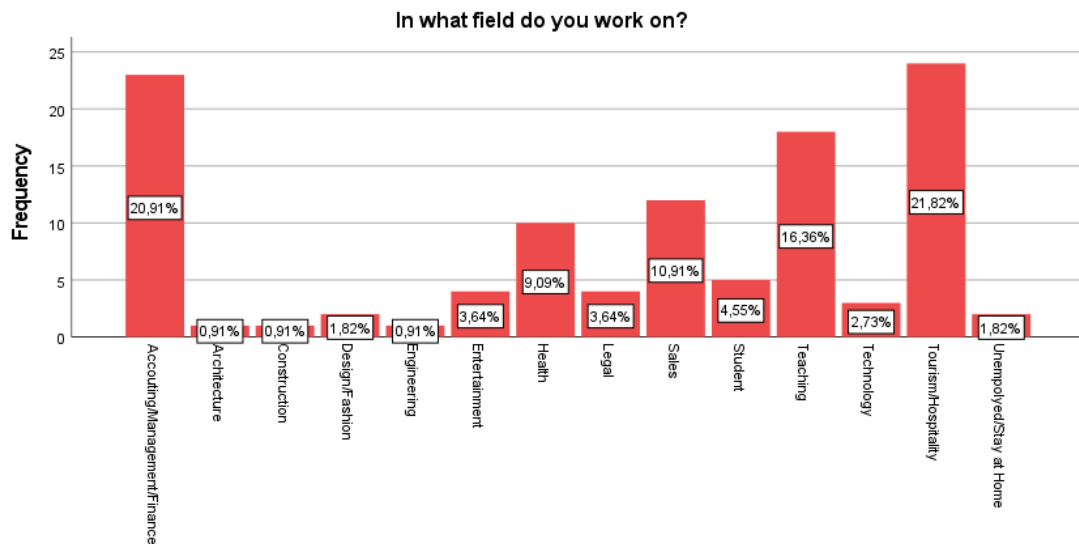


Figure 7 Work Field. Source: Own elaboration

When it comes to the need for a human touch in guest-host relationships at hotels, most of the respondents' state that they do prefer a human touch (83,6%), whereas 16,4% do not feel the need to have a person in this process, as viewed in Figure 8.

Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" in the guest-relations at hotels, since nowadays everything is made digitally and online?

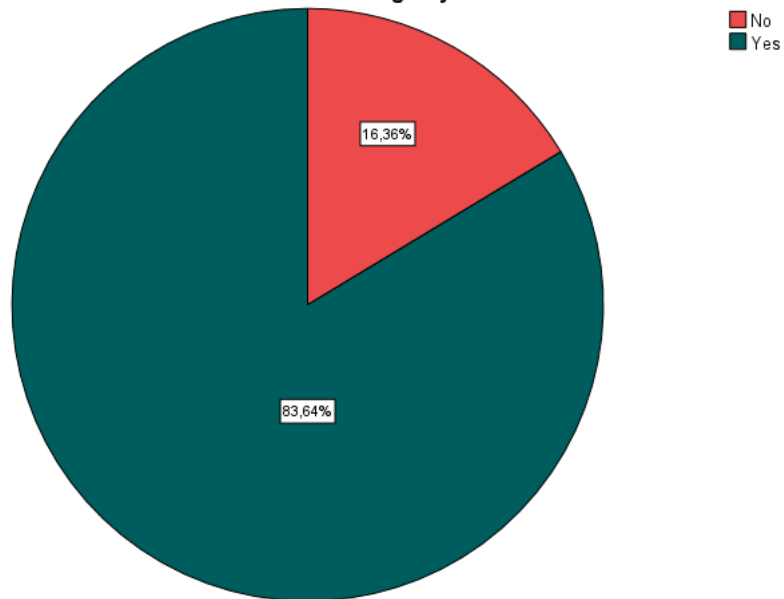


Figure 8 Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays? Crosstabulation. Source: Own elaboration

Regarding this direct and personal contact, as shown in Table 2, the age group that does not feel this need is the 18-24 years old group (with 38.9% of total number of negative answers), which might be explained by the fact that this age group is more used to the new technologies. Nonetheless, there is not a significant statistic relationship between these variables.

Age * Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays?

Crosstabulation

			Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays?		Total
			No	Yes	
Age	18-24	Count	7	32	39
		% within Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays?	38,9%	34,8%	35,5%
	25-34	Count	3	24	27

	% within Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays?	16,7%	26,1%	24,5%
35-44	Count	1	16	17
	% within Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays?	5,6%	17,4%	15,5%
45-54	Count	6	12	18
	% within Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays?	33,3%	13,0%	16,4%
55-64	Count	1	8	9
	% within Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays?	5,6%	8,7%	8,2%
Total	Count	18	92	110
	% within Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays?	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 2 Age * Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays? Crosstabulation. Source: Own elaboration

Gender is also a relevant factor on this matter – females are the ones with the highest negative answer rate counting 61.1% versus 38.9% of males' negative answers, as seen in Table 3.

**Gender * Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays?
Crosstabulation**

			Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays?		
			No	Yes	Total
Gender	Female	Count	11	58	69
		% within Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays?	61,1%	63,0%	62,7%

	Male	Count	7	34	41
		% within Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays?	38,9%	37,0%	37,3%
Total		Count	18	92	110
		% within Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays?	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

*Table 3 Gender * Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays? Crosstabulation. Source: Own elaboration*

Concerning education level, respondents holding a Bachelor's or Master's degree or equivalent are the groups with the higher opposition to human touch, counting 38.9% each of total negative answers each, as illustrated in Table 4.

Education Level * Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays?
Crosstabulation

			Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays?		
			No	Yes	Total
Education Level	Bachelor's or equivalent	Count	7	44	51
		% within Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays?	38,9%	47,8%	46,4%
	Doctoral or equivalent	Count	2	6	8
		% within Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays?	11,1%	6,5%	7,3%
	Master's or equivalent	Count	7	26	33
		% within Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays?	38,9%	28,3%	30,0%
Secondary Education/ High School	Count	2	16	18	
	% within Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays?	11,1%	17,4%	16,4%	
Total		Count	18	92	110

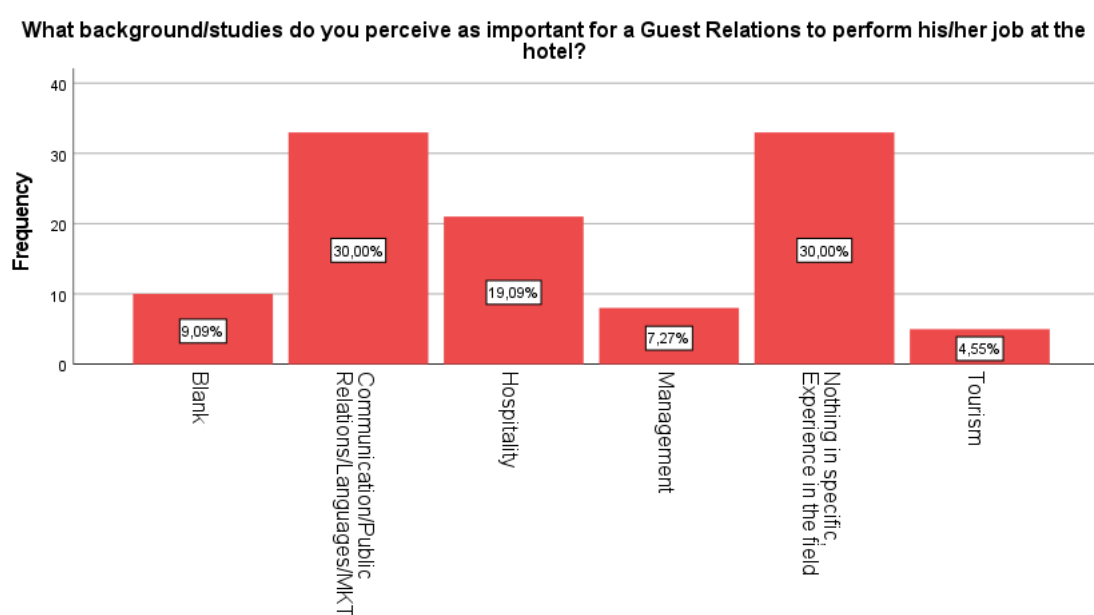
% within Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays?	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
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Table 4 Education Level * Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays? Crosstabulation.

Source: Own elaboration

Respecting the importance given to a Guest-Relations studies' background, 30% of the total answers affirm that there is no specific study field that makes a GR exceptional in their work. Instead, common sense, background and experience in the field determines his/her success. Other 30% value the most the Communication, Public Relations, Languages or Marketing background, followed by 19% that believe that a Hospitality background will help the most on performing this job.

Furthermore, 7,27% consider Management the best study field for a GR, and 4.55% consider Tourism the best one. The remaining 9.09% presented a blank answer. All information is detailed in Figure 9.



What background/studies do you perceive as important for a Guest Relations to perform his/her jo...

Figure 9 Studies' Background. Source: Own elaboration

Table 5 suggests that the younger age groups tend to value more education as a background for a GR position (in first place the 18-24 with 37.3% of the "Education" votes and in second the 25-34 with 25.4%). On the other hand, Experience in the Field is distributed evenly

among the five existing age groups. However, the relationship between age and background studies perceived as important is not statistically significant.

Age * Background studies Crosstabulation

				Background studies		
				Education	Nothing in specific, Experience in the field	Total
Age	18-24	Count	5	25	9	39
		% within Background studies	50,0%	37,3%	27,3%	35,5%
	25-34	Count	3	17	7	27
		% within Background studies	30,0%	25,4%	21,2%	24,5%
	35-44	Count	0	9	8	17
		% within Background studies	0,0%	13,4%	24,2%	15,5%
	45-54	Count	1	11	6	18
		% within Background studies	10,0%	16,4%	18,2%	16,4%
	55-64	Count	1	5	3	9
		% within Background studies	10,0%	7,5%	9,1%	8,2%
	Total	Count	10	67	33	110
		% within Background studies	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

*Table 5 Age * Background studies Crosstabulation. Source: Own elaboration*

Regarding employment status, Table 6 shows that the quality “Employee” and “Other” are the ones that value the most Education, with 67.2% and 17.9% of the answers, correspondingly. Nonetheless, the relationship between those two variables is not statistically significant.

Employment Status * Background studies Crosstabulation

			Background studies			Total
			Blank	Education	Nothing in specific, Experience in the field	
Employment Status	Employee	Count	5	45	20	70
		% within Background studies	50,0%	67,2%	60,6%	63,6%
	Employer	Count	2	5	2	9
		% within Background studies	20,0%	7,5%	6,1%	8,2%
	Other	Count	2	12	5	19
		% within Background studies	20,0%	17,9%	15,2%	17,3%
	Self-employed	Count	1	5	6	12
		% within Background studies	10,0%	7,5%	18,2%	10,9%
	Total	Count	10	67	33	110
		% within Background studies	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 6 Employment Status * Background studies Crosstabulation. Source: Own elaboration

Concerning Education Level, Table 7 demonstrates that 56.9% of people holding a Bachelor's value the most Education, followed by people holding a Master's (66.7%) and people holding a Doctorate (75%). In total, 60.9% of respondents value Education the most.

Education Level * Background studies Crosstabulation

			Background studies			Total
			Blank	Education / Training	Nothing in specific, Experience in the field	
Education Level	Bachelor's or equivalent	Count	6	29	16	51
		% within Education Level	11,8%	56,9%	31,4%	100,0%
	Doctoral or equivalent	Count	0	6	2	8
		% within Education Level	0,0%	75,0%	25,0%	100,0%

Master's or equivalent	Count	4	22	7	33
	% within Education Level	12,1%	66,7%	21,2%	100,0%
Secondary Education/High School	Count	0	10	8	18
	% within Education Level	0,0%	55,6%	44,4%	100,0%
Total	Count	10	67	33	110
	% within Education Level	9,1%	60,9%	30,0%	100,0%

*Table 7 Education Level * Background studies Crosstabulation. Source: Own elaboration*

From 92 respondents who feel a need for a “human touch”, 63% value more Education in comparison to Experience. From 18 participants who do not have this need, 50% value Education and 38.9% value Experience.

Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays? * Background studies Crosstabulation

			Background studies			Total
			Blank	Education / Training	Nothing in specific, Experience in the field	
Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays?	No	Count	2	9	7	18
		% within Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays?	11,1%	50,0%	38,9%	100,0%
	Yes	Count	8	58	26	92
		% within Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays?	8,7%	63,0%	28,3%	100,0%
	Total	Count	10	67	33	110
		% within Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays?	9,1%	60,9%	30,0%	100,0%

*Table 8 Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays? * Background studies Crosstabulation. Source: Own elaboration*

More detailed information regarding the previous tables is found in Annex A, B, C D and E, where is possible to find which studies are valued.

Concerning characteristics and soft skills most valued by guests in the Guest-Relations job, there seems to be an agreement in the following ones, which are mutual to all answers: kindness, friendliness (a smile is widely valued), availability, good communication and listening, empathy, politeness, understanding, caring, flexibility, know-how and the ability to make the guest feel at home.

When confronted with a set of tasks that a GR might perform and given the opportunity to rank their importance according to personal experiences, Douro41' guests agreed that the most important tasks are:

- Be positive from arrival to departure while actively listening and solving guests' complaints and needs, even the unstated ones, and maintaining beneficial host-guest relationships.
- Provide excellent service to the guest, assuring their experience at the hotel will be positive, offering assistance with a broad range of tasks.
- Oversees and coordinates all arrivals and departures of special guests (VIPs and others).
- Manage communication between guests and staff and follow up to ensure that customer concerns are resolved.
- Appraise team's performance and produce reports while training and managing guest relations team members.
- Promote all amenities, conveniences and programs offered and tourist spots.
- Analyse customer feedback and provide strategic direction to improve the overall rating continuously.
- Stays updated with the latest trends in the hospitality industry.
- Informs guests of hotel rates and services.
- Makes and confirms reservations for guests.
- Registers and checks-in guests.
- Issue room keys and direct guests to their rooms.

Summing up, guests prefer to have someone present every step of the way on their stay – someone they can count on and rely on/delegate some tasks that will make the most out of their stay.

On the other hand, respondents stated that a GR did not need to perform the following tasks:

- Coordinate luggage collection and storage.
- Answers and directs incoming calls.
- Closes guest accounts and checks guests out.

In summary, guests felt that there was a better position to rely on those tasks: receptionists and concierges, leaving the GR with more “solving and caring” duties.

When confronted with the question “Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function?”, eighty-five people answered yes, and twenty-five people stated that they would not see an advantage, as shown in figure 5.

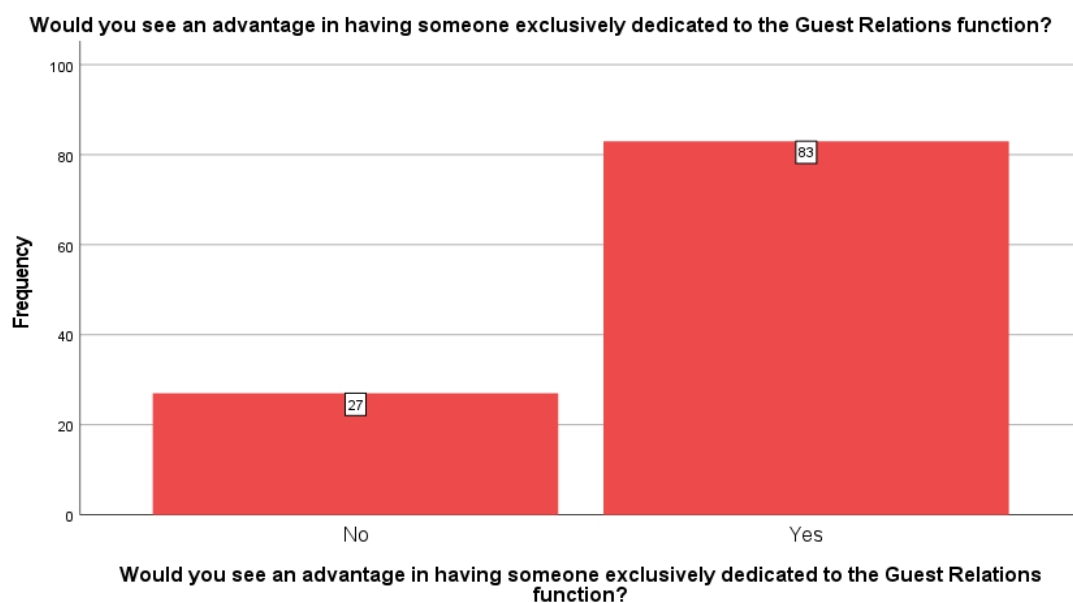


Figure 10 “Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function?”. Source: Own elaboration

On the one hand, and considering only the answers “yes” from the research question, below it is possible to find some quotes which explain that answer, giving a more in-detail answer:

- ❖ Some things/issues surpass everyday business. A personal touch/contact will make the hotel guest feel even more “at home”!
- ❖ Improves the speed of satisfying the guests' needs, a better and improved service
- ❖ To relieve receptionists from such duties and to create another job opportunity
- ❖ Someone specialized with those tasks would free other people (receptionists) from doing it and would also do them in a better way because it only needs to focus on that and nothing more
- ❖ To achieve a service of excellence, the tasks must be well distributed so that everyone can focus entirely on the task at hands
- ❖ I think having more support/people to help provide a great customer experience is essential. Expecting one person or team (e.g., receptionists) to do it all is not realistic and will stretch them too thin.
- ❖ Specific functions need specific skills and training.
- ❖ Receptionists already have their work. Having the duty of doing everything (from check in to providing information till check-out) is too much work for a person in their role!
- ❖ There should be a specific person handling complaints instead of doing it directly with the receptionist who should be in charge of welcoming new guests, providing information to current/ new guests, and ensuring that everything is running smoothly from beginning to end. In addition, handling complaints is time-consuming; having one person dedicated to solving problems without affecting or disrupting any tasks is more effective.
- ❖ Regular front desk duties can be effectively managed by receptionists. Guest relations should be available for pressing matters, especially complaint management, VIP treatment, upgrades.

Hotels are not chosen only for “bed and breakfast” purposes, as it was once before. Nowadays, guests want and need the whole “experience” that the hotel provides. The increasing importance given to staff and hotel facilities is the proof.

As it is possible to observe from the previous answers, guests want an excellent and personalised service, and having someone exclusively dedicated to the guest-host relationships is of paramount importance.

As guests tend to value more the experience and service provided at hotels, the trend is to have a job/position multiplication over time, with more people having more specific tasks to improve guests' stays and to have someone with expertise available for a specific problem/need with a solution, rather than having several people with general knowledge.

Although this representing a higher cost for the company, it is indeed a vital way to meet and exceed guests' expectations, to improve service consistency and to deal with guests' complaints.

On the other hand, and concerning exclusively the “no” answers for the research question, some justifications may be found below:

- ❖ All staff should exhibit these qualities.
- ❖ If you have only one person, it will take too long to respond in contrast to when there are more people.
- ❖ A receptionist can do it.
- ❖ There's no point in make simple tasks an entire career. Besides, the customer should deal with just one or two persons rather than a dozen.
- ❖ Because for this type of request we already have the reception. This will disperse the info, sometimes personal information, to all hotel staff. It looks like we are justifying the creation of a new role in hospitality, and for this, we are taking some functions from other positions already implemented and consolidated.

As previously seen in Figure 10, a minority considers not to have an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the GR function.

Having one person for a specific job/position (in this case the GR) leads to aggregation of information in that specific person, while other positions do not have the same level of knowledge and know-how. When faced with the absence or of the GR, receptionists (for instance) may not fully correspond to the guests' needs. If the GR position does not exist, all employees would be prepared and equipped with all information necessary, leading to lower costs for the company (one less person required), less time consuming for guests (any receptionist is able to help) and a more specialised staff.

Crossing the variables “How old are you” with the variable “Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function?”, it is possible to conclude that the younger the age category, the more likely it is to answer “yes” to the question. In this case, as seen in table 9, the age category more prone to answer “yes” is the 18-24 (counting with 39.8% of the total yes answers), followed by 25-34 (25.3%) and 35-44 (13.3%).

Age * Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function? Crosstabulation

			Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function?		
			No	Yes	Total
Age	18-24	Count	6	33	39
		% within Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function?	22,2%	39,8%	35,5%
	25-34	Count	6	21	27
		% within Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function?	22,2%	25,3%	24,5%
	35-44	Count	6	11	17
		% within Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function?	22,2%	13,3%	15,5%
	45-54	Count	7	11	18
		% within Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function?	25,9%	13,3%	16,4%
	55-64	Count	2	7	9
		% within Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function?			

	% within Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function?	7,4%	8,4%	8,2%
Total	Count	27	83	110
	% within Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function?	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

*Table 9 Age * Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function? Crosstabulation. Source: Own elaboration*

As can be seen in table 8, gender does not have a significant impact whether people see an advantage having someone exclusively dedicated to a GR function: 75.6% of males respondents and 75.4% of female respondents (and 75.5% of total respondents) responded “yes” to the question.

Gender * Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function? Crosstabulation

			Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function?		Total
			No	Yes	
Gender	Female	Count	17	52	69
		% within Gender	24,6%	75,4%	100,0%
	Male	Count	10	31	41
		% within Gender	24,4%	75,6%	100,0%
Total	Count		27	83	110
	% within Gender		24,5%	75,5%	100,0%

*Table 10 Gender * Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function? Crosstabulation. Source: Own elaboration*

According with table 11, the “self-employed” situation is the lowest one with positive answers to the main question, representing only 6%. On the other hand, the employee quality represents the biggest category with positive answers, counting 67.5% of the total amount.

Simply put, employees seem to be more favourable to the existence of the GR and the relationship between employment status and GR preference is statistically significant, as seen in Table 12.

What is your employment status? * Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function?

Crosstabulation

			Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function?		
			No	Yes	Total
What is your employment status?	Employee	Count	14	56	70
		% within Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function?	51,9%	67,5%	63,6%
	Employer	Count	1	8	9
		% within Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function?	3,7%	9,6%	8,2%
	Other	Count	5	14	19
		% within Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function?	18,5%	16,9%	17,3%
		Count	7	5	12

	Self-employed	% within Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function?	25,9%	6,0%	10,9%
Total	Count		27	83	110
	% within Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function?		100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 11 *Employment status * Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function? Crosstabulation. Source: Own elaboration*

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9,087 ^a	3	,028
Likelihood Ratio	8,066	3	,045
N of Valid Cases	110		

a. 3 cells (37,5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2,21.

Table 12 *Chi Square Test - Employment Status. Source: Own elaboration*

Having children seems to not have a positive or negative impact on the answer, since 77.8% of people who have children answered yes to the main question, while 69% of people who do not have children had the same answer. The connection between these two variables is not statistically significant.

Do you have children? * What advantages would you see in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function? Crosstabulation

What advantages would you see in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function?		Total
No	Yes	

Do you have children?	No	Count	18	63	81
		% within Do you have children?	22,2%	77,8%	100,0%
	Yes	Count	9	20	29
		% within Do you have children?	31,0%	69,0%	100,0%
Total	Count		27	83	110
	% within Do you have children?		24,5%	75,5%	100,0%

*Table 13 Children * Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function? Crosstabulation. Source: Own elaboration*

One would think that after answering “no” to the question “Do you feel there is a need for a “human touch” in the guest-relations at hotels, since nowadays everything is made digitally and online?” the answer to the main question would also be “no”. However, from the 18 respondents who answered “no” to the first question, 50% of them answered “yes” to the research question, which means that even though they do not feel a need for a human touch, they still want someone to rely on.

Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays? * Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function? Crosstabulation

			Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function?		Total
			No	Yes	
Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays?	No	Count	9	9	18
		% within Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays?	50,0%	50,0%	100,0%
	Yes	Count	18	74	92
		% within Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays?	19,6%	80,4%	100,0%

Total	Count	27	83	110
	% within Do you feel there is a need for a "human touch" nowadays?	24,5%	75,5%	100,0%

*Table 14 Human touch * Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function? Crosstabulation. Source: Own elaboration*

4.2 Interviews

Concerning interviews made to the multiple department heads of Douro41 Hotel, it was possible to have the same conclusion: people do see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the GR function.

Below, Table 12 sums up the characteristics of all department heads interviewed:

Position	Time in the position	Age	Gender	Schooling	Direct contact with guests?
Front Office Manager	2 years	33	Female	Master in Hotel Management	✓
Experience Manager	1 year, 10 months	33	Male	Bachelor in Marketing Management	✓
Reservations Manager	1 year	27	Female	Master in International Relations	✓
Housekeeping Manager	1 year, 9 months	31	Female	High School	X
Bar Manager	1 year	34	Male	High School	X
F&B Manager	2 months	34	Male	Bachelor in Hotel Management	X

Table 15 Head-Departments Summary. Source: Own Elaboration

When asked what the motivations of the Hotel would be when hiring someone to the GR position, the main answers were related to guests' problem solving, satisfying their needs, a

more personalized service, and to have someone with who guests and have a closer interaction and who guests' can trust needs and doubts recommendations.

Concerning the GR prerequisites in terms of education, there were two prominent opinions. One interviewee stated that there was no need for higher education, while others (5) defended higher education in the following areas: marketing, hotel management and public relations. Some previous experience in hospitality or customer service was valued.

Regarding prerequisites relating soft skills, problem-solving was the most valued. Additionally, the following characteristics were highly appreciated: well-spoken, active listener, language skills, resourceful, enthusiastic, sympathy, easily approachable, honesty, humility and above all, be true to themselves. Since it is a Front Office position, those skills were the most valued.

Concerning tasks that the GR should perform, the following tasks were mentioned by the head departments: solve guests' problems and complaints; pre-arrival contacts using all the information they can gather about their guests so that their experience at the Hotel exceeds all expectations; passing on feedback to all departments; be present at check-in and at the start of the guests' experiences; keep in touch with the guest at the Hotel. Since all interviewees were already inside the Hospitality environment, these answers were more detailed and more hospitality-focused.

Confronted with the question regarding what tasks the GR should not perform, all interviewees argued that there were no tasks that the GR should not perform. Nonetheless, the GR should not lose the focus on his/her primary responsibilities.

Respecting the question “Would you see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations function?”, in a total of 6 interviews, four answered yes, and two answered no, which demonstrates how all departments value the GR position. It is important to note that both negative answers came from department heads that do not have close contact with guests, and therefore, their opinion may lack the big picture of the Hotel.

To sum up, the closer managers work with guests, the more they value the GR position. Additionally, it is defended that the GR should be able to perform any task from their scope since their focus and goals are not put in second place.

In conclusion, the guests' and department managers' point of views are aligned. This means that both value the GR position and see it as beneficial for the hotel.

4.3 The absence of the GR

Even though the Guest Relations importance growing overtime, there are still hotels which do not have this position in its hierarchy. Many reasons may lead to this decision, such as: labour costs, labour availability and specialisation, brand/chain rules, among others.

In the case of not existing a GR, it is possible to find multiple scenarios, but the most common are when all receptionists can perform all tasks delegated to a GR or when someone is delegated with that job, assuming two positions. Normally it is someone high in the hierarchy and present in the Front Office, knowing how to deal with guests, such as Duty Manager, Front Office Manager, Reservations Manager.

Since it is not mandatory for hotels to have the GR position and being possible to solve guest's issues through other means, it is important to understand the reasons why it is beneficial for the hotel.

By having a GR the hotel will have a more personalised service, which will improve the guests' stay; at the same time, the GR will congregate knowledge to perform his/her job better and will be an expert in his/her area, which means that guests will spend less time trying to solve their issues with the GR; the GR will be able to focus on his/her tasks, rather than having to accumulate tasks from other positions (for instance, the receptionist that also performs as a GR).

5. Conclusion

This dissertation addressed the Guest Relations position and the guests' perspective on this matter by distributing an online questionnaire to Douro41 Hotel' guests and conducting online interviews with department heads. The guests' views on this matter have been neglected in the literature, and the current research seeks to contribute to fill this gap.

The results obtained in both methodologies suggest that both guests and department heads feel the need to have a Guest Relations position at the hotel and that they highly value this position.

Through the online questionnaire, it was possible to conclude that a group of respondents were more prone to see an advantage in having someone exclusively dedicated to the Guest Relations: the younger groups (18-24 and 25-34 years old); people with higher education; and lastly, females. At the same time, tasks that should or should not be performed were explored.

Using online interviews with department heads, it was clear that the closer contact that employees have with guests, the more likely it was to value and need someone in the Guest Relations function.

The aim of the GR is to guarantee the guests' satisfaction throughout their stay, fulfilling their needs. As stated by Wójcik (2017) the GR is not only limited to providing information, but also multiple tasks and duties to perform to ensure that guests are satisfied.

It was possible to complement the tasks that a GR should perform stated by Gonçalves (2013). At the same time, considering the importance given to the GR and the trust guests have towards him/her, the GR should exhibit certain soft skills, according to Marques (2018).

While the case study was rigorously conducted and validated, the results are limited by the case study sample size. Nonetheless, the findings and conclusions presented in this study should be interpreted with caution since it presents some limitations. First, the Covid-19 pandemic figured as the biggest limitation found, postponing the internship several months. Second, and because of the Covid-19 pandemic, people were more reluctant to have a personal contact and therefore the questionnaire was distributed online. Furthermore, at the time, travelling restrictions were implement across the world, which made it more difficult to get the required number of respondents to this survey.

In this way, it is interesting for future researchers to address these limitations, by collecting information from a bigger sample. And, even though challenging, instead of a case study, it is appealing to study this matter on a national or international level, by recurring to multiple hotels and hotel chains.

This study is crucial because it opens a door for further study on this matter since it may be necessary to understand better the profile of those who prefer to have a GR in the hotel, and hotels may use it according to their target segment. For instance, if a hotel target are women or younger people, (hypothetically) the more likely they are to prefer to have a GR. Therefore, the hotel might adjust its strategy according to its target customer, location and needs.

6. Appendix

Appendix A – Crosstabulation Age * Background studies

Age * Background studies Crosstabulation									
			Background studies						
			Blank	Communication/ Public Relations/ Languages/MKT	Hospitality	Management	Nothing in specific, Experience in the field	Tourism	Total
Age	18-24	Count	5	12	8	3	9	2	39
		% within Background studies	50,0%	36,4%	38,1%	37,5%	27,3%	40,0%	35,5%
	25-34	Count	3	5	10	1	7	1	27
		% within Background studies	30,0%	15,2%	47,6%	12,5%	21,2%	20,0%	24,5%
	35-44	Count	0	8	0	1	8	0	17
		% within Background studies	0,0%	24,2%	0,0%	12,5%	24,2%	0,0%	15,5%
	45-54	Count	1	6	1	2	6	2	18
		% within Background studies	10,0%	18,2%	4,8%	25,0%	18,2%	40,0%	16,4%
	55-64	Count	1	2	2	1	3	0	9
		% within Background studies	10,0%	6,1%	9,5%	12,5%	9,1%	0,0%	8,2%
Total		Count	10	33	21	8	33	5	110

% within Background studies	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
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Appendix B – Crosstabulation Gender * Background studies

Gender * Background studies Crosstabulation									
		Background studies							Total
		Blank	Communicati on/Public Relations/ Languages/M KT	Hospitality	Management	Nothing in specific, Experience in the field	Tourism		
Gender	Female	Count	7	23	13	4	19	3	69
		% within Background studies	70,0%	69,7%	61,9%	50,0%	57,6%	60,0%	62,7%
	Male	Count	3	10	8	4	14	2	41
		% within Background studies	30,0%	30,3%	38,1%	50,0%	42,4%	40,0%	37,3%
Total		Count	10	33	21	8	33	5	110
		% within Background studies	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Appendix C – Crosstabulation Employment Status * Background studies

Employment Status * Background studies Crosstabulation									
		Background studies							Total
		Blank	Communication/ Public Relations/Lang uages/MKT	Hospitalit y	Manageme nt	Nothing in specific, Experience in the field	Touris m		
Employee nt Status	Employee	Count	5	19	16	5	20	5	70
		% within Background studies	50,0%	57,6%	76,2%	62,5%	60,6%	100,0%	63,6%
	Employer	Count	2	4	0	1	2	0	9
		% within Background studies	20,0%	12,1%	0,0%	12,5%	6,1%	0,0%	8,2%
	Other	Count	2	7	4	1	5	0	19
		% within Background studies	20,0%	21,2%	19,0%	12,5%	15,2%	0,0%	17,3%
	Self- employed	Count	1	3	1	1	6	0	12
		% within Background studies	10,0%	9,1%	4,8%	12,5%	18,2%	0,0%	10,9%
Total		Count	10	33	21	8	33	5	110

% within Background studies	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
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Appendix D – Crosstabulation Children * Background studies

			Children * Background studies Crosstabulation						
			Background studies						
			Blank	Communication/P ublic Relations/Languag es/MKT	Hospitalit y	Manageme nt	Nothing in specific, Experience in the field	Tourism	Total
Children	No	Count	9	25	17	6	21	3	81
		% within Background studies	90,0%	75,8%	81,0%	75,0%	63,6%	60,0%	73,6%
	Yes	Count	1	8	4	2	12	2	29
		% within Background studies	10,0%	24,2%	19,0%	25,0%	36,4%	40,0%	26,4%
Total	Count		10	33	21	8	33	5	110
	% within Background studies		100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Appendix E – Crosstabulation Education Level * Background studies

Education Level * Background studies Crosstabulation

			Background studies						Total
			Blank	Communication/ Public Relations/ Languages/ MKT	Hospitality	Management	Nothing in specific, Experience in the field	Tourism	
Education Level	Bachelor's or equivalent	Count	6	14	9	4	16	2	51
		% within Background studies	60,0%	42,4%	42,9%	50,0%	48,5%	40,0%	46,4%
	Doctoral or equivalent	Count	0	4	2	0	2	0	8
		% within Background studies	0,0%	12,1%	9,5%	0,0%	6,1%	0,0%	7,3%
	Master's or equivalent	Count	4	13	5	2	7	2	33
		% within Background studies	40,0%	39,4%	23,8%	25,0%	21,2%	40,0%	30,0%
	Secondary Education/High School	Count	0	2	5	2	8	1	18
		% within Background studies	0,0%	6,1%	23,8%	25,0%	24,2%	20,0%	16,4%
	Total	Count	10	33	21	8	33	5	110
		% within Background studies	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

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Annexes

Annex A: Extracted Variables

Variable	Category
Age	18-24
	25-34
	35-44
	45-54
	55-64
	65-74
	75 and over
Nationality	List of 257 countries
Gender	Female
	Male
	Prefer not to say
Employment Status	Employee
	Employer
	Self-employed
	Other
Children	Yes
	No
Level of Education	Secondary Education/High School
	Bachelor's or equivalent
	Master's or equivalent
	Doctoral or equivalent
	Other
Work Field	Short text answer
"Human touch" need	Yes
	No

Characteristics/Soft Skills	Long text answer
How important is to you that a Guest Relations...	Five-points Likert
Background/Studies	Long text answer
Advantage	Yes No
Why	Long text answer

Annex B: Interviewing Method

		Age	
Gender		Education (Level/Field)	
Nationality			
Position		Time in that position	

1. In your opinion, what would be the motivations of a Hotel when hiring a Guest Relations?
2. In your opinion, what would be the goals of a Guest Relations in a Hotel?
3. What would be his/her prerequisites?
 - 3.1. In terms of education?
 - 3.2. In terms of soft skills?
4. Would you see an advantage of hiring someone exclusively for a Guest Relations position?
 - 4.1. Why?
5. What tasks should they perform?
6. What tasks should not they perform?

Annex C: Consent Form

This questionnaire makes part of an investigation for the master's Dissertation, within the scope of the Master's in Management at the Faculty of Economics of the University of Porto (FEP), with the major goal of understanding guests' opinion regarding the Guest Relation position and its environment.

The survey's target population is all guests from Douro41 Hotel, from April to July 2021.

The data collected is for scientific purposes only, therefore all the information collected will be confidential and analysed in its aggregate. Thus, we ask that you answer the questions with the utmost sincerity, as there are no right or wrong answers, nor does it cause any harm to the respondent in case of withdrawal. The answer to the questionnaire takes 5 to 10 minutes.

☐

I have read and agree to the informed consent.