

## **Abstract**

The importance of hotel choice and satisfaction attributes is undisputed in the lodging industry. However, the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has decelerated and changed the hotel industry globally. Due to lockdowns and curfews, and a coherent hotel-closure wave, the industry had to implement new standards to satisfy the market.

This thesis aims to identify the possible shift in importance of hotel choice and satisfaction attributes during the Covid-19 pandemic. To examine a shift of importance, a qualitative thematical analysis was chosen. Further, guest reviews were collected from two major OTAs (online travel agencies) which are booking.com and tripadvisor.com. Nine themes were coded through an inductive, data-driven, research approach.

The results of the qualitative thematical analysis show that the most common hotel choice attributes, for instance, price and location are still key choice attributes. Nonetheless, safety, which was not listed under the top hotel choice attributes in the literature, appears to be a vital attribute for guests now. Personal protective equipment (PPE), for example, face masks and hand sanitizers, is now mentioned more often than before the global Covid-19 pandemic.

For many guests, it is the first time, they travel after the hotel industry almost stopped globally, with lockdowns and curfews. To conclude, nowadays, safety is more relevant than ever regarding the still ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Hotel guests need to have a safe feeling when traveling. Limitations arise from the uncertainty of how long the virus will be present in the future and if a vaccine will stop the pandemic. Further, it is unclear, if the newly implemented safety measures will remain after the pandemic and to what extent the hotel industry got affected by the virus.