HOTEL SERVICE QUALITY AS A FUNCTION OF SPORTS TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AT DIVČIBARE

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Abstract: Sports tourism represents travel in which sport is the main motive of tourists for travelling to a specific tourist destination. Hotel service quality is a key element of guest satisfaction and as such represents the basis of tourism development at a specific destination. Apart from basic hotel services, additional facilities offered by both hotels and the destination itself are highly significant in sports tourism. The research was conducted in two hotels, where 100. respondents, who were the hotel guests, were interviewed.   The research is intended to prove that hotel service quality and sports facilities are the basis of guest satisfaction and sports tourism development at Divčibare.

Key words: Hotel service quality, sports tourism, hotel industry, satisfaction.

1.INTRODUCTION

Divčibare is located in the central area of Mount Maljen, at the distance of 38 kilometres from Valjevo, 110 km from Belgrade, and it is a famous mountain and climate tourist location. Divčibare is recognizable as a traditional air spa, which is particularly conducive to development of sports tourism, as it is especially the places at higher altitudes that have a stimulative impact on the human organism. Owing to its natural values and social activities, Divčibare as a destination has a capacity for development of sports tourism. The highest value of this area lies in its brooks, small rivers, forests and mountain paths for hiking to peaks bordering the mountain.{1} The existing infrastructure - open-air grounds, indoor swimming pools and sports facilities inside hotel complexes are a good basis for development of this selective type of tourism, which everybody should expand and modernise. Full potential for development of sports tourism is also offered by the construction of the Crni Vrh Hotel complex, owned by our famous basketball player Miloš Teodosić, with the accompanying sport facilities.{2}
Sport and tourism are phenomena whose facilities greatly help people to meet their needs for rest and recreation. Negative effects of the urbanisation process, such as noise, fatigue and air pollution, foreground the wish of people for rest by way of satisfying tourist needs, pinpointing among them the need for the tourist recreation itself, which in turn features participation in particular sports activities. It is possible to meet tourist needs in sports in several ways: by active involvement in a sport game, watching a sport game as a spectator and engaging in sports activities for the purpose of recreational rest, such as: swimming, mountaineering and other numerous activities.{3}
The hotel industry is nowadays a global industry consisting of global customers who use hotel services all over the world. The use of hotel facilities such as a room, restaurant, bar, fitness centre and

swimming pool are no longer considered luxurious. For many users of hotel services, these facilities are an integral part of their style.{4}. Under the current conditions of business operation, the hotel companies must take care of service quality in order to remain competitive in the market. In the hotel industry and tourism it is highly significant to provide as high quality of service as possible, since it plays a very important role in the guest satisfaction assessment and the final tourist's decision on the selection of a particular hotel and a particular destination. A large number of satisfied users of hotel services remain loyal, which implies revisiting the particular hotel and the particular destination. Loyalty therefore ensues as a result of high quality hotel service.{5}

This paper is aimed at measuring the satisfaction of guests with the hotel service quality and facilities for sport activities, which are first of all intended for sportspeople, as well as guests visiting this destination for recreational rest. The research was conducted on the basis of 100 questionnaires, at the hotels that can provide quality guest service, and these are Crni Vrh Hotel 4* and Divčibare Hotel 3*, which represent the most luxurious units at Divčibare and the foundation of its material basis, both in terms of hotel service and additional facilities intended for sportpersons.

This research will test two hypotheses:

H1: Hotel service quality has a statistically significant effect on satisfaction of service users;

H2: Facilities for sport activities have a statistically significant effect on satisfaction of service users.

2.HOTEL QUALITY SERVICE AS A FUNCTION OF SPORT TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Tourism and sport are considered the most massive socio-economic phenomena in the modern society and as such are becoming phenomena of the modern age. Both tourism and sport move, i.e. attract masses, have a strong impact on social life and become increasingly interdependent on a daily basis. Clearly the concepts of tourism and sport are related, so we could also say that they even overlap. Sport is an important activity within tourism, and tourism is a fundamental characteristic of sport.{6}.

There is a large number of definitions of sports tourism, a few of which we are going to present in our paper. Sports tourism refers to travel away from permanent residence to participate in a sport activity for competition or recreation, take part as a spectator, or visit a sports attraction.{7}. According to Ross {8} sports tourism represents a traveler's experience of a journey which includes travel for the purpose of sports activities. Weed and Bull {9} point out a non-commercial dimension of sports tourism and define this concept as active or spectator-type sport activities of individuals who engage in or view the said activities. In our literature, the concept of sports tourism is explained as a massive and diverse form of trade, which results from an accelerated pace of urbanisation. The main characteristics of this type of tourism feature massiveness of participants, longer periods of stay at the destination, seasonal concentration and a small radius of movement {10}.

In order to gain a competitive advantage, hotel companies must look for a profitable way to differentiate themselves in the market. One of successful hotel strategies relates to the delivery of high-quality services under conditions of intense domestic and international competition.{11}. Starting from the above-mentioned statements, the quality of services becomes one of the key determinants in choosing a tourist destination. In order to be competitive on the market in modern business conditions, companies must take care of the quality, regardless of whether their offer includes a product, service or their combination, There are numerous definitions of quality. From the aspect of marketing, most of them start from the customer, who is offered such product or quality service which surpasses their needs, requirements and expectations. In this context, a well-known definition is that given by Kotler, Bowen and Makens {12}, in which quality is defined as the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that result from its ability to satisfy the existing or implied needs of the customer".

A very successful and applicative definition of hotel product quality was given by Middleton and Clarke {13}. In their research paper, the stated authors formulate three levels of hotel product quality. The first level of quality is represented by the product core, i.e. basic product. The second level is the formal, i.e. tangible product, and the third level refers to the augmented hotel product. The core hotel product consist of a the basic benefit for which a guest comes to the hotel, and that is sleeping accommodation. This level of viewing a hotel product in terms of its quality is not different with respect to other hotel companies. The second level, the tangible product, includes a series of tangible and intangible characteristics related to the quality, design, trademark and image. A hotel product is created and offered to customers in some tangible form of its appearance, quality, style , trademark, and the like. At this level, a hotel can be different with respect to the competition. The third level, featured by an augmented product, is equipped with additional services, which make it possible to meet

additional customer's needs, and which relate to their ability to meet the existing or implied customer's needs".

The most famous definitions of domestic authors present the quality of hotel service, which often include its tangible and intangible components. In her research paper, Kosar {14} gives a definition according to which: "The quality of hotel product is a commercial category which includes the emergence of its tangible and intangible components, connecting them into an integral whole, as well as the implementation of related services, at a level to ensure compliance of these processes with the requirements of users - hotel guests." A similar definition is also given by Čačić {15}, our renowned author in the field of hotel industry, who defines hotel service "as a set of tangible and intangible properties provided for the guest and which serve as the basis to establish an interpersonal relationship with them and to meet their needs and expectations".

With reference to the quality of rendering hotel services intended for sportspeople as guests in sports tourism, certain specifics are characteristic of rendering both basic and additional services, which conform to the needs of sportspeople. The amenities of the accomodation rooms typically go beyond the usual standards with respect to bed sizes. Also, in the domain of serving meals, the content and calorific value, and the serving time differ from the standard ones. In addition, perhaps of the biggest importance are additional facilities, such as grounds for miscellaneous sports, workout gyms, massage rooms, spa centres, meeting rooms and others.{16}

3.RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

The subject of this research is measurement of guest satisfaction in the hotel industry and tourism, on the basis of sports tourism, as well as consideration of the strategies that hotels can use with the purpose of increasing satisfaction and loyalty of their guests. Hotels must be focused on their guests in order to achieve success in a turbulent and competitive environment.

The aim of this paper is to show effect of the quality of hotel service and sports facilities, as the elements of tourist destination, on the satisfaction of service users at Divčibare through two hypotheses:

H1: Hotel service quality has a statistically significant effect on satisfaction of service users;

H2: Facilities for sport activities have a statistically significant effect on satisfaction of service users.

In order to gather primary data, a survey questionnaire was designed, which was used for the purpose of examining hotel guests attitudes. The questionnaire was distributed to respondents in a printed form. A total of 100 questionnaires were completed, 54 of which by men and 46 by women. The interview was conducted in January and February 2021 in the hotels Crni Vrh and Divčibare (50 questionnaires in each hotel). The questionnaire consisted of four parts:

- The first part refers to the statements reflecting guest satisfaction with the hotel service quality during their stay at the hotel (10 questions).
- The second part refers to the statements reflecting guest satisfaction with sports facilities at Divčibare. (7 questions)
- The third part comprises the questions referrring to an overall opinion about the stay at the hotel/destination (3 questions).
- The fourth part of the questionnaire refers to the general type questions aimed at establishing demographic characteristics of hotel guests.

The respondents expressed their attitudes on seven-point Liker scales. The given statements were rated by the respondents on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 indicates "absolute dissatisfaction", while 7 indicates "absolute satisfaction". The data analysis was performed by applying the statistical program IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences SPSS 20). Within the framework of descriptive statistical analysis, the arithmetic mean and standard deviation were calculated for each statement, in order to determine the statements with which the respondents expressed the highest degree of agreement and those with the lowest degree of agreement, as well as on the basis of which statements the respondents' attitudes were most homogenous/most heterogenous. In reliability analysis the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which shows whether the statements used for measurement of the subject variables are internally consistent, was established for each variable in the model. By using a t-test it was determined that there were significant differences in the assessment of respondents belonging to different socio-demographic groups. A regression analysis was made to find out the effect of the independent on the dependent variable.

3.1.Descriptive analysis

Table 1 shows the results of descriptive statistical analysis. The arithmetic mean and standard deviation were calculated for each individual statement More favourable attitudes of respondents are present for the statements with a higher arithmetic mean, and more homogeneous statitudes are present for the statements with a lower value of standard deviation
.

Table 1. Results of descriptive statistical analysis

Variable	Statement	M	SD
Hotel service quality	Hotel location and appearance	5.7167	0.7385
	Professionalism of employees (tidiness, helpfulness …)	6.1333	0.7240
	Reception performance	6.2500	0.8757
	Hotel cleanliness and maintenance during stay	6.1167	0.7831
	Room appearance, comfort and design	6.0333	0.9561
	Room furniture and amenities	6.1500	0.7899
	Food and drink range for sportpeople	6.0833	1.0781
	Food and drink quality	6.2500	0.9134
	SPA centre facilities (swimming pool, sauna, workout gyms, etc.)	6.1167	0.8455
	Additional hotel facilities (meeting room, sports corner, sports grounds, etc.)	6.0167	1.03321
Sports facilities	Indoor courts (basketball, fotball, volleyball)	6.0333	0.9013
	Indoor swimming pools	6.1667	0.8668
	Outdoor ground for Association football	6.1500	0.8601
	Concrete grounds	6.1667	0.8861
	Tennis courts	6.1500	0.8601
	Ski paths	6.1000	0.7961
	Trim trails	6.1000	1.0033
Satisfaction	Overall, how satisfied are you with the service quality at this hotel/destination?	6.2667	0.7782
	I have a positive opinion about the hotel/destination	6.3667	0.7356
	In the future, I am ready to revisit this hotel/destination	6.5333	0.6500

M- arithmetic mean;   SD – standard deviation

The results of descriptive stastical analysis from Table 1 show the average grade given by hotel guests to the mentioned statements. The most favourable attitudes of respondents refer to the statements "In the future …" (6.5333) and "I have a positive opinion about the hotel" (6.3667) connected with the satisfaction variable, then to the statements of "indoor swimming pools" and "concrete grounds" (6.1667) connected with the sports facilities and, at the end, with "the reception performance" and "food and drink quality" (6.2500) in the variable "hotel service quality". The least favourable attitudes of respondents refer to the statement of "hotel location and appearance", where the arithmetic mean has the lowest value, and ranges about 5,7167.

3.2.Reliability analysis

In this situation, when a particular variable is measured through a number of statements, it is very important to calculate whther the given variable is reliable, in other words, whether the statements through which it is measured are internally consistent. Fort he purposes of this analysis, the value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient is calculated, which ranges in the interval from 0 to 1. The statements are internally consistent, i.e, the variable is reliable if the value of this coeffcient amounts to 0.7 or more. The results of reliability analysis are shown in Table 2, as well as the results of desciptive analysis for formed variables.

Table 2. Results of reliability analysis and descriptive analysis for formed variables

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
Hotel service quality	0.923	6.0867	0.5527
Sports facilities	0.821	6.1238	0.5895
Satisfaction	0.793	6.3889	0.5663

As can be seen in Table 2. there is a high degree of internal consistency between the variables in the model.
On the basis of the results of descriptive analysis, it can be concluded that the hotel guests are the most content with the variable of satisfaction (6.3889). and the least with the hotel service quality (6.0867). The standard deviation result shows the highest homegenity to be present with the variable of sports facilities (0.5895), followed by the variable of satisfaction (0.5663), and at the end with the hotel service quality (0.5527).
The results from Table 1 show that the statements connected with intangible elements generally have higher scores with respect to the others. Also. the descriptive analysis confirms that the variables of staff and reception have higher arithmetic mean results with respect to the others. Statements and variables formed on the basis of them belong to the group of the most homogeneous attitudes.

3.3. Regression analysis

Regression anaysis is used to measure the effect of an independent varible on a dependent variable, and in this case it is called the common regression analysis. A beta coefficient (β) indicates the strength of effect of the independent on the dependent variable. The higher the value of the beta coefficient, the stronger the effect. If the *sig* value is higher than 0.05, then the given independent variable does not have a statistically significant effect on the dependent variable. Also, regression analysis uses the indicator Coefficient of Determination (R^2), which shows which percentage of variability of the dependent variable is described by the given regression model, i.e. which percentage of variability of the dependent varible is affected by the independent variable. The value of coefficient of determination ranges from 0 to 1. If it is higher than 0.4, it can be concluded that the regression model is good. The effect of intangible components of hotel service and intangible cultural heritage on satisfaction will be measured.

Table 3. Effect of independent variables on satisfaction

Variables	B	T	sig.	Vif
Quality of hotel service	0.338*	2.736	0.008	1.573
Sports facilities	0.481*	4.410	0.000	1.691

R^2=0.501

The data in the given regression model are suitable for the analysis because the values of the variance increase factor (the last column) are less than 5. The coefficient of determination is 0.532. which means that 50.1% of the variability of satisfaction (the dependent variable) is described by this model, and this means that this regression model is good. The value of coefficient of determination is statistically significant at the level of 0.01. Both variables have the statistically significant effect on the satisfaction of guests (all sig values are lower than 0.05).
When the effects of these variables processed in this regression model are compared, a conclusion is reached that the sports facilities have a bigger effect on satisfaction than the hotel service quality (Б 0.481 > 0.338).

This regression model was used to test two hypotheses: H1: Hotel service quality has a statistically significant effect on satisfaction of service users, and H2: Facilities for sport activities have a statistically significant effect on satisfaction of service users. The regression model proves both variables. i.e. it proves that both hypotheses have been proved. with a slightly higher effect of facilities for sport activities on satisfaction with respect to hotel service quality.

4. CONCLUSION

Nowadays. tourism is one of the most significant activities in terms of economic indicators. In almost all countries of the world. tourism represents one of the more important activities of economic development of each country. while in some seaside states it also represents their main income. The hotel industry in an integral part of tourism. without which this activity would not even be able to express its economic indicators. It is through the hotel industry, i.e. hospitality industry, that data related to arrivals, overnight stays, income, and the like, are presented.

Divčibare represents a mountain tourist destination which first of all meets the recreational needs of tourists and abounds in natural resources. In addition to the recreational needs manifested by the desire to rest. escape from the humdrum of big cities and the noise they produce, more and more mention is made of the integral need where, besides the recreational, cultural needs of tourists are also met. Although Divčibare bases its development on the recreational types of tourism, the construction of Crni vrh Hotel complex provides an additional improvement in the development of sports tourism, so Divčibare is slowly gaining another segment of market share.

By means of above analyses we can conclude that the hotel service quality and sports facilities of this destination have a strong impact on the satisfaction of service users. The results of empirical research have shown that both variables, which are very important in the development of tourism of any destination, have a statistical significance for satisfaction. The results of resgression analysis have shown that there is a statistically significant effect of both variables on satisfaction. Especially significant is the effect of sports facilities because Divčibare is first of all a mountain destination and it mostly bases its development on the natural resources and development of recreational tourism, and from now on sports tourism will provide a special component in the offer of this destination in the tourist market.

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