

TIME MANAGEMENT AT HOTEL MANAGER'S LEVEL – E-MAIL BASED RESEARCH –

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ABSTRACT

A hotel is a 24-hour a day operation. Since time has become a very precious resource, hotel managers have to know precisely in which direction to concentrate their attention. They also have to know how to manage their time with efficiency in order to run this specialized business. This paper is focused on a research about time management at the hotel manager's level. The research uses the e-mail service of the Internet, spreadsheets, and statistical tools and has been carried out in order to enhance the content of our faculty's education materials which deal with time management. We now speak about "the art of computer usage" (Kovács et al., 2006); in this sense, special importance is given to understanding how managers use their time for web surfing and electronic messages. Try to minimize the time that you are available to take unplanned phone calls (Chapman, 2006); in this sense, we were interested to find out how much time the manager spends speaking on fixed/mobile phones. We conclude that the e-mail based research is unfamiliar in Romania.

Keywords: *e-mail based research, hotel industry, time management, statistical analysis*

1. INTRODUCTION

Not long ago, our Faculty of Business carried out some research about time management at executive manager's level. At that time, we found 107 organizations/entities that were chosen randomly from those who accepted students to have face-to-face contact with the managers. In this way, the participating students involved themselves in that research knowing that they would benefit from it. This research shows that, on the whole, there is not a significant difference between the time spent by the managers of all organizations/entities and the time spent by the managers of companies with more than 500 employees. The sample of managers interviewed was very heterogeneous, but their behavior regarding time management was relatively homogeneous, which raises some serious questions about the managers' time management skills. The final conclusion shows that "in our region (Cluj-Napoca, Romania), managerial competencies with managers of big companies are not appropriate and therefore there is a strong need for specialized time management courses at this level (Kovács et al., 2007).

Starting from the structure, objective and methods of the research mentioned above, we have done another one in order to find out how hotel managers organize their time. This new research has a social relevance as it will provide more data to include in the courses for our students. The results will also be used in the short courses provided for the local hotel managers' community. The research also has scientific relevance, being the second of this kind in our faculty and among the few existing in our country.

Objective: to conduct an e-mail based exploratory research in order to find out how the hotel managers from Romania use their 24-hour daily time and how many days a month they travel.

Methods: We sent the Romanian hotels a total of 501 e-mail messages (table 1) including a questionnaire developed in Microsoft Excel as attachment. The e-mail addresses of these hotels from all the Romanian counties were found in "Hotel Guide". The Microsoft Excel document, after data introduction, showed the remaining time and an error message if the time exceeded the value of 24 hours (the total time spent daily). The questionnaire was completed successfully if the remaining time was zero. After receiving all the answers, the sets of data were placed and analyzed in a centralized Microsoft Excel worksheet and the statistical analysis was conducted in Statgraphics software package.

NOTE: The "Hotel Guide" is a very valuable source of information about the Romanian hotels because, besides each hotel image, it contains the classical e-mail and web addresses, phone number and the

symbols for the services offered: Single room, Double room with standard double bed, Double room with queen size bed, Twin room, Triple room, Room with 4 beds, Junior suite, Suite, Bathroom with bathtub, Bathroom with shower, Shared bathroom, Air conditioned rooms, Some rooms with air conditioning, Cable TV in the room, Some rooms with cable TV, Telephone in the room, Some rooms with telephone, In-room Internet connection, Some rooms with Internet connection, Internet connection at reception, Minibar in the room, Some rooms with minibar, Refrigerator in the room, Some rooms with refrigerator, Elevator, Reception / conference hall, Business center, Hairdresser, Beauty salon, Laundry and / or dry cleaning, Massage, Sauna, Kinder-garten, Pharmacy, Medical aid, Bar, Nightclub, Room-service, Restaurant, Club, Indoor swimming pool, Indoor heated swimming pool, Outdoor swimming pool, Outdoor heated swimming pool, Fitness room, Parking, Garage, Mini-golf, Sports ground, Skiing school, Sports equipment rental, Winter sports, Cable car, Water sports, Distance to beach, Boat rental, Bicycles rental, Archery, Solarium, Fishing, Hunting, Billiard, Bowling, Casino, Boutique, Cure center, Exchange office, Credit cards accepted, Safe, Rent a car, Access for disabled, Dogs allowed, No dogs allowed, Euro high season tariffs, Euro off season tariffs, Euro all year round tariffs and Breakfast included.

TABLE 1 – NUMBER OF E-MAIL MESSAGES SENT TO EACH COUNTY OF ROMANIA

County	Sent e-mails	County	Sent e-mails	County	Sent e-mails
Alba	3	Constanța	91	Mureș	17
Arad	11	Covasna	9	Neamț	2
Argeș	14	Dambovița	4	Olt	1
Bacău	8	Dolj	6	Prahova	25
Bihor	13	Galați	6	Satu Mare	4
Bistrița-Năsăud	7	Giurgiu	1	Salaj	2
Botoșani	1	Gorj	1	Sibiu	15
Brașov	34	Harghita	12	Suceava	16
Brăila	6	Hunedoara	5	Teleorman	1
București	62	Ialomița	3	Timiș	30
Buzău	5	Iași	8	Tulcea	13
Caraș-Severin	7	Ifov	1	Vaslui	3
Călărași	1	Maramureș	9	Vâlcea	14
Cluj	27	Mehedinți	2	Vrancea	1

As previously shown, there were 501 e-mail messages sent with a Microsoft Excel document questionnaire as attachment. It is easily seen that București (Bucharest), the capital of Romania, has the greatest number of hotels.

The questionnaire contained these questions:

- How old are you?
- How many employees does your hotel have?
- How many days do approximately travel monthly?
- About how many hours do you spend daily doing the following activities?
 - Supervision in your office/hotel.
 - Administrative matters.
 - Meetings with your employees.
 - Meetings with your clients/guests within business hours.
 - Meetings with your clients after work.
 - Business meetings.
 - Reading (in general).
 - Personal/private matters.
 - Sleep.
 - Access Internet (Web and e-mail).
 - Telephone calls (on fix and mobile phones).

2. RECEIVED ANSWERS

After sending the 501 e-mail messages, we received the following:

- 39 e-mails with correctly completed questionnaires we could use for our statistical analysis;
- 206 error messages generated by the systems (table 2);
- 1 message from an auto responder (table 3);
- 2 written messages (table 4).

TABLE 2 – RECEIVED ERROR MESSAGES (GENERATED BY THE SYSTEMS)

The text of received error message (generated by the systems)	Number of received messages
This user doesn't have a yahoo.com account	15
User unknown	84
Mail quota exceeded (or equivalent)	18
Sorry, no mailbox here by that name	15
The following addresses had permanent fatal errors	1
Host unknown	15
Message size exceeds remaining quota (or equivalent)	3
Mailbox is full: retry timeout exceeded (or equivalent)	12
Disk quota exceeded	1
Write error or disk full	2
Name server timeout	8
This account has been disabled or discontinued (or equivalent)	4
Delivery failed	8
Operation timed out	11
The recipient cannot be verified	1
Relay access denied	3
User cannot receive mail	1
Unrouteable address	1
Invalid final delivery mail id	1
Connection refused by	2
TOTAL error messages (generated by the systems)	206

TABLE 3 – RECEIVED MESSAGE (AUTORESPONDER)

The text of received message (auto responder)	Number of received messages
Dear Clients & Partners: ... We do not tolerate any mass emailing or any type of unsolicited emails. Please take us out from your mailing list. Thank you for your understanding. The management.	1

TABLE 4 – RECEIVED WRITTEN MESSAGES (TRANSLATED FROM ROMANIAN)

The text of received written messages	Number of received messages
Good afternoon, Your message was received and will be treated with maximum seriousness. For more information, please call the front desk at <phone number>. Thank you for choosing Hotel ...	1
Dear madam, Because of our hotel policy, we cannot reply to your questions received by e-mail. However, I can reply to any question regarding our hotel management in a face-to-face meeting. In this sense, please contact me if you consider it appropriate. Best wishes, <name>, <phone number>	1

3. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Although we sent a number 501 e-mail messages, we received only a total of 39 correctly completed questionnaires. We conducted the statistical analysis in Statgraphics, where we obtained 13 frequency tabulations and the appropriate interpretations. Due to space limitations, only the first frequency tabulation is reproduced as screen capture in fig.1. All levels of confidence are situated at 95%.

Frequency Tabulation for varsta							
Class	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Midpoint	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Cum. Rel. Frequency
at or below		25.0		3	0.0769	3	0.0769
1	25.0	30.0	27.5	9	0.2308	12	0.3077
2	30.0	35.0	32.5	6	0.1538	18	0.4615
3	35.0	40.0	37.5	6	0.1538	24	0.6154
4	40.0	45.0	42.5	8	0.2051	32	0.8205
5	45.0	50.0	47.5	7	0.1795	39	1.0000
above	50.0			0	0.0000	39	1.0000
Mean = 36.7949				Standard deviation = 7.88463			

FIG. 1 – FREQUENCY TABULATION FOR MANAGERS' AGE

3.1. Managers' age

The analysis shows that the average age for the 39 managers is 36.79. The average age is situated within a minimum of 34.23 and a maximum of 39.35 (fig.1).

3.2. Number of employees

The average number of employees is 36.92. On the whole, the average number of employees is situated within a minimum of 30.28 and a maximum of 43.55 (table 5).

TABLE 5 – FREQUENCY TABULATION FOR NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

Class	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Midpoint	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Cum. Rel. Frequency
At or below		10		0	0%	0	0%
1	10	30	20	17	43.59%	17	43.59%
2	30	50	40	17	43.59%	34	87.18%
3	50	70	60	1	02.56%	35	89.74%
4	70	90	80	4	10.26%	39	100%
above	90			0	0%	39	100%
Mean = 36.9231				Standard deviation = 20.4661			

3.3. Supervision in your office/hotel

The average time spent supervising the office/hotel is 2 hours and 19 minutes. On the whole, this average time is situated within a minimum of 2h 5' and 2h 33' (table 6).

TABLE 6 – FREQUENCY TABULATION FOR SUPERVISION OFFICE/HOTEL

Class	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Midpoint	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Cum. Rel. Frequency
At or below		1		0	0%	0	0%
1	1	2	1.5	25	64.10%	25	64.10%
2	2	3	2.5	11	28.21%	36	92.31%
3	3	4	3.5	1	02.56%	37	94.87%
4	4	5	4.5	2	05.13%	39	100%
above	5			0	0%	39	100%
Mean = 2.3141				Standard deviation = 0.729361			

3.4. Administrative matters

The average time spent on administrative matters in the hotel is 2 hours and 29 minutes. On the whole, this average time is situated within a minimum of 2h 10' and 2h 48' (table 7).

TABLE 7 – FRECVENCY TABULATION FOR ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Class	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Midpoint	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Cum. Rel. Frequency
At or below		0		0	0%	0	0%
1	0	2	1	17	43.59%	17	43.59%
2	2	4	3	21	53.85%	38	97.44%
3	4	6	5	1	02.56%	39	100%
above	6			0	0%	39	100%
Mean = 2.48718		Standard deviation = 0.969856					

3.5. Meetings with employees

The statistical analysis shows that the average time spent meeting with the employees is 1 hour and 28 minutes. On the whole, this average time is situated within a minimum of 1h 18' and 1h 39' (table 8).

TABLE 8 – FRECVENCY TABULATION FOR MEETINGS WITH EMPLOYEES

Class	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Midpoint	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Cum. Rel. Frequency
At or below		0		0	0%	0	0%
1	0	1	0.5	13	33.33%	13	33.33%
2	1	2	1.5	25	64.10%	38	97.44%
3	2	3	2.5	1	02.56%	39	100%
above	3			0	0%	39	100%
Mean = 1.47436		Standard deviation = 0.549506					

3.6. Meetings with clients/guests within business hours

The average time spent meeting with clients/guests within business hours is 1 hour and 43 minutes. On the whole, this average time is situated within a minimum of 1h 29' and 1h 59' (table 9).

TABLE 9 – FRECVENCY TABULATION FOR MEETINGS WITHIN BUSINESS HOURS

Class	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Midpoint	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Cum. Rel. Frequency
At or below		0		0	0%	0	0%
1	0	1	0.5	12	30.77%	12	30.77%
2	1	2	1.5	22	56.41%	34	87.18%
3	2	3	2.5	2	05.13%	36	92.31%
4	3	4	3.5	3	07.69%	39	100%
above	4			0	0%	39	100%
Mean = 1.71795		Standard deviation = 0.833468					

3.7. Meetings with clients after work

The average time spent meeting with clients after work is 39'. This average time is situated within a minimum of 26' and 42' (table 10).

TABLE 10 – FRECVENCY TABULATION FOR MEETINGS WITH CLIENTS AFTER WORK

Class	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Midpoint	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Cum. Rel. Frequency
At or below		0		15	38.46%	15	38.46%
1	0	1	0.5	21	53.85%	36	92.31%
2	1	2	1.5	3	07.69%	39	100%
above	2			0	0%	39	100%
Mean = 0.532051		Standard deviation = 0.532433					

3.8. Business meetings

The average time spent for business meetings is 1 hour and 38 minutes. On the whole, this average time is situated within a minimum of 1h 25' and 1h 51' (table 11).

TABLE 11 – FRECVENCY TABULATION FOR BUSINESS MEETINGS

Class	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Midpoint	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Cum. Rel. Frequency
At or below		0		1	02.56%	1	02.56%
1	0	1	0.5	11	28.21%	12	30.77%
2	1	2	1.5	21	53.85%	33	84.62%
3	2	3	2.5	6	15.38%	39	100%
above	3			0	0%	39	100%

Mean = 1.62821 Standard deviation = 0.675881

3.9. Reading (in general)

The analysis shows that the average time spent reading is 1 hour and 24 minutes. On the whole, this average time is situated within a minimum of 1h 12' and 1h 35' (table 12).

TABLE 12 – FRECVENCY TABULATION FOR READING

Class	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Midpoint	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Cum. Rel. Frequency
At or below		0		0	0%	0	0%
1	0	1	0.5	20	51.28%	20	51.28%
2	1	2	1.5	16	41.03%	36	92.31%
3	2	3	2.5	3	07.69%	39	100%
above	3			0	0%	39	100%

Mean = 1.39744 Standard deviation = 0.586913

3.10. Personal/private matters

The average time spent for personal/private matters is 2 hours and 3 minutes. On the whole, this average time is situated within a minimum of 1h 50' and 2h 16' (table 13).

TABLE 13 – FRECVENCY TABULATION FOR PERSONAL/PRIVATE MATTERS

Class	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Midpoint	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Cum. Rel. Frequency
At or below		0		0	0%	0	0%
1	0	1	0.5	7	17.95%	7	17.95%
2	1	2	1.5	19	48.72%	26	66.67%
3	2	3	2.5	12	30.77%	38	97.44%
4	3	4	3.5	1	02.56%	39	100%
above	4			0	0%	39	100%

Mean = 2.05128 Standard deviation = 0.676629

3.11. Sleep

This average time spent sleeping is 6h 56' and it is situated within 6h 39' and 7h 13' (table 14).

TABLE 14 – FRECVENCY TABULATION FOR SLEEP

Class	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Midpoint	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Cum. Rel. Frequency
At or below		5		3	07.69%	3	07.69%
1	5	6	5.5	8	20.51%	11	28.21%
2	6	7	6.5	14	35.90%	25	64.10%
3	7	8	7.5	14	35.90%	39	100%
above	8			0	0%	39	100%

Mean = 6.9359 Standard deviation = 0.889851

3.12. Access Internet (Web and e-mail)

The average time spent accessing the Internet (Web and e-mail) is 2 hours and 5 minutes. On the whole, this average time is situated within a minimum of 1h 42' and 2h 28' (table 15).

TABLE 15 – FRECVENCY TABULATION FOR ACCESS INTERNET (WEB AND E-MAIL)

Class	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Midpoint	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Cum. Rel. Frequency
At or below		0		0	0	0	0%
1	0	1	0.5	10	25.64%	10	25.64%
2	1	2	1.5	17	43.59%	27	69.23%
3	2	3	2.5	5	12.82%	32	82.05%
4	3	4	3.5	4	10.26%	36	92.31%
5	4	5	4.5	3	07.69%	39	100%
above	5			0	0%	39	100%

Mean = 2.07692 Standard deviation = 1.18399

3.13. Telephone calls (on fixed and mobile phones)

The average time spent for telephone calls (on fixed and mobile phones) is 1 hour and 23 minutes. On the whole, this average time is situated within a minimum of 1h 6' and 1h 40' (table 16).

TABLE 16 – FRECVENCY TABULATION FOR ACCESS TELEPHONE CALLS

Class	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Midpoint	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Cum. Rel. Frequency
At or below		0		0	0%	0	0%
1	0	1	0.5	24	61.54%	24	61.54%
2	1	2	1.5	11	28.21%	35	89.74%
3	2	3	2.5	3	07.69%	38	97.44%
4	3	4	3.5	0	0%	38	97.44%
5	4	5	4.5	1	02.56%	39	100%
above	5			0	0%	39	100%

Mean = 1.38462 Standard deviation = 0.891934

3.14. Travel

This average time is 2.5 days/month. 56.41% of the managers travel less than 2 days/month, 30.77% travel between 2 and 3 days/month and 12.82% travel between 4 and 6 days/month (table 17).

TABLE 17 – FRECVENCY TABULATION FOR TRAVEL

Class	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Midpoint	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Cum. Rel. Frequency
At or below		0.0		3	07.69%	3	07.69%
1	0.0	2.0	1.0	19	48.72%	22	56.41%
2	2.0	4.0	3.0	12	30.77%	34	87.18%
3	4.0	6.0	5.0	5	12.82%	39	100%
above	6.0			0	0%	39	100%

Mean = 2.46154 Standard deviation = 1.41135

The statistical analysis shows that the mean values for the number of employees, meetings with the clients/guests within business hours, meetings with the clients after work, access Internet (Web/e-mail), telephone calls (on fixed and mobile phones) and travel are not representative.

4. CORRELATINS

Trying to make some correlations between the variables, we have obtained the following:

- 4.1. The managers' age may bear no relation to its value for sleep.
- 4.2. The managers' age may bear no relation to its value for Internet access.
- 4.3. The number of employees is related to the time spent supervising the office/hotel.
- 4.4. The number of employees is related to the time spent on administrative matters.
- 4.5. The number of employees is related to the time spent meeting with the employees.
- 4.6. The time spent in business meetings is related to the time spent in meetings with the clients/guests within business hours.

- 4.7. The time spent in business meetings may bear no relation to the time spent in meetings with the clients after work.
- 4.8. The time spent on administrative matters may bear no relation to the time spent in meetings with the employees.

CONCLUSIONS

In our research, we used an e-mail based questionnaire. We have chosen this method because it has a number of advantages over the paper-based questionnaire: the questionnaires can be distributed fast, at low costs, to hotels in any county, and the data can be more easily collected and processed. As our data shows, the main disadvantage of this method is that the respondent rate was very low and consequently we had to send a great number of messages. Another disadvantage is that we received a lot of error messages. As a consequence, we can say that the e-mail based research is unfamiliar in Romania.

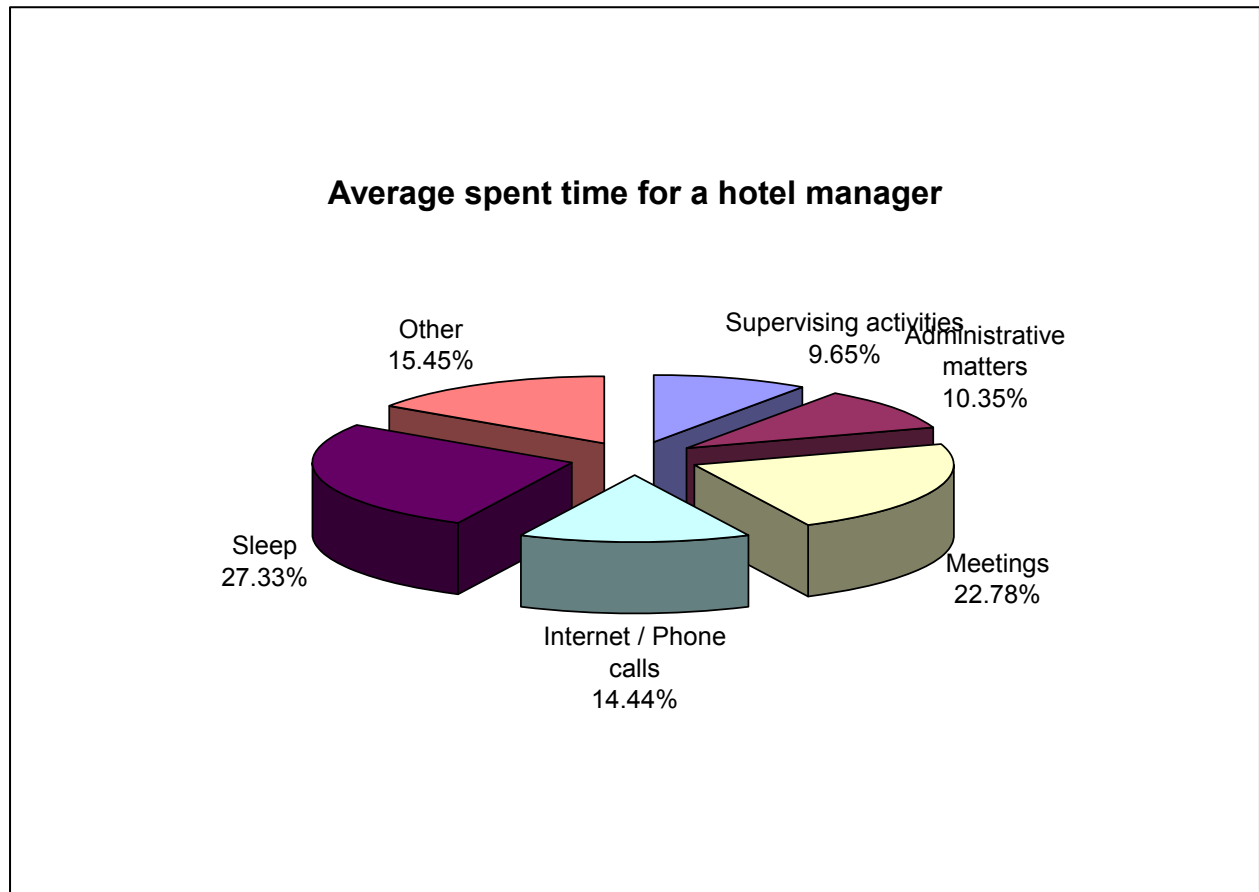


FIG. 2 – AVERAGE SPENT TIME WITHIN 24 HOURS A DAY FOR A HOTEL MANAGER

All you can do is make the best use of the time you have (Scott, 1992). The research shows that hotels managers spend on average 9.65% of their time supervising activities in the hotel and 10.35% for administrative matters. A hotel manager spends a large amount of time – 22.78% of their time – in different types of meetings. We also consider that managers spend too much time reading e-mails, surfing the Internet and talking on the phone. As our study indicates, they use 14.44% of their time for these activities, instead of allocating more time for developing their business. The average time for sleep obtained in our study is very close to the normal average value of 7 hours per day (fig.2). Based on the results of our research we can conclude that managers need to attend time management courses in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their managerial activity.

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