



**HOTELSCHOOL
THE HAGUE**

Hospitality Business School

Hospitality Research Centre

HTH Working Paper Series, March 2022

HTH Working Paper Series, March 2022
ISSN Number:

Address:
Hotelschool The Hague
The Hague Campus
Brusselselaan 2
2587 AH Den Haag
Netherlands

Hotelschool The Hague
Amsterdam Campus
Jan Evertsenstraat 171
1057 BW Amsterdam
Netherlands



**HOTELSCHOOL
THE HAGUE**

Hospitality Business School

***Hospitality competencies facilitating diplomatic relationship
building***

Date: March 2022
Author: Sebastian Imrecke | Student, Hotelschool The Hague
Version: HTH Working Paper Series, March 2022

ABSTRACT

Embassies and governmental bodies are focused on representing their countries' foreign agenda, whether peace within a country or upholding alliances and bilateral agreements. Therefore, this research explores these factors through exploratory research on embassies and how hospitality competencies are perceived. Grounded on those findings, three propositions have been formulated, assisting the understanding of the conceptual framework. First how can Hospitality experience can facilitate relationship building? What role does emotional intelligence can facilitate relationship building? Can trust can facilitate relationship building? The described methodology tested the three formulated propositions in line with the explorative research. The nature of this study allowed a qualitative research approach, enabling a precise understanding and accurate analysis through the expressed thoughts, experiences, opinions, and emotions, resulting in governmental representatives embracing hospitality competencies and allowing for in-depth development towards the building of skills and competencies to execute contemporary diplomacy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>INTRODUCTION</i>	6
<i>LITERATURE REVIEW</i>	8
Diplomatic relations	8
Government Representatives	9
Hospitality Competencies	11
<i>METHODOLOGY</i>	13
<i>FINDINGS</i>	16
<i>CONCLUSION</i>	21
<i>DISCUSSION</i>	22
Limitations	28
Recommendations	29
<i>REFERENCES</i>	31

INTRODUCTION

Responding to terroristic threats, trade agreements, civil unrest, international treaties, pandemics, and many other world disputes are the daily contact point for governmental representatives. International treaties, alliances, and agreements often originate from long-term diplomatic negotiations between states and non-states. Such resolutions originated from international conferences such as the Vienna Congress in 1815, which shaped the European Union's political map (E.U.) (Small & Singer, 1973). Furthermore, the congress of Berlin in 1878 led European powers to meet with Ottoman Empires leading politicians to reorganize conditions in the Balkan. A centerpiece and truly the defiance of diplomatic relations was the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961, which laid out the framework of prevailing diplomatic relationships between countries (Small & Singer, 1973). As a result, it states diplomatic missions and privileges and is considered the foundation of modern international diplomatic relations.

Foreign policy is irreplaceable due to the standing of actions and governments' understanding (Fitzpatrick, 2007). They showcase the importance of meditating and conveying contemporary issues such as modern diplomacy. Recent reform efforts indicate that governments have acknowledged that change with diplomatic activity is needed. For instance, Germany comprehended a reanalysis, shifting towards an exchange between EU-membered foreign ministries and non-state entities (Gaskarth & Oppermann, 2019). They are known as network diplomacy. However, China evaluates its approach toward the modern nature of diplomacy and the emergence of its significance. Building relationships with foreign governments and primarily non-state entities is the contemporary shift forward (Fitzpatrick, 2007). Relationships have been an integral part of humanity; exchanging thoughts and building new ties is seen as a regular part of humanity (Heffernan, 2004).

Building relationships is often initiated by one person reaching out to another and engaging with another. The act of building a relationship is built on soft skills, especially interpersonal skills. An industry that is built on such values is the hospitality industry. Hospitality workers are seen to use their soft skills daily; they use them to build a relationship with guests due to the lack of research on hospitality competencies within the diplomatic setting and its role in relationship building. It Bases the justification of researching how embassies perceive hospitality competencies on how they build relationships with international businesses and other governmental representatives.

The research aimed to study how embassies perceive hospitality competencies in building relationships with international businesses and governmental representatives. Founded on the results, a recommendation was constructed for relationship building based on hospitality competencies within diplomacy. Founded on the literature review, the proposition was formulated that hospitality competencies influence how embassies build relationships with international businesses and other governmental representatives. Furthermore, an assumption is that the desired result influences hospitality in diplomacy.

On that basis, three concepts have been derived: Hospitality competence, diplomatic relations, and government representative. Thus, formulating the research question and allowing for further literature exploration. A conceptual model has been comprised of the dependency amid diplomatic relations and government representatives, leaving diplomatic relations as the dependent variable and governmental representatives as the independent variable (Fig.1). Hospitality competencies are seen as the mediator between the two variables (Tsang, 2015).

Grounded on the presented information, the following research question is proposed: **How do embassies perceive hospitality competencies in building relationships with international businesses and governmental representatives?**

LITERATURE REVIEW

Diplomatic relations

Diplomatic relations represent one's country's interest while negotiating foreign policy towards other states or non-states; one can compare such understanding to two salespersons wanting to sell to each other. This analogy makes it easier to understand how diplomatic relationships can be seen. Crosby (Crosby et al., 1990) investigated relationship quality in the sales context. With this, the customer's relationship quality was defined, leading to an environment where the customer could rely on the integrity and is confident about future encounters and consistently good past encounters. Thus, translated to diplomatic situations, quality relationships are built on trust time after time and therefore build towards a lasting bond. Establishing that communication and trust are fundamental to building quality or a good relationship, it is also essential to consider the value in the relationship between increasing the benefits or decreasing sacrifices. Mohr and Spekman (1994) argue that any successful relationship's primary characteristics are trust, commitment, coordination, communication quality, participation, and conflict resolution by joint problem-solving based on empirical data. Their research focuses on the outline and defines the purposive relationship between two or more parties that share the same strategic goal. Contradicting more values and ethos-based approach is the theory (R M Emerson, 1976), the social exchange theory needs to be considered.

Not all relationships are purely based on values, trust, and emphasis on resources, power, and dependence. They are posing the exchange framework towards one's good, justified by emphasizing the type and amount of the resources traded. Defining a relationship's value is reduced to an economic form and seen as purely platonic without more profound meaning. Network science theory is equivalent to the mentioned theories, which must be analyzed. The homophily theory enjoying a renaissance is due to electorate Americans' polarisation into equal camps (McPherson et al., 2001). It describes individuals who seek out similar individuals to

gather and form relationships with one another. This raises the hypothesis of does homophily have a place in modern diplomacy. One can argue that state and non-state show some homophily approach to their business attempt. Looking at various nations and their foreign policy approaches, it is plausible that they act on homophily terms and negotiate favorable terms for each other.

Government Representatives

To understand government representatives, one needs to understand where the word derives from. A government representative is a person that upholds the current representative government's interest (Pitkin, 1972). In a country that constitutes a democratic electoral system, citizens vote to elect a representative for their concerns and interest, choosing to debate and formulate laws on behalf of their community society (Beetham, 1994). A non-democratic system is chosen for society without any say (Wintrobe, 1990). However, it still stands that regardless of which political system a government representative associates itself with, the interest of upholding the governmental interest is her or his highest priority (Pitkin, 1972). Traditional representation adheres to and with state representatives, multilateral, supranational, non-governmental organizations, and international businesses (Ruel, 2013b; Melissen, 2005; Mogensen, 2017). Representation of a government outwards is mainly done via diplomacy. Cornago (2008) defines diplomacy as "the art of persuasion conducted within international relations, done by dialogue and negotiation or any other non-violent action (p. 574)". Over time various distinctive categories of representation have been identified, such as public diplomacy, implying the preservation of collaboration of relationships with host countries (Snow, 2009; Bergmann, 2018).

Furthermore, it can be subdivided into economic, commercial, business, and recently established Gastro diplomacy. Economic diplomacy aims to create effective policies and trade agreements (Ruel, 2013a). Commercial diplomacy refers to the governmental interventions that support businesses and entrepreneurs throughout international endeavors (Ruel, 2013a). Business diplomacy denotes legitimizing industry within another country (Constantinou, 2016). Gastro or Culinary diplomacy is a progressively popular form of public diplomacy where the cuisine is used to communicate the culture (Sikorski, 2018; Nguyn, 2015). It uses the uniqueness of a country's cuisine as a tactic to enable nation branding (Defranco, 2019). The Former United States Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton, called the "use of food the oldest diplomatic tool" (Clinton, 2012). Public diplomacy engages with public entities and has become imperative for collaborative transnationals in times of globalization (Melissen, 2005). To allow the realization of national economic interest, the engagement of businesses, governments, and organizational stakeholders must be there (Mogensen, 2017).

With geographic shifts and globalization, diplomacy has changed from a state-centered field to integrative diplomacy (Jones & Clark, 2017). It necessitates training diplomats to engage with diverse stakeholders (Saner & Yiu, 2006; Lindstrom, 2002). To adhere to the ever-shifting demand, diplomats must achieve a successful mission (Lindstrom, 2002; Small & Singer, 1973). Diplomatic soft power, combined with strong cognitive skills, can result in trust and economic significance (Mogensen, 2017). Cognitive skills such as analytical and problem-solving thinking combined with interpersonal skills, strong values, tolerance, and multicultural aptitudes will significantly increase the positive outcome of a successful assignment (Svetličič, 2014; Lindstrom, 2002).

Furthermore, sharp emotional intelligence, resilience, leadership, integrity, initiative, entrepreneurship, team focus, and a systematic and holistic thought process are respected within the municipal sector (Lindstrom, 2002). Besides, diplomats must have the ability to adapt and learn quickly, especially in hyper-dynamic environments (Saner & Yiu, 2006;

Svetličič, 2014). New diplomatic competencies have distanced themselves from being purely academic and have shifted toward managerial and application-based, focusing on soft skills rather than solely academic (Lindstrom, 2002). It is, therefore, integral for the research to investigate which aspects are decisive in building relationships.

Hospitality Competencies

The term hospitality is difficult to comprehend due to its subjective understanding (Lynch et al., 2011, p.10). Holistically defined, the term hospitality is constructed of a social, economic, and private side (Lynch et al., 2011); therefore, it is also subject to anthropology¹ (Lashley and Morrison, 2001). Hospitality is associated with the notion of being welcoming toward strangers, friends, and family. Thus, triggering the association between being kind and being hospitable (Lynch, 2017). The Experience of Hospitality Scale suggests five dimensions of experiential hospitality: welcoming, putting at ease, signs of empathy, servitude, acknowledgment, and individually balancing on each other's attributes (Pijls et al., 2017). Hospitality or hospitableness focuses on the action of being hospitable and, therefore, also the reception of hospitality. The term experience of hospitality has established itself over the last decade. This term states physical service, such as the facility and the staff's experience. However, one needs to differentiate between hospitality and hospitality experience, referring to an experience in a hospitality enterprise such as a restaurant, bar, or hotel (Hemmington, 2007, pp.13–15). Each guest may respond differently based on their needs (Lynch et al., 2011). Furthermore, it will also vary depending on the type of service given.

This leads to proposition 1: **hospitality experience facilitates relationship building.**

A recent research study analyzed 44 essential skills and competencies that future hospitality leaders need and categorized them into six main categories (Suh et al., 2012). These categories are hospitality, interpersonal, communication, managerial, and food and beverage management

¹ Anthropology – defined as the science of human behavior

(Suh et al., 2012). Significant emphasis was also placed on showing listening skills and being culturally aware. Another study suggests that 99 competencies can be categorized into seven headers, self-management, implementation, strategic positioning, critical thinking, communication, interpersonal, and leadership (Chung-Herrera et al., 2003). A further study was done on hospitality leaders. It also specifies the economic-financial, marketing management, and marketing analysis aspects and emphasizes people and team-work-orientated management behaviors, focusing on being customer-orientated (Pickering, 2017).

Another study identified that future hospitality leaders show leadership, listening, integrity, and ambition toward their team and customers (Brownell, 2011). It can be said that many of these competencies relate to interpersonal skills, which are essential for hospitality leaders in a people-orientated sector (Suh et al., 2012). Subsequently, it shall be defined that hospitality-related competencies are for one hospitality knowledge and a human resources skill (Agut et al., 2003). Recent publications on emotional intelligence embrace the abovementioned competencies and allow categorizing under one heading. The term is primarily used in corporate culture rather than hospitality or diplomacy; one can argue that such competence should be focused on in these fields. Most of the corporate world has welcomed corporate collaboration; it is desired or necessary in today's interconnected and interwoven world. Leaders that have applied mindfulness and emotional intelligence training have brought more profit and achieved more societal good (Verma et al., 2017).

Therefore, proposition two states; **emotional intelligence facilitates relationship building.**

The term trust has presented itself multiple times. Trust has proven to be crucial in building relationships and improving communication and cooperation (Solomon & Flores, 2003). Trust as competence is not a trait, but more action is given to someone, providing a sense of security. Besides, it can also help to take risks in a complex environment; without practice and understanding comes no result (Nicholson, 2001). As stated, trust is seen as an action, but in particular, it is a commitment that is made and honored. Referring to trust as a hospitality trait

is seen as building relations with a guest. Guests have the confidence to honor their privacy or trust that specific commitments are made and build a relationship through caring and commitment (Solomon & Flores, 2003). Resulting in proposition 3, **that trust can facilitate relationship building.**

METHODOLOGY

Explorative qualitative research was applied to understand better how embassies perceive hospitality and answer the formulated propositions. Due to the uniqueness and limited insight into this research field, it is considered the most appropriate approach. For this particular research, to understand the perception of embassies have towards hospitality competencies, a non-probability sampling method of field experts in diplomacy and hospitality, such as diplomats, educators of diplomats, and current hospitality experts, were interviewed (Brotherton, 2015). A self-selection sampling method was applied, as chosen field experts with insight are limited. It shall be noted that selective sampling was applied in this exploratory research (Saunders et 2016). The uniqueness of the field sample of 8 interviews shall be sufficient due to the group being homogenous (Saunders & Townsend, 2016). The sample list (Table 1) showcases the interview order. The names have been anonymous; if desired, all interviews are available and traceable.

Due to the pandemic of COVID-19, all interviews were held online via Zoom. Six of the eight were based in The Hague, working at their embassies. The remaining are deployed in Berlin, Germany. Five out of the eight were actively in the role of an Ambassador. One had just completed the academy for diplomats and was about to go on their first deployment. Another was the head of protocol for their representing embassy. Lastly, a parliament member who once was an ambassador is now only representing the foreign ministry for their country, referred to as a diplomat.

Diplomat	Nationality	Gender
----------	-------------	--------

Table 1 Interview diplomat A literature review interviews were investigate deeper	1	German	F	overview of and semi-structured conducted to into the topic. Using
	2	German	M	
	3	German	M	
	4	German	F	
	5	Austrian	F	
	6	French	M	
	7	United Arab Emirates	F	
	8	Greece	M	

a semi-structured interview in primary data collection allows for gathering more in-depth responses than a statistical approach. The interviews were prepared with open questions to enable greater clarity with the findings (refer to Appendix A.1). Throughout the interview, it was made sure that the respondent had enough time to answer the question; on most occasions, follow-up questions were asked to understand the given answer better. Closed questions were asked to confirm the given information, giving a definitive answer to said questions. Before the scheduled interview, all participants received a standardized email. The email entailed the reason for the research, the interview topic, some sample questions, furthermore the possible outcomes of the research, i.e., diplomatic training or academic publication on said topic. All emails included a confidentiality statement, and all interviewees consented to the interview by replying with the signed statement. Interviews were held in English and German and at the convenience of the diplomat's schedule. As stated before, all interviews were held online via Zoom. The duration of the interviews averaged between 30 to 60 minutes. For transcription purposes, all interviews were recorded; these can be found in Appendix A.2.

Data analysis

It is often seen that researchers are unfamiliar with traditional data analysis approaches found in qualitative data. The lack of knowledge makes it challenging to execute the right approach (Thomas, 2006). Therefore, based on the transcription of the eight interviews and the analysis of the interviewees' cognitive thought, brought forward the most appropriate analytical approach follows Hsieh and Shannon (2005), who differentiates between three data analysis

approaches, reflecting on the desired outcome: directed analysis, conventional analysis, and summative data analysis. Due to the nature of this research wanting to validate existing conceptual frameworks' theoretical theories and understand certain words contextually (summative), or describe a phenomenon (conventional), the approach of directed was chosen to be the best fitting analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The directed analysis approach is frequently used when approaching the analysis deductively. Thus, considering existing theory when formulating research questions and constructing a construct organizes data (Saunders et al., 2016). Applying a deductive approach brings the advantage of an initial analytical frame to which the researcher can extend and apply existing knowledge. However, it also presents the limitation of potentially being over-structured and allowing for preconceptions, which allow for irrelevant themes that do not match the preconceptions. Thus, resulting in a potential limitation of findings and biased conclusions that omit the results (Saunders et al., 2016).

Hsieh and Shannon (2005) proposed a strategy to highlight references in the research's general sphere. Subsequently, repeat this with the predetermined categories. These color-coding categories originated from the concluded literature review (Table 2). With the assistance of the analyzing tool Atlas.ti, it was easy to find common patterns and review responses, identifying themes and patterns based on frequency. Please refer to Appendix A.3 for the coded interviews.

Theory	Category
Diplomatic Relations	Characteristics
	Quality / Value
	Success Factors
Hospitality Competencies	Definition
	Competencies
	Goal
Government Representatives	Role
	Future
	Expectations

Table 2 Overview of color coding categories within Atlas.ti

FINDINGS

As stated before, the data was analyzed through thematic analysis and allowed to state the following findings. The interviews' findings supported the three propositions; it can already be stated that not all had the same impact. Furthermore, the interviews presented new factors previously considered, therefore, have neither been explained nor concluded. The resulting findings are underpinned by the most relevant statements made by the interviewees. All transcribed interviews can be found in Appendix A.2

P1: hospitality experience can facilitate relationship building

The typical response was that all interviewees see hospitality experience as a "relevant" topic regarding building relationships. However, it became evident that multiple themes were derived from one question. An overlying theme was the representation, and diplomats stated that the "residence" of the ambassador is the actual venue of an event. "Showing flag" became apparent when hosting an event. One diplomat said that "people come to the event and expect to experience something from that country" another strengthened that and stated that guests expect to be "wined and dined" with "products from that country ."Using "food diplomacy" as an experiential tool to facilitate relationship building was knowingly seen as a facilitator by four out of the eight interviewees. The remaining four only became apparent of this active term when questioned about it. They stated that "this is something that one gets taught at the diplomatic academy" and "is something present but not emphasized on, and it is just there ."When asked if this should be emphasized, diplomats stated, "it is something that needs to be taken into consideration and not only seen as an act of protocol but more moved into relevance." One diplomat defined it that "it is definitely noticeable if an embassy decides not to offer service during a reception, there is just something off," meaning "it does not happen often, but if it does, an event is dull, and people do not feel as relaxed as they would when they have something in their hand, like a glass ."The offering of domestic culinary specialties is also a starting point for a conversation. It can be said that acting upon protocol is necessary; it is seen

to "set the framework" on what type of experience is offered. This framework helps to "avoid diplomatic, political and cultural mishaps"; therefore, it is seen to "get the hospitality right" and allow for the opportunity to "communicate" and "exchange thought" with other diplomats, governmental representatives, or businesspeople. Likewise, "clearly envisioning the desired outcome helped identify the type of the event that should be held." This was underpinned by "keeping in line with the standardized protocol framework," i.e., a sit-down dinner, flying finger food reception, or just a drinks reception. It became evident that all diplomats had a similar overall approach toward that framework of hospitality-related interactions.

This hospitality approach was constructed from three layers; the outer layer focuses on hospitable action. This entails the selection of guests and the invitations, and the decision of protocol. The second layer is the atmosphere layer, where one creates a "welcoming" and at ease atmosphere. The third and most complex layer is where the experiences are personalized and built upon the individual guest. Two diplomats even emphasized personalizing experiences, cataloging specific guests' details and reviewing them by the next invite. Picking up on "likes and personal details that one can bring into conversation the next time one meets." Ultimately, all diplomats appreciated emphasizing the hospitality experience for their guests. It became clear that they took pride and wanted to be a part of the primary decision processes. For some, it was clear that "this role falls mostly towards the partner" in overlooking decisions to the hospitality experience of that event. Regardless of who is the final decision maker, it became eminent that all showcased a particular responsibility towards "making guests feel welcomed." Furthermore, it became clear that all diplomats see hospitality as a "proactive tool that brings people together (..) not only physically but also to your culture and ultimately to your representing country". Consequently, all diplomats see the representation and upholding of their country as a priority, done in the best form of protocol and always focusing on the bilateral or multilateral relationship.

P2: emotional intelligence facilitates relationship building

It has been established that relating to and understanding people is critical in building relationships with others. "Understanding where people are coming from" is fundamental to day-to-day diplomacy, one diplomat stated. Upon further questioning why this is fundamental, it was stated that "only if you get where a person is coming from and have the emotional capacity can you adapt to the situation and usually accomplish a lot more ."Referring to the accomplishment of business but also relational. "The ability to understand a person leads to the understanding of the emotions"; however, "diplomats are trained to often leave emotion out of the decision process ."Only rational decisions can be made if a founded relationship has been established and knowing all specifics. Six of the eight diplomats confirmed that statement, giving examples where they only achieved a result through understanding their negotiation partner.

Furthermore, it became evident that diplomats already in the position for a long time found it easier to engage with various people and obtain quicker results. What fascinated me was the remark of one senior diplomat stating that "modern-day diplomacy only has marginally to do with the diplomacy from 15 years ago (...) today a lot of it is result based and quicker". "That change from club to network diplomacy" is a strong statement showcasing where diplomacy will go in the future. Upon request on defining the difference, club diplomacy is "practiced among a few, mostly governmental officials (..) largely in written form and behind closed doors".

A Network "entails a much larger number of players, NGOs, political parties, trade unions, etc. and is often practiced in public (..); it not only appeals to get written agreements done as club diplomacy (..) objecting to increasing trade, tourism". This type of diplomatic shift was supported by two diplomats affirming "the future of networking and therefore quickly understanding who is opposite you" instead of "only remaining amongst known officials." Junior diplomats especially backed the move towards a more public form of diplomacy. "We will be hosting more events (..) allowing for a greater network exchange and hopefully resulting

in more business for the individual". Understanding and recognizing what your opponent would like to achieve are critical. An example given by one diplomat was the invitation made towards smaller countries from one region that would often hard, if not at all, interact with a major country; however, the understanding of this led to countries' openness towards business. This resulted in an exchange of companies that have moved their business to that country. The diplomat stated, "this type of diplomacy came from understanding and being open to facilitate .". The diplomat stated that the countries were surprised that a major country was interested in facilitating such a meeting, "it was my understanding and seeing the long-term potential, which led me to this discussion."

The unprecedented shift caused by the outbreak of COVID-19 led to a halt in how we interact with civilians, especially in foreign relations. One diplomat raises the concern of "guessing what the person on the screen is feeling"—raising the point of no longer physically seeing the emotional reaction and non-verbal features of a physical conversation. This type of concern was brought up by multiple diplomats, summarising that "there is only so much you can depict from a video call .". The thing is, our job still needs to be upheld regardless of the situation (..) I am concerned that negotiations and coming to a common ground will be stretched due to the inability to see and understand them physically". One example given was by a diplomat negotiating new terms; however, as the other term ended, he was forced to move onward to a new country. The diplomat was left with being introduced to the new diplomat; however, due to COVID-19 restrictions, they only could meet via video conferencing. The diplomat was "frustrated" as "you cannot just meet in person and discuss; it is like talking to a wall that hears, sees, and responds to you, but it is just cold .". The worst part is that I think he will have many problems as he is new and cannot meet (..) at receptions, dinner or other". Overall, this concern was made by seven out of the eight diplomats.

P3: trust can facilitate relationship building

Trust was overly emphasized throughout all diplomats. "In our line of business, almost everything is built on trust (..) it starts at the academy" and follows them through "all aspects of our career ."The competence trust was by far the most reoccurring aspect throughout all responses. A diplomat gave an interesting standpoint on trust and how it builds relationships. "The trust to represent our country is already given to us (..) we try to give it back by our commitment towards our job (..) trust is also built over time, especially when one has been working in the field for longer".

Trust is also a base derived from emotional intelligence, "if I understand someone and they me, then we can build upon this ."Referring to the building of trust is based on understanding where someone is coming from as well as based on the same interest. "Trust is something that needs to be worked on constantly" this statement refers to the diplomats needing to work in their relationships constantly. This can be seen either individually or from a nation's perspective. "With some colleagues, we had to meet two, three times before we even got to the business part," referring to first building up trust with one another, and only once this was established could they proceed to the business aspect. Another diplomat mentioned that when a delegation traveled to Asia, where they had planned only three days, they extended their stay to a whole week. This was due to them only having the "ice broken" on day three.

Trust is nothing tangible, it is a feeling (..) either you have it, or you do not" was referred to by a diplomat who made it clear that it all relates to your relationship and how you feel towards your counter partner. Arguably, at this current time, meetings are held predominately via video conference. The diplomat also stated, " At first, you need to earn it; that means you need to be the first to allow for trust to happen ."Reflecting on the integrity of a person builds trust. Overall, all diplomats see trust as an integral part of building relationships and a crucial part of their job. "Integrity leads to trust, and trust leads to building bilateral and multilateral relations."

CONCLUSION

Substantiated from the findings, it can be said that integrating all three aspects, hospitality experience, emotional intelligence, and trust, builds a solid and foundational relationship. It shall be highlighted that building a relationship is built on emotional intelligence and understanding the person you are trying to build the said relationship. To understand why hospitality competencies are essential to building relationships, one needs to understand how embassies perceive hospitality experiences and what factors influence such perceptions.

The initial hospitality experience was essential to building a relationship due to its importance to everyone's personal needs. Food diplomacy and the attached hospitality experience were seen as ordinary acts of the protocol. It was also represented by showcasing the country's products and culinary offerings. For instance, the beverages and dishes are known to that country; some diplomats even went to having single dishes representing their local culinary standing. These offerings were seen as a representation and a differentiated conversation point, leading away from maybe the more formidable discussion points of the day. These more personal and intimate opportunities are the short touching points that lead to the subconscious build of the emotional relationship, i.e., getting to know the person.

The overall hospitality experience should encourage the ongoing diplomatic mission and thus is seen as a tool to leverage and assist a build-in relationship and result in a successful mission. The building of relationships with hospitality experiences is underlined with the building of an emotional relationship. Although, many diplomats responded that when undergoing training, they were taught to mitigate their emotions during negotiations. However, the majority stated the opposite; showing a cognitive understanding allows for more significant results. The allowance to understand where someone is coming from and their desired needs have proven essential to building and sustaining a relationship. Having this cognitive-emotional understanding allows you to approach the person's needs and wants and demonstrate an empathetic approach toward your counter partner.

Furthermore, it became evident that the display of emotional intelligence was also seen as a calculated response; the understanding of how to build a relationship led to the desired result, that being either multilateral or bilateral, resulting in unanimously agreeing that emotional intelligence is seen as a solid competence to have. It became apparent that the underlying factor of building a healthy relationship, especially regarding diplomacy, is building trust. It has been established that trust is something that is not tangible. It is a subconscious feeling, establishing that your counter partner is comfortable initiating a relationship with you and relying on you to prove this over time.

This is proven over time and needs time to develop and evolve into a strong bond. Furthermore, a strong level of trust will develop new opportunities and facilitate new bilateral and multilateral understandings. The conclusive result from the findings is that embassies perceive hospitality competencies as an underlying facilitator towards building a founded relationship. Embassies need to establish the initial step toward building bilateral and multilateral relations. The diplomat's job is to initiate and execute this order; the process of doing so that will deliver that result is often left to the own preference. The conclusion can be made that without the emotional intelligence that builds trust with hospitality understanding the initial building of a relationship is immensely difficult.

DISCUSSION

This research intends to explore how embassies perceive hospitality competencies and how relationships are built with international businesses and governmental representatives. The paper focuses on hospitality competencies and their role in diplomatic relationship-building; however, the theory and results can be generalizable. The audience is in no need to be of a specific diplomatic representation as it can focus on being hospitable and interacting with others. The discussion aims to reflect and analyze, allowing the information to evolve into wisdom and knowledge (Wallace, 2021). By interviewing industry experts, the variables and

the proposed propositions resulted in a positive correlation, meaning that diplomats' optimistic viewpoint correlates with hospitality competencies building relationships.

Foreign policy is irreplicable and is built among trust and relationships. The simple act of just building a relationship is simpler said than done. In line with the formulated research question and the made proposition, the research development showed that all variables are very much interlinked. Building a relationship is a competence formed from a human being's inner value. Either the person showcases emotional intelligence and outgoingness, or it is not present.

In most cases, the result showed that it is very present in the scope of diplomats. Diplomats are people who need human interaction as this is their source of information. In most cases, their interaction with others leads to information insights that otherwise might not have been possible. The act of relationship building is built on many competencies, as it shows. However, the identified correlations between emotional intelligence with building trust were the two focus points. It can be said that the competence of having integrity when engaging with people leads to the build-up of trust. It became evident that having integrity leads to building trust. This was a key finding for me during the research phase. The research can be linked to one's engagement and relationship etiquette. One does not immediately trust a stranger; only over time will the understanding of a person's values (integrity) resonate with building a relationship. This very much so reflected the statements made by the diplomats.

As stated before, understanding a person is critical in building trust and resulting in a solid and foundational relationship. My understanding of this research was that trust from all hospitality competencies overshadowed the power of building a relationship. However, the competence to show emotional intelligence must be on the same level as trust. Seeing the results, I would interpret that one needs to show emotional intelligence before trust is even built. This is the first step towards building trust and moving to a relationship. It is significant to compare the findings with the research literature from the literature review. Fitzpatrick (2007) argues that

foreign policy is irreplaceable due to the understanding and mediating between governments and other entities.

Additionally, concerning what Heffernan (2004) stated, relationships have been an integral aspect of humanity and the building of new ties. All are confirmed with single statements by the diplomats interviewed; as stated before, the research aims to determine how embassies perceive hospitality competencies in building relationships. The results showcase that hospitality competencies assist in relationship building; however, it became evident that the emotional relation and the building of that are to be established. They are reiterating the theories on diplomatic relationship building, where it had been established by Mohr and Spekman (1994) that the primary characteristics of a diplomatic relationship are built upon commitment, trust, and communication. The stated Exchange theory of Emerson (1976), where not all relationships are built on trust communication but emphasize the exchange of resources, power and dependence. Likewise, the Homophily theory asserts that liked-minded individuals seek out each other and build relationships. It was also stated that this fell under the umbrella theory of networking theory, whereby all theories are mentioned due to their affiliation with relationship building within a diplomatic environment. The results showcased that modern diplomacy is a combination of all stated theories. The initial introduction phase could be derived from Mohr and Spekman (1994) combined with the Exchange theory. Diplomats stated that meeting the person one wants to establish a relationship with needs to see a compassionate or humane side, which allows for the first step of building trust. A surprising result was that diplomats, in most cases, do this out of their persona and are not commanded by the foreign office. One diplomat's statement, where some states would not have met if the diplomat did not initiate the meeting, is along with the Exchange theory. This showcases that it is crucial to weigh off what is needed to be accomplished as a diplomat, and based on that; the following steps need to be taken.

The exchange theory is seen as a more individualistic approach toward relationship building, which also needs to be taken into consideration by a diplomat. However, the exciting aspect that developed from the results is that the diplomats from more prominent and influential countries were seen as countries that needed to interact more with smaller countries and invite them to events and keep relationships strong. Diplomats from smaller countries felt they directed their attention to relationships that would benefit them the most. This concludes that larger and powerful countries need to establish a level playing field and not act as oppressors and think about themselves, leading to a distancing and diminishing relationship with smaller and less powerful countries. McPherson's (2001) notion with his Homophily theory is that individuals tend to seek interaction with like-minded or similar people. For this research, the notion was altered towards states and non-states rather than individuals. This theory proves not to be as relevant as initially anticipated. Diplomats were unaware of this term and often could not affiliate with it. However, the relationship states build towards non-states to expand business attempts can only be seen on a local scale, local projects supported.

Diplomats see themselves more as mediators rather than seeking non-state business partners. Such undergoing's are done by the local representation from the House of Commerce, and the foreign office or the government dictates more extensive projects. In line with the research into diplomatic relations, the researcher also saw a close representation of governmental representatives' descriptions. The central stated literature explains how their government instructs governmental representatives to execute its objectives and outcomes. The results show that this is only, to some extent, true. As stated before, diplomats and local embassies aim to gain information overall. Dictated by the government, however, the way this information is obtained is often left to the representative. The diplomats explained that they have the local knowledge and on-site experience to gain such information effectively and efficiently. Again, this is done by building local relationships with other state and non-state officials. Following

the literature of Jones and Clark (2017), diplomacy has moved from being state-centric towards integrative geographic diplomacy.

Nevertheless, it became clear that the research made by Mogensen (2017) still focuses on the economic interest and the engagement of businesses and governments. This leads back to the gain in information and interest of the country. In line with this new move towards a more geographic-centric approach, diplomats and government representatives need to be trained to deal with diverse stakeholders, as stated by Saner and Lindstrom (2002; 2006).

They deal with intercultural aspects and build relationships with others depending on the individuals' competencies due to the relevance of executing their job. The findings showed that the competencies of individual diplomats were heavily reliant on their character. The overshadowing competence formed trust; this laid the foundation for the relationship to grow. What was interesting to see is that all diplomats gave the same answer regarding the formulation of relationship building. As Solomon and Flores (2003) stated, building trust needs commitment. This commitment is sometimes difficult to make due to the duration of the deployment.

Furthermore, trust-building was seen as a challenging aspect of building a relationship due to its subjective and non-tangible form. It became clear that all diplomats needed trust to gain information. The information required derives from the established relationship that leads to new opportunities. Diplomatic relations are built upon alliances and seen as a form of trust, trusting another country to abide by the agreement. Diplomatic relations within a country uphold the alliance between two countries. As diplomats are seen to execute foreign policy, but as they deem fit, building and having close relationships built upon trust are seen as vital to execute those orders. What was interesting to see was the insight given that diplomats are measured based on their achievements. How this is measured is more based on information. As stated before, this information source can only be delivered by establishing a trusted relationship. Therefore, a modern diplomat needs to establish trust and build upon this.

Ultimately, the establishment of the trust is seen as a tool that facilitates the building of relationships. As the research focuses on competencies, the proposition of emotional intelligence was formulated concerning facilitating relationship building. Overall, showcasing emotional intelligence toward your guests and employees was the originating factor. A healthy balance of empathy, integrity, listening, and strong communication skills were critical in fulfilling their daily duties and delivering results. Interestingly, diplomats continuously stated that these traits could only be trained to a limiting factor; most diplomats understood this as an intrinsic characteristic trait. Verma (2017) has stated that emotional understanding leads to profitability, which was seen to be welcomed by the diplomats. Again, their focus is to understand cultures and where people come from to gain success for themselves, i.e., information. Establishing the factor of emotional intelligence and trust is the foundation of relationship building. Being hospitable was seen by all as a very relevant and indispensable trait when facilitating a relationship. This falls in line with the notion given by Lynch (2017) that one needs to be welcoming and hospitable towards strangers. The proposition was formulated if the hospitality experiences facilitate relationship building. As Suh (2012) stated, giving a hospitality experience originates from having a hospitality mentality. Besides, giving a hospitable experience was seen as an opportunity to represent the country's attributes. Knowing that trust is built on an emotional response facilitates that being in a comfortable environment allows for firm building trust. This creation of the environment and servitude is seen to be facilitated through hospitality.

Offering a hospitable experience has proven to develop relationship building and assist business development. The act of breaking bread coincides with building trust in one another. In line with the research and the hospitality scale described by Pijls (2017), diplomats saw hospitality offerings to their guests as a tool facilitating their relationship. As already established, diplomats are keen to showcase hospitality due to its effectiveness. This research

paper focuses on the emphasis of hospitality competencies toward relationship building. The formulated propositions facilitate relationship-building with governmental representatives and non-state entities. Therefore, states must emphasize training and consciousness towards competencies and what can be done through hospitality to develop new relationships and intensify them in the future. It must be considered that the outbreak of COVID-19 has given way to the unprecedented territory when it comes to relationship building. The lack of meeting personally and allowing to interact will place even more emphasis on taking the lead in training and developing upcoming diplomats on how to build such relationships remotely.

This paper can be generalized toward hospitality competencies and factors influencing the foundation of relationship building. As strong as the results might have been towards verifying the made claims. It needs to be said that this paper is only a beginning point towards further research based on the already limited amount of previous research within this field. The lack of excruciating details gives way to the vast potential of future research.

Limitations

Despite the successful findings and analysis of the research, one needs to note the limitations. This research's most conflicting limitation and the fault would be personal bias, given the German embassy's previous knowledge and relation. I tried to limit the number of biases throughout my research, clarifying to the interviewees that they needed to answer in such a format as not understand the subject. I want to eliminate the bias as much as possible; however, it is still possible that personal biases did appear throughout the research. The research stated that the sample size would be sufficient due to the population being homogeneous; I believe that having a larger sample size would have justified the results even more significantly. The interviewees were predominantly from Europe, and one from outside the European Union could result in a one-sided viewpoint. If the diplomats had derived from various countries, one could have understood whether such a hospitality focus is present within all regions and not

confined to one. It shall also be noted that even though all participants had the option of doing it in German or English. This potentially results in neither of these languages being their mother tongue, leading to some answers not being understood or answered due to the lack of vocabulary. The more I comprehended research into this field; the more psychological research indicated that some areas might have been overlooked.

Furthermore, the limitations of the outbreak of COVID-19 gave me the chance to change my research approach overall. Thus, being that all interviews were held online via Zoom. The research subject could have proven challenging to comprehend the implication as it was all based online. The virtual interviews made it hard to build trust, potentially leading to the limitation of in-depth answers. The virtual interviews also resulted in not seeing the non-verbal responses and solely basing the virtual interview's reactions. The pandemic also reduced the sample size as embassies focused on responding to COVID-19-affected corporations and individuals. Leading to interviewees being time-bound and only having a limited time to interview. Also, with the decreasing number of interviews, a total response rate of 47% was reached. Due to the low response rate, most interviewees originated from Germany. Overall, this research has some aspects that could be improved if it were to be done again, leading to a more precious and established analysis.

Recommendations

The concluded research successfully understood how embassies perceive hospitality competencies toward relationship building. Despite the shortcomings, the overall analysis is clear and meaningful, leading to future research opportunities. Several future research themes exposed themselves in line with the findings and limitations. Within this study's duration, COVID-19 presented itself with additional limitations; however, it also led to future research. Firstly, it should be stated that further research with the same approach should be undertaken due to the limited responses. It would be adequate to have a more extensive scope that is

questioned and, therefore, strengthen the findings. Due to the limiting factor of diverse respondents, i.e., nationality, future research should focus on the intercultural linkage within hospitality competencies and building relationships. Even though English and French are seen globally as the diplomatic languages are spoken, it would be interesting to see how language competence is seen within diplomacy. This study could be done in parallel with the intercultural understanding of diplomats. In addition to the findings that a country's reputation is significant, studying how this influences tourism attraction would stimulate future research.

The outbreak of COVID-19 presented new shortcomings in the execution of the initially presented methodology; however, it offered new perspectives. Due to the execution, in-depth research can be done to build a relationship. The results could facilitate new diplomatic handling on a virtual basis and result in new diplomatic forms and protocols. Based on all recommendations, this future research is the most applicable due to its relevance.

REFERENCES

- Agut, S., Grau, R. and Peiró, J.M., 2003 Competency needs among managers from Spanish hotels and restaurants and their training demands. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 22(3), pp.281–295.
- Beetham, D. ed., 1994 *Defining and measuring democracy*, London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif, Sage Publications.
- Bergmann, K., 2018 *Mit Wein Staat machen: eine Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, 1. Auflage., Berlin, Insel Verlag.
- Brotherton, B., 2015 *Researching hospitality and tourism*, 2nd edition., Los Angeles, SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Brownell, J., 2011 “Creating Value for Women Business Travelers: Focusing on Emotional Out” by Judi Brownell PhD. Available at: <https://scholarship.sha.cornell.edu/chrpubs/10/> (Accessed 29 July 2020).
- Chung-Herrera, B., Enz, C. and Lankau, M., 2003 Grooming Future Hospitality Leaders: A Competencies Model. *Articles and Chapters*. Available at: <https://scholarship.sha.cornell.edu/articles/366>.
- Clinton, H., 2012, *Diplomatic Culinary Partnership Initiative Launch* Available at: <https://statedept.brightcovegallery.com/detail/video/1831515641001/diplomatic-culinary-partnership-initiative-launch> (Accessed 30 July 2020).
- Constantinou, C.M. ed., 2016 *The SAGE handbook of diplomacy*, Los Angeles, SAGE.
- Cornago, N., 2008 Diplomacy. In: *Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace, & Conflict*. pp. 574–580.
- Crosby, L.A., Evans, K.R. and Cowles, D., 1990 Relationship Quality in Services Selling: An Interpersonal Influence Perspective. *Journal of Marketing*, 54(3), pp.68–81.
- Defranco, P., 2019 *Food and Politics?! Why Countries are Spending Millions on ‘Gastrodiplomacy.’*
- Emerson, R M, 1976 Social Exchange Theory. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 2(1), pp.335–340.
- Emerson, Richard M., 1976 Social Exchange Theory. *Annual Review of Sociology*, pp.335–362.
- Fitzpatrick, K., 2007 Advancing the New Public Diplomacy: A Public Relations Perspective. *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 2(3), pp.187–211.
- Gaskarth, J. and Oppermann, K., 2019 Clashing Traditions: German Foreign Policy in a New Era. *International Studies Perspectives*. Available at: <https://academic.oup.com/isp/article/doi/10.1093/isp/ekz017/5581524> (Accessed 5 August 2020).

- Heffernan, T., 2004 Trust formation in cross-cultural business-to-business relationships. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 7(2), pp.114–125.
- Hemmington, N., 2007 From Service to Experience: Understanding and Defining the Hospitality Business. *The Service Industries Journal*, 27(6), pp.747–755.
- Hsieh, H.-F. and Shannon, S.E., 2005 Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 15(9), pp.1277–1288.
- Jones, A. and Clark, J., 2017 Assembling geographies of diplomacy under neoliberalism. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 43.
- Kramar, R., 2014 Beyond strategic human resource management: is sustainable human resource management the next approach? *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 25(8), pp.1069–1089.
- Lashley, C. and Morrison, A.J. eds., 2001 *In search of hospitality: theoretical perspectives and debates*, Repr., Oxford, Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Lindstrom, G., 2002 Diplomats and Diplomacy for the 21st Century. , p.174.
- Lynch, P., 2017 Mundane welcome: Hospitality as life politics. *Annals of Tourism Research*, pp.174–184.
- Lynch, P. et al., 2011 Theorising hospitality. *Hospitality society*, 1(1), pp.3–24.
- McPherson, M., Smith-Lovin, L. and Cook, J.M., 2001 BIRDS OF A FEATHER: Homophily in Social Networks. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 27(1), pp.415–438.
- Melissen, J., 2005 *Wielding Soft Power*,
- Mogensen, K., 2017 From public relations to corporate public diplomacy. *Public Relations Review*, 43(3), pp.605–614.
- Mohr, J. and Spekman, R., 1994 Characteristics of Partnership Success: Partnership Attributes, Communication Behavior, and Conflict Resolution Techniques. *Strategic Management Journal*, 15, pp.135–152.
- Nguyn, E., 2015 Gastronomic diplomacy. *Public Diplomacy and Global Communication 2014d*. Available at: <https://pdgc2014d.wordpress.com/2015/04/15/gastronomic-diplomacy/> (Accessed 19 March 2020).
- Nicholson, C.Y., 2001 The Role of Interpersonal Liking in Building Trust =n Long-Term Channel Relationships. *Academy of Marketing Science*, 29(1), pp.3–15.
- Pickering, T., 2017 Thomas Pickering: The Future of Diplomacy. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CCz179C49LA> (Accessed 25 March 2020).
- Pijls, R., Groen, B.H., Galetzka, M. and Pruyn, A.T.H., 2017 Measuring the experience of Hospitality: Scale development and validation. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 67, pp.125–133.

- Pitkin, H.F., 1972 *The concept of representation*, 1. paperback ed., [Nachdr.], Berkeley, Calif., Univ. of California Press.
- Ruel, H., 2013a Business diplomacy: a definition and operationalisation. Available at: https://www.academia.edu/5849628/Business_diplomacy_a_definition_and_operationalization (Accessed 30 July 2020).
- Ruel, H., 2013b Diplomacy means business.
- Saner, R. and Yiu, L., 2006 Training of Diplomats: Guarantee Training Effectiveness through use of the Quality Assurance System (ISO 10015). Available at: https://www.academia.edu/19858131/Training_of_Diplomats_Guarantee_Training_Effectiveness_through_use_of_the_Quality_Assurance_System_ISO_10015 (Accessed 30 July 2020).
- Saunders, M.N.K., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A., 2016 *Research methods for business students*,
- Saunders, M.N.K. and Townsend, K., 2016 Reporting and Justifying the Number of Interview Participants in Organization and Workplace Research: Reporting and Justifying Interview Participant Numbers. *British Journal of Management*, 27(4), pp.836–852.
- Sikorski, R., 2018 *Radek Sikorski: Gastrodiplomacy*,
- Small, M. and Singer, J.D., 1973 The diplomatic importance of states, 1816–1970: an extension and refinement of the indicator. *World Politics*, 25(4), pp.577–599.
- Snow, N., 2009 Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy. Available at: https://www.academia.edu/322384/Routledge_Handbook_of_Public_Diplomacy (Accessed 30 July 2020).
- Solomon, R.C. and Flores, F., 2003 *Building trust in business, politics, relationships, and life*, Oxford, Oxford Univ. Press.
- Suh, E., West, J.J. and Shin, J., 2012 Important competency requirements for managers in the hospitality industry. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 11(2), pp.101–112.
- Svetličič, M., 2014 Competences for Economic Diplomacy and International Business; Convergence or Divergence? *Central European Public Administration Review*, 9(1). Available at: <http://cepar.fu.uni-lj.si/index.php/CEPAR/article/view/170> (Accessed 30 July 2020).
- Thomas, D., 2006 A General Inductive Approach for Analysing Qualitative Evaluation Data. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 27, pp.237–246.
- Tsang, T., 2015, *Mediating and Moderating Variables Explained — Psychology In Action* Available at: <https://www.psychologyinaction.org/psychology-in-action-1/2015/02/06/mediating-and-moderating-variables-explained> (Accessed 8 March 2021).
- Verma, S., Aggarwal, A. and Bansal, H., 2017 The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence (E.Q.) and Adversity Quotient (A.Q.). *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, 19(01), pp.49–53.

Wallace, P., 2021 What is the Data Information Knowledge Wisdom Pyramid? *Ontotext*. Available at: <https://www.ontotext.com/knowledgehub/fundamentals/dikw-pyramid/> (Accessed 31 March 2021).

Wintrobe, R., 1990 The Tinpot and the Totalitarian: An Economic Theory of Dictatorship. *American Political Science Review*, 84(3), pp.849–872.