Hotel Guest Satisfaction and Service Quality: Evidence from Czech Safari Hotel

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Abstract

The development of accommodation facilities is currently (especially in the COVID-19 pandemic) accompanied by a growth in guests' emphasis on the quality and structure of additional services. Guest satisfaction with services in tourism is thus one of the important factors affecting the level of profitability, prosperity, and competitiveness. The quality of accommodation facilities is related to the satisfaction of guests. The proper attitude and professionalism are the key success factors along with the quality of the services provided by any accommodation facility. The guests' perception of quality is influenced by the professionalism, helpfulness, and willingness of the staff. The goal of this paper was to evaluate guest satisfaction with accommodation, catering, and additional services at a selected hotel in Dvůr Králové nad Labem. Guest satisfaction was determined using a questionnaire survey conducted from July 2018 to January 2019. The results were evaluated by means of a cluster analysis in the Statistica 13 EN software application. The greatest dissatisfaction was expressed in summer with air-conditioning in rooms. Furthermore, the worst rating concerned the quality of food and beverages with respect to their price, which did not meet guests' expectations. The lowest satisfaction expressed by guests was with the value for money in terms of the quality of additional services, which they perceived as part of the value for money ratio with respect to room rates.

Keywords: guest satisfaction; service quality; hotel, complaint, Czechia.

1. Introduction

The current trend in the accommodation market goes hand in hand with an increase in guests' expectations in terms of the quality and structure of additional services (Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003; Baker & Crompton, 2000). Lately, the word 'quality' has been used ever more often. In 2003, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defined quality as "the result of a process which implies the satisfaction of all tourism product and service needs, requirements and expectations of the consumer at an acceptable price, in conformity with mutually accepted contractual conditions and the implicit underlying factors such as safety and security, hygiene, accessibility, authenticity and concerns over the impact of tourism activities on the natural and cultural environment." The international ISO 9001 standard defines quality as "the degree to which a set of inherent characteristics of an object fulfils requirements". According to this standard, requirements are either expected (e.g., by hotel guests) or binding (e.g., based on legislation).

Guests increasingly often visit high-quality hotels and expect high-quality food in restaurants; suppliers sell high-quality goods to hotels and hotels hire high-quality staff that provide high-quality service, etc. (Hán et al., 2016). The quality of services is considered to be a key element affecting guest satisfaction and loyalty. The quality of services also affects a

hotel's marketability and prosperity (Lee & Cheng, 2018). Baloglu (2002), Bowen & Shoemaker (2003) state that ensuring guest satisfaction is the goal of all operators of accommodation facilities.

Guest satisfaction is the subject of psychological research. It can be characterized as the degree to which a guest perceives his or her requirements to be met (Gúčik, 2010). Guest satisfaction in accommodation facilities is linked to the care that staff of the accommodation facility provide to guests (Němčanský, 1995). Many hotel managers agree that guests should feel they got some added value which they had not expected to get. This motivates them to return to the accommodation facility in the future (Scholz, 2014). Guest satisfaction in hotels is addressed by Das et al. (2017) and Paulose and Shakeel (2021); guest satisfaction in hotels chains is covered by Barthélemy et al. (2021), AirBnB (Ruan, 2020). It needs to be said that there are differences in guest satisfaction between independent hotels and hotels chains (Moreno-Perdigón et al, 2021). Guest satisfaction with services provided by tourism businesses is one of the significant factors affecting companies' revenue and profit, prosperity, position in the competitive environment, etc. Equally important, along with the quality of services, is the attitude and professionalism of staff. Their professionalism, helpfulness and willingness affect the guests' perception of the product (Linderová & Gúčik, 2011). Accommodation facilities often believe that their guests are satisfied if they do not

receive any complaints. This is not always the case and not even high-quality services necessarily lead to complete guest satisfaction. In general, quality is the fundamental prerequisite for customer satisfaction and customer satisfaction is a prerequisite for guests coming back in the future (Clemes et al., 2010; Gracia et al., 2011; Gúčik et al., 2007).

Quality is defined as the degree or standard of perfection. The quality of services offered and provided is not a matter of chance, but the result of hard work (Hán et al., 2016). However, it cannot be understood as the highest degree possible, as something of supreme quality and the highest price, because guests may expect and be happy even with a simple restaurant menu (Linderová & Gúčik, 2011). The quality of hotel management significantly affects the quality of accommodation as well as catering services (Faktorová, 2019; Janičková et al., 2006). Hán et al. (2016) claim that a quality management system is about setting rules and establishing order, about creating a form to be filled with content guests and motivated employees. It is a proven fact that flaws in hotels and hotel restaurants are in 85% of cases caused by deficiencies of the system while only 15% of problems are caused by the employees responsible. Gúčik et al. (2016); Hán et al. (2016); Linderová & Gúčik (2011); Křížek & Neufus (2014); Rašovská & Ryglová (2017); Sysel (2019); Vodáček & Vodáčková (2006) state that there are usually concepts of quality systems used in quality assurance: (1) standards pertaining to the amenities and services (product standards), quality control, which is based on (2) the ISO 9000 series of standards and (3) total quality management (TQM).

Reception staff should pay close attention to guests' complaints and comments and try to achieve a result that is satisfactory for both sides. If an upset guest approaches the front desk to express a complaint, it is crucial that the reception staff let them speak, pay attention and refrain from interrupting them. This should result in the guest calming down and allowing room for a constructive solution. If the receptionist does not succeed, he or she should call their supervisor, or possibly the hotel manager. Guests' complaints are an indication that there is something wrong with the hotel and they are often useful for the hotel. That is why some hotels ask their guests for feedback and suggestions for further improvements to their services (Stárek & Vaculka, 2008). It is important to understand that complaints are beneficial in providing quality services. Long (2006) states that only 4% of dissatisfied guests complain directly at the accommodation facility. Dissatisfied guests share their negative experience, on average, with ten relatives, friends, acquaintances and even strangers. Of these, 13% will further share it with another 20 people, so news of this negative experience may in the end get to as many as 1,560 people. Besides that, thanks to social media, this number can easily climb much higher.

It is worth pointing out that there are different categories of complaining guests (Table 1) with whom staff come into contact. Therefore, they should know how to communicate with a difficult customer (Gúčik et al., 2007).

Demanding complainer

Demanding complainers express their dissatisfaction with quality, but do not expect any compensation. Despite this, it is necessary to respond to their complaints. The best compensation is saying sorry and possibly giving them a small present.

A reasonably demanding complainer

Reasonably demanding complainers make up the majority of complaining guests and are most beneficial for improving quality. They need a certain type of support to express their complaint (a toll-free number, a questionnaire, ...).

A dangerous complainer

Dangerous complainers make substantiated complaints, but usually do so in an unpleasant way, for example, by threatening to make the deficiencies public in the media.

An unreasonably demanding complainer

Unreasonably demanding complainers make legitimate complaints, but have unreasonably high expectations for compensation.

Demanding customers making unjustified complaints

Their dissatisfaction and complaints are based on baseless expectations (e.g., misunderstanding information presented in an advertisement).

A self-seeking complainer

Self-seeking complainers look for reasons to complain hoping for financial compensation, although they are in fact satisfied with the quality. When dealing with this type of guest, it is important to clearly define the justifiability of the complaint.

A passive dissatisfied guest

Most dissatisfied guests do not make a complaint, but these guests are the biggest threat for the hotel, as they spread bad references without the hotel management knowing about it.

Table 1: Typology of complaining guests Source: Processed by Gúčik et al., 2007.

If a complaint is found to be justified, a remedy must be provided to the guest (Table 2). The greater the guest is put out (materially, psychologically), the more difficult and financially demanding it is to compensate them. A hotel should have a system of compensations in place in order to resolve

complaints, including assigned competencies specifying in what cases the complaint may be resolved by a member of staff in direct contact with the guest as opposed to cases when it must be handled by a member of hotel staff in charge of resolving guests' complaints (Gúčik et al., 2016).

Non-material	- a verbal apology
	- a written apology
	- an apology conveyed over the phone
Material	- a voucher for a service (e.g., new services provided in the hotel, free cosmetics services)
(service)	- providing higher-standard services (e.g., a suite instead of an unavailable deluxe double room)
	- a trip
	- a ticket to an amusement park or a cultural or sports event
	- a voucher for food and beverages
Material	- a fruit basket
(gift)	- a bottle of wine, a bottle of sparkling wine
	- a souvenir
Financial	- a refund
remedy	- a discount
	- compensation for damages

Table 2: Compensation tools Source: Processed by Gúčik et al., 2007.

In most cases, guests whose complaints were resolved to their satisfaction become the most loyal customers and spread the good name of the hotel. For various reasons, most hotel guests do not voice their complaints. They do not know who to turn to and assume that it would be pointless and that the hotel would not deal with their complaint. They consider the complaint handling procedure too complicated and are afraid that as a result of their complaint the service provided might even get worse (Long, 2006). There are a number of models explaining the essence of guest satisfaction (e.g., the European Customer Satisfaction Index, GAP analysis, Kano mode, a model of possible responses, etc.). These models are not mutually exclusive, but rather complement one another. They also imply that guest satisfaction is not merely a result, but a certain process (Gúčik et al., 2007). It is used not only to ensure a degree of guest satisfaction, but also serves as a tool for hotel management to put measures in place required in order to improve their hotel.

2. Materials and Methods

The hotel that was selected for the purposes of this article is located in Dvůr Králové nad Labem and is part of the famous local zoo with its African and Lion Safari. It is a Standard class hotel with the designation Superior. There is a restaurant with its own brewery available to guests. The hotel includes a campground and together they form a resort. The goal of the article was to evaluate satisfaction with

accommodation, catering, and additional services in Dvůr Králové nad Labem. In connection with this goal, the following research question was posed: In which areas, in terms of the satisfaction of guests staying at the said accommodation facility, was customer satisfaction the lowest? Satisfaction was determined using a questionnaire survey which was conducted from July 2018 to January 2019. The collection of primary data was preceded by literature research. Following the completion of the theoretical basis for this article, the research itself was conducted. It was divided into three parts the pilot study, pre-research, and data collection (Disman, 2002; Hendl, 2012). The questionnaires were put in hotel rooms so that guests would have enough time to fill them out. The 2-page questionnaire contained 6 questions with subquestions about the various criteria in the areas of accommodation, catering, and additional services. These items were evaluated by respondents (n = 198, Table 3) on the Likert scale (1-5). Mark 1 represented the highest satisfaction and 5 the lowest. The evaluation was further carried out by means of a cluster analysis using the Statistica 10 EN software application. One of the most common ways of expressing similarity relations between objects are metrics based on a geometric data model. If we assign to objects characterized by p features as models points of a pdimensional Euclidean space Ep, then the Euclidean distance between two points (r, s) is defined as follows (Lukasová & Šarmanová, 1985):

$$\delta(r,s) = \left[\sum_{i=1}^{p} (x_{ri} - x_{si})^2\right]^{1/2} \tag{1}$$

Criteria	%
Gender	
Male	33
Female	61
I do not wish to express my opinion	6
Length of stay	
1 night	36
2-3 nights	56
4-5 nights	6
6-7 nights	1
Extended stay	1
Age	
Up to 18 years	11
18-30 years	7
31-40 years	25
41-54 years	25

55-65 years	9
Over 65 years	2
I do not wish to say	21
Achieved education	
Primary school	6
Vocational school (certificate of apprenticeship)	10
High school (maturita)	38
College	4
University	32
I do not wish to say	10

Table 3: Sample of respondents Source: Own elaboration, 2021.

3. Results and discussion

In terms of accommodation services, guests were very satisfied. 89% of them found the hotel's location satisfactory, mostly because the hotel is part of the zoo with its African and Lion Safari. 84% of the guests were satisfied with booking their accommodation; most guests made their reservation using the online reservation form or by email. Satisfaction with check-in reached 88%. Although check-in is after 2 p.m., if the room has been cleaned and is ready for the next guest, the receptionist tries to accommodate clients and checks them in earlier. If an earlier check-in is not possible, guests are at least provided with wristbands for free entry into the walking area of the zoo, allowing them to stroll through the entire walking part of the zoo before checking into the hotel. As for the behavior of the reception staff, most respondents were completely satisfied, with the satisfaction score reaching 95% in this criterion. Receptionists did their best to be helpful and friendly and accommodate guests' wishes. The behavior of the hotel maids was also viewed very positively. They were always around and available to help with cleaning or any other requests concerning room service. Another criterion was the professionalism of the staff, which also received a positive rating of 88%, which was the same result as satisfaction with the behavior of the housekeeping staff. This shows that the staff at this accommodation facility tried to accommodate guests and fulfill their requests every time it was possible. A slightly lower guest satisfaction at 77% was with the size and lighting of rooms. Family, double rooms with extra beds and wheelchair accessible rooms are smaller compared to hotel suites. Some rooms are rather dark even with proper lighting. The lowest satisfaction score in terms of accommodation services went to heating and air-conditioning. 49% of the respondents were satisfied when it comes to this criterion. As far as heating goes, the questionnaires reported positive feedback even on cold days, but on hot days the guests were not very satisfied as some rooms do not have air-conditioning at all. This is one of the reasons why the hotel is rated in the 3star Superior category. On the other hand, guests were very satisfied with the hotel telephone system, the rating in this criterion reaching 90%. In terms of the hotel TV service, the satisfaction rate dropped slightly, mostly because of the limited selection of TV channels for children. Thanks to the proximity of the hotel to the zoo, a large number of children stay at the hotel, which resulted in the satisfaction score being only 72%. Storage facilities were rated quite positively and when it came to this criterion, the respondents' satisfaction was 80%. What this hotel prides itself on is cleanliness, so it is no wonder that guest satisfaction with room cleanliness reached 95%, with satisfaction in terms of bathroom cleanliness being even higher, at 97%, which represented the highest satisfaction score in the areas of accommodation, catering, and additional services. The rooms are well-equipped, which corresponded with 82% of respondents being satisfied with the room amenities. Most respondents voiced no problem with the check-out time being before 10 a.m., and this criterion received a 78% satisfaction score. 74% of respondents were satisfied with room cleaning during their stay, although this figure was largely affected by the fact that many guests did not know that they needed to put a sign on the door to request that their room be cleaned, which led to a lower satisfaction score than that of room cleanliness upon check-in. Slightly more than half of the respondents (57%) were satisfied in terms of the value for money criterion, which is not a high score, but it needs to be noted that especially during the summer holidays the rooms are in high demand and the occupancy rate is very high, which may have resulted in higher room rates (Table 4, Figure 1).

Criteria (%)	Means	Std. Dev.	© ©	©	⊕	8	88
Localization	4.878788	0.356882	89	10	1	0	0
Reservation of accommodation	4.782828	0.550319	84	10	5	1	0
Check-in	4.838384	0.517845	88	9	1	2	0
Staff behavior (reception)	4.944444	0.270259	95	4	1	0	0
Behavior of maids	4.808081	0.647945	88	9	1	0	2
Professionalism of staff	4.858586	0.403289	88	10	2	0	0
Room size	4.696970	0.644454	77	17	4	1	1
Lighting	4.707071	0.608777	77	17	5	0	1
Heating/AC	3.838384	1.397656	49	16	16	8	11
Hotel telephone	4.863636	0.457970	90	6	3	1	0
TV offer	4.585859	0.740560	72	17	9	2	0
Storage facilities	4.747475	0.593423	80	16	2	1	1
Room cleanliness	4.929293	0.370280	95	3	1	1	0

Cleanliness of bathroom	4.954545	0.338636	97	2	1	0	1
Room amenities	4.787879	0.509259	82	15	2	1	0
Check-out	4.702020	0.626890	78	15	6	1	0
Cleaning during the stay	4.368687	1.274677	74	10	4	2	10
Room price vs. quality	4.404040	0.805050	57	29	11	2	1

©©- very satisfied (1), © - satisfied (2), ⊕ - neutral (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied) (3),

⊗ - dissatisfied (4), ⊗⊗ - very dissatisfied (5)

Table 4: Evaluation of accommodation services

Source: Own elaboration, 2021,

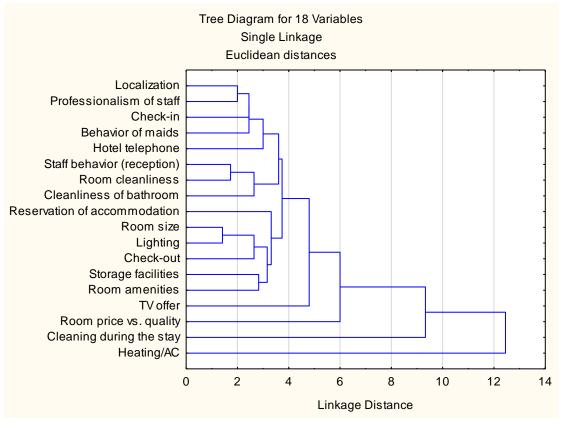


Figure 1: Evaluation of accommodation services Source: Own elaboration, 2021.

In most cases, the guests were also satisfied with the hotel's catering services. There were only a few cases of negative feedback. The cost of accommodation in all hotel rooms includes the breakfast buffet, so everyone had the chance to evaluate the quality of breakfast in the questionnaire, in which 76% of respondents said they were satisfied with the quality and variety of food at breakfast. More than half of the respondents, precisely 55%, were satisfied with the lunch menu. Less than half of the respondents (48%) were satisfied with their dinner menus. The satisfaction score was much lower compared to guest satisfaction with breakfast because of the smaller and less varied selection of dishes at lunchtime and dinnertime. The quality of food compared to the previous two offers rarely increased to 62%. 71% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the quality of

beverages. A mere 36% of respondents were satisfied with the value for money ratio for food and beverages, which is the lowest satisfaction score of all the accommodation, catering, and additional services. Given the result, the quality of food should increase to correspond to its price. Satisfaction with the behavior and professionalism of the restaurant staff at 77% and 79% were above-average, mainly because staff members always tried to accommodate guests' requests. 79% of respondents were satisfied with the dining atmosphere, which is also viewed as a positive rating. In terms of catering services, the highest satisfaction score went to restaurant cleanliness, which the restaurant, just like the hotel, prides itself on, hence in this criterion the satisfaction score reached 88%. 81% of respondents expressed their satisfaction with the cleanliness of dishware (Table 5, Figure 2).

Criteria (%)	Means	Std. Dev.	© ©	0	⊜	8	88
Breakfast offer	4.707071	0.591866	76	19	4	0	1
Restaurant menu at lunch time	4.282828	0.934835	55	24	15	5	1
Restaurant menu at dinner time	4.151515	0.975472	48	25	21	5	1
Food quality (temperature, consistency, appearance)	4.464646	0.834694	62	27	7	2	2
Drink quality	4.585859	0.760845	71	19	8	1	1
Behavior of staff	4.691919	0.638077	77	16	5	2	0
Dining atmosphere	4.686869	0.615312	75	21	2	2	0
Staff professionalism	4.696970	0.690097	79	14	4	2	1
Cleanliness of the restaurant	4.818182	0.593769	88	9	1	1	1
Cleanliness of dishes	4.777778	0.524633	81	16	2	0	1
Price of drinks and meals vs. quality	3.888889	1.098119	36	31	21	8	4

©©- very satisfied (1), © - satisfied (2), © - neutral (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied) (3), © - dissatisfied (4), ©© - very dissatisfied (5)

Table 5: Evaluation of catering services Source: Own elaboration, 2021.

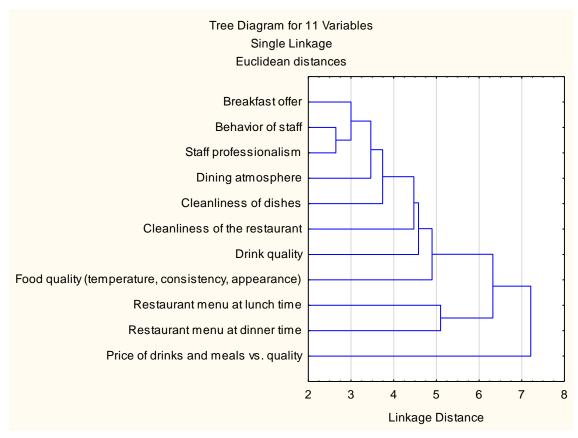


Figure 2: Evaluation of accommodation services Source: Own elaboration, 2021.

Additional services available to hotel guests included Wi-Fi, a swimming pool, bowling, the zoo, and customer parking. The only service that was not provided free of charge was bowling; the remaining services were included in the cost of accommodation, although the free zoo access included only the walking paths. Most guests were satisfied with the hotel's additional services. The hotel Wi-Fi received a 69% satisfaction score, the lower figure caused by a less than optimum internet connection in some rooms. 72% of

respondents were satisfied with the hotel pool. As many as 86% of guests were happy with the hotel bowling alley with four shorter lanes. The highest satisfaction among guests was with the zoo, which is usually the main reason for choosing to stay at this hotel. More than half of the respondents (61%) were satisfied with the value for money ratio. The parking lot for guests is situated right outside the hotel entrance, which resulted in an 86% satisfaction score (Table 6).

Criteria (%)	Means	Std. Dev.	00	©	(2)	8	88
Wi-Fi	4.454545	0.979721	69	16	8	4	3
Swimming pool	4.666667	0.604551	72	23	4	0	1
Bowling	4.848485	0.386672	86	13	1	0	0
Z00	4.909091	0.429636	94	3	2	0	1
Parking	4.790000	0.624338	86	10	2	1	1
Price vs. quality of additional services	4.470000	0.784380	61	28	9	1	1

©©- very satisfied (1), © - satisfied (2), © - neutral (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied) (3),

⊗ - dissatisfied (4), ⊗⊗ - very dissatisfied (5)

Table 6. Evaluation of additional services Source: Own elaboration, 2021.

4. Conclusions

The aim of the article was to evaluate guest satisfaction with accommodation, catering, and additional services at a selected hotel in Dvůr Králové nad Labem. In connection with this aim, the following research question was posed: In which areas, in terms of the satisfaction of guests staying at the said accommodation facility, was customer satisfaction the lowest?

Satisfaction with the accommodation services was very high. The lowest satisfaction score was that for airconditioning in the summertime (49% satisfaction), although it needs to be said that this dissatisfaction was unjustified, as according to the Official Classification of Czech Accommodation Facilities, the Standard class does not require to offer air-conditioning. Guests were also somewhat dissatisfied with the value for money ratio (57% satisfaction) and the selection of TV channels (72% satisfaction), with some guests requesting a wider variety of channels for their children.

With some exceptions, satisfaction with the catering services was very high. The worst satisfaction score was for the quality of food and beverages vs. their price, which did not match guests' expectations, thus in this criterion the satisfaction score reached only 36%. Respondents also expressed dissatisfaction with the restaurant's offer at dinnertime (48% satisfaction), but also at lunchtime (55% satisfaction), most likely because of the limited selection of dishes at these times.

The additional services were assessed as satisfactory. The lowest satisfaction was with the value for money ratio in additional services, which may have been understood as part of the value for money in terms of the room rate, as all the additional services, except for bowling and refreshments at the zoo and tickets to its experience programs (e.g., the African and Lion Safari), are included in the cost of accommodation. There was also notable dissatisfaction with the hotel Wi-Fi.

The research limits can be considered that there is only one hotel and it is not possible to generalize the results. On the other hand, the owner and the general manager of the hotel were satisfied with the questionnaire survey and have already eliminated some shortcomings for higher guest satisfaction. As for the following research direction, we would like to focus on other hotels in the town and their surroundings or regions to compare the individual results. During the COVID-19 pandemics, it is more than desirable to focus on the guest and exceed his expectations. It can be done with the quality of services offered and provided, thus differentiating it from competing hotels.

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