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WAYS TO REDUCE THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF THE WORLD PANDEMIC ON UKRAINE'S RESTAURANT BUSINESS

The article considers the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the hospitality sector of the world and Ukraine in general and the food market in particular. Today, scientists and other researchers view the global pandemic as a purely negative phenomenon for the restaurant business, without taking into account the fact that each crisis leads to innovative "breakthroughs" and the emergence of new market opportunities.. It is noted that any crisis leads to new opportunities. It was noted that for many institutions this impact was catastrophic and led to the fact that they were forced to stop their work. It was noted that the introduction of stricter safety and sanitation requirements was a necessary condition for the existence of a modern food establishment. Recommend the introduction of a number of measures: additional control of packaging of raw materials, daily disinfection of all surfaces, airtight packaging, thermometry of personnel, daily disinfection of the premises and "mask" mode of personnel.

Key words: *hospitality, restaurant business, COVID-19 pandemic, crisis, food strategies, prospects for recovery, new opportunities, ways to overcome the crisis, innovation in the restaurant industry.*

ШЛЯХИ ЗМЕНШЕННЯ НЕГАТИВНОГО ВПЛИВУ СВІТОВОЇ ПАНДЕМІЇ НА РЕСТОРАННИЙ БІЗНЕС УКРАЇНИ

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У статті розглянуто вплив пандемії COVID-19 на сферу гостинності світу та України загалом та ринок продуктів харчування зокрема. Сьогодні вчені та інші дослідники розглядають глобальну пандемію як суто негативне явище для ресторанного бізнесу, не беручи до уваги той факт, що кожна криза призводить до інноваційних «проривів» і появи нових можливостей ринку. Україна – країна, бізнес якої постійно стикається з необхідністю подолання різноманітних криз, тому цікаво з наукової точки зору відповісти на питання: як ресторанний бізнес України долає негативний вплив пандемії COVID-19 та як використовує кризові можливості. Тому все вищесказане є актуальною науковою проблемою. Зазначається, що будь-яка криза веде до нових можливостей. Проаналізовано масштаби впливу пандемії та заходи боротьби з нею на ресторанний бізнес України. Зазначено, що для багатьох закладів цей вплив був катастрофічним і призвів до того, що вони були змушені припинити свою роботу. Найбільше криза зачепила малі кафе. Зазначено, що запровадження більш жорстких вимог безпеки та санітарії є необхідною умовою існування сучасного закладу харчування. Рекомендовано запровадити ряд заходів: додатковий контроль пакування сировини, щоденну дезінфекцію всіх поверхонь, герметичність упакування, термометрію персоналу, щоденну дезінфекцію приміщень та «масковий» режим персоналу. Розглядаються можливі стратегії, до яких ресторани заклади можуть вдатися для збереження позицій на ринку. А саме: стратегія, спрямована на утримання клієнтів шляхом переходу на поставку готової продукції або напівфабрикатів; стратегія, спрямована на створення нових онлайн-форматів надання послуг; стратегія, спрямована на злиття з іншими видами бізнесу; стратегія, спрямована на зниження витрат. Українським закладам громадського харчування рекомендується перейти на світовий тренд цифровізації та автоматизації та активно впроваджувати спеціалізовані програми автоматизації ресторанів і кафе, які дозволять відстежувати поточний стан бізнесу, оперативно перерозподіляти ресурси та запаси, оптимізувати витрати.

Ключові слова: *сфера гостинності, ресторанний бізнес, пандемія COVID-19, криза, стратегії закладів харчування, перспективи відновлення, нові можливості, шляхи подолання кризи, інновації в ресторанному господарстві.*

Introduction and formulation of the problem.

Hospitality is an integral part of many economies. In 2020, the global hospitality industry experienced a serious crisis due to the rapid spread of a new species of coronavirus (COVID-2019) around the world. The most significant losses from the introduction of restrictive measures in March 2020 were suffered by the restaurant business,

which faced the need to cover the costs of staff, territory, security, utilities in a significant reduction in income due to bans and restrictions on visits to food establishments during months of periodic quarantine and lockout. According to analysts in the hotel and restaurant industry, by 2023 GDP will be 2.2% lower than the trend that existed before the pandemic [7].

As for the trends of the pandemic impact on the restaurant business in Ukraine, although at the beginning it was predicted that almost 50% of all restaurants in the country will close in a year, but in two years of the pandemic we can see that the market decline was not so significant and that the COVID-2019 pandemic has actually prompted a reboot of the restaurant industry.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Many scientists and researchers are studying the impact of various economic crises on the hospitality industry. Today, leading economists together with representatives of the tourism and hotel and restaurant business are trying to predict the scale of impact on the industry, see prospects and ways out of the crisis, trying in every possible way to retain customers, reorienting to new global requirements. In particular, A. Vozovych [2] studies the scale of the pandemic's impact on various sectors of the economy, including the hospitality industry, O. Nasonova [6] focused on studying the changes that the restaurant business is undergoing today. However, all researchers view the global pandemic as a negative phenomenon for the restaurant business, not taking into account the fact that each crisis leads to innovative "breakthroughs" and the emergence of new opportunities in the market. Ukraine is a country whose business is constantly faced with the need to overcome various crises, so it is interesting from a scientific point of view to answer the question: how Ukraine's restaurant business overcomes the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and how it uses crisis opportunities. That is why the above is an urgent scientific problem.

The aim of the article is to find out the impact of the COVID-19 virus pandemic on the restaurant market of Ukraine and the world and to suggest ways to reduce the negative effect of this impact.

Research results. The restaurant business is an important part of the domestic hospitality industry [2]. Unfortunately, due to objective circumstances, this area, along with tourism and hotels, has suffered the most since the beginning of the pandemic. After all, restaurants and cafes are an integral part of the tourist infrastructure. And the sharp decline in tourist flows to Ukraine in 2020–2021 also had a negative impact on the development of the catering industry. The restaurant business was forced to close immediately with the announcement of the first lockdown in March 2020, and today we can say that in general it has not fully recovered. As of the beginning of 2020, there were more than 30,000 restaurants in Ukraine and each of them employed an average of 35 people (in large complexes – 150 people and in small cafes 3–5 people). Today we can see that not all of them survived the pandemic. In April and May 2020, one third of all Ukrainian cafes and restaurants were open, including those that took delivery or sold food with them. Only 4 out of 5 catering establishments were able to recover in June, and the industry remains at about this level to this day. The rest, 20% of the Ukrainian restaurant business, has closed completely. This is evidenced by the analyst, which was jointly prepared by the projects joinposter.com and Opendatabot.ua [3]. The negative trend of closing the restaurant business in 2021 continued. According to Opendatabot, during the spring lockdown of 2021, the number of restaurants operating in Ukraine decreased by 14% and their turnover by 12% [3]. The so-called "weekend quarantine" introduced in Ukraine in the spring

of 2021 had a particularly negative impact on the activities of the restaurant sector. The ban on visiting establishments on weekends had little effect on the spread of the virus, but caused even greater financial problems in the service sector, as for most catering establishments weekends are 60–70% of total turnover [5].

Another important problem in the restaurant market today is the staffing problem. In 2020, the largest staff reductions compared to other domestic industries occurred in the restaurant business. After all, during the period of all lockdowns and quarantine restrictions, many workers were forced to look for work in other areas, many of them went to work in Poland and other countries. Some institutions tried to retain employees, using different methods: transferred some employees from offices to telecommuting (accounting, management); organized shift work for employees, carried out professional retraining (for example, waiters worked as couriers for delivery of orders), etc. However, today there is a shortage of chefs, waiters, bartenders and other employees in restaurants. According to the Ukrainian Restaurant Association, virtually every restaurant has vacancies at the level of 15–30% of the total staff. To fill them, restaurants and cafes are ready to hire people without relevant experience and even raise wages. Thus, the unemployed have a good chance not only to find a job, but also to receive a considerable salary, which can be considered a kind of positive phenomenon for the domestic labor market.

Considering the impact of the crisis caused by the pandemic in terms of food, it should be noted that the most difficult to survive the crisis are small family restaurants, cafes, which have a small margin of safety, as well as restaurants located in shopping malls, which were closed for the longest time. In 2020–2021, the decline in incomes did not increase the demand for the services of such catering establishments, as people began to work more and cook at home. Large restaurant chains with capital reserves are experiencing a coronavirus crisis with much lower losses. This is especially true for establishments that have a car service line (such as McDrive McDonald's). At the beginning of the quarantine, their profits fell by only 25% due to a significant increase in car traffic.

However, it should be noted that despite all the efforts of the restaurant business to retain customers and survive the crisis caused by the pandemic, not all restaurants will be able to stay in the market, because the world has changed radically. Therefore, only those industry representatives who have been able to adapt to the new realities of today and start offering people new services and products will end up winning.

In the restaurant business in particular, today there is a tendency to combine those businesses that previously existed exclusively separately. Thus, the catering industry is now actively cooperating with retail and on the shelves of conventional food chains began to appear properly decorated and packaged restaurant dishes. Book chains are effectively merging with coffee shops, opening the latter on their territory. Brewers have begun to successfully refocus on the production of antiseptics, and taxi services, in the face of declining customer flow – work as delivery services, taking orders for food delivery from restaurants.

For food establishments, one of the options for survival in a crisis is to focus on fast food (pizza, hamburgers, shawarma, sushi), which will be popular all the time and is

easy to deliver and prepare. After all, in the conditions of constant quarantines, lockdowns and restrictions of work, the restaurant ceases to provide the service of a pleasant pastime for food consumption, and more and more often providing only the service of food delivery. Also, given the decline in incomes caused by the coronavirus crisis, catering establishments may be advised to rely on low- or below-average price menus.

Restaurant establishments should refocus on the production and delivery of semi-finished products. Today, the so-called "Cooking Box" is gaining popularity – sets of ingredients from which the customer can prepare a dish according to a certain recipe.

Another option to survive the crisis in the hospitality industry may be to focus on creating a so-called online restaurant, ie a restaurant whose dishes are prepared exclusively for delivery.

A necessary condition for the existence of a modern food establishment was the introduction of stricter safety and sanitation requirements. Restaurants can be recommended the introduction of a number of measures: additional control of packaging of raw materials, daily disinfection of all surfaces, airtight packaging, thermometry of staff, daily disinfection of the premises and "mask" mode of staff.

Catering establishments can also be recommended to create their own delivery service, as using the services of delivery companies is often less efficient than creating their own delivery network, as the average prices of delivery services in Ukraine remain at 30% of the order amount. Thus, the creation of its own delivery network will also solve the problem of providing employment for its own employees affected by the crisis in the industry. The pandemic proved that those restaurants that were able to set up work in time, or in other words the format of work "take away", were able to partially resume their activities and remain competitive in the market of restaurant services in crisis conditions.

Another trend in the market of restaurant services caused by the pandemic is the automation and, accordingly, the elimination of people from many processes, as institutions try to minimize staff contact with customers. The main trends in the digital transformation of the hospitality industry include the following:

- telegram bots and various telephone applications for ordering;
- restaurants that do not have ticket offices and sellers;
- payment by biometrics;
- robotic cafes and pizzerias, etc. [4].

Such innovations in restaurant service as telegram bots and mobile applications with which orders are made appeared before the pandemic, but it became especially popular during it. With the help of this service you can easily place any order in the institution, while avoiding contact with staff.

Restaurants without cash registers and vendors provide for the installation of self-service terminals with a biometric identification system in establishments instead of cash registers. The system digitizes the customer's face and creates a unique "digital fingerprint" that can be used for payment.

Biometric payment technology assumes that to make a payment, the visitor will simply look into the camera of the payment terminal. To do this, the client will need to pre-register the biometrics of his face in the bank application.

Robo-cafes and robo-pizzerias are interesting in that the coffee drinks or pizza in such establishments are fully prepared by the workers, who are in fact the main employees of the establishments.

All these various institutions are united by a single principle – the minimum presence of man in technological processes, which is especially true in a pandemic.

Another manifestation of the trend of digitalization and automation of the restaurant business is the use of modern automation programs to monitor the current state of the business, the rapid redistribution of resources and stocks, as well as to optimize costs. One such specialized program for restaurants and cafes is the Poster automation system. It covers general warehousing and financial accounting, cash registers and connected equipment for customer service and compliance with tax accounting. Using this or analog programs allows restaurants to increase the speed and quality of customer service, avoid theft by staff, track sales and build effective marketing strategies, as well as analyze the cost of the warehouse to avoid unnecessary write-offs [1].

Conclusions. Thus, the global pandemic of the COVID-19 virus has become for many areas of the economy, including the hospitality industry, a kind of test of resilience and flexibility. Unfortunately, not all food establishments have passed this test. Today it can be argued that in order to survive in modern conditions, food establishments need to choose one or more of the following strategies:

- strategy aimed at retaining customers through the transition to the delivery of finished products or semi-finished products;
- strategy aimed at creating new online formats of service provision (telegram bots, biometrics, etc.);
- strategy aimed at merging with other types of business (retail, bookstores, etc.);
- a strategy aimed at reducing costs (reorientation of staff to other work, simplification and reduction of the menu in favor of the fast food format and partial dismissal of staff).

Thus, although the pandemic caused one of the biggest crises in the history of the restaurant business, it also contributes to the emergence of new opportunities and prospects for domestic food establishments.

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