

THE ASSESSMENT OF HOTEL SERVICES IN POIANA BRAŞOV RESORT

C.A. BĂLTESCU¹ D. BOŞCOR¹

Abstract: *The choice of a holiday destination is determined by the features of the existing accommodation offer. The quality of hotel services provided influence the attracted customer segment, the satisfaction degree of consumption, the loyalty degree for the accommodation unit and destination, and also the economic-financial performance of the company. This article analyzes the opinions of tourists staying in Poiana Braşov resort regarding their consumption experience in one of the most representative hotels of the resort. The results obtained show customers' expectations, satisfaction degree after consumption and future ways for adapting and improving hotel services.*

Key words: *hotel services, customer satisfaction, service quality.*

1. Introduction

Poiana Braşov resort is considered one of the most famous resorts for wintersports from our country and an international tourism center. In Poiana Braşov 47 accommodation units operate with accommodation functions providing 3200 accommodation places [1]. Diversity and reputation at national level of tourism services offered are elements providing the resort's awareness. This statements are supported by the resort's market shares on the romanian mountain tourism market and especially, those recorded at the level of foreign tourists arrived in mountain destinations from our country [1].

The article presents the results of a marketing research conducted among tourists who used hotel services in four of the accommodation units with a well defined image on the hotel market of the Poiana Braşov resort. The results of the

research show the behaviour of persons staying in analyzed hotels regarding the purchase of hotel services with the aim to identify the customers' requirements and expectations, the selection criteria, the loyalty behaviour.

2. Customer satisfaction and quality

Ensuring a standard of services provided has always been a problem in tourism industry. Failure is always perceived as being more transparent in comparison with an activity's success. Failures analysis starts from knowing the dynamic and complex nature of tourism services. The quality of product/service offered is the basis of ensuring competitiveness of a tourism company [5]. Due to the simultaneity and perishability of services, when evaluating hotel performance it is worth noting that service provisions are more difficult to evaluate than the

¹ Faculty of Economic Sciences and Business Administration *Transilvania* University of Braşov.

production and consumption processes of the manufacturing sector, as services are often created and consumed concurrently and there is interaction between consumer and provider [8].

The quality of hotel services is a determining factor for attracting and retaining customers [6]. While customer satisfaction and service quality are distinct constructs, they are sometimes used interchangeably both in the tourism industry and academia [4]. Although customer satisfaction is characterized by the positive "attitudes of the customers' resulting from comparing a product's or service supplier's perceived performance (or outcome) in relation to their expectations"[3], service quality is known as a "relativistic and cognitive discrepancy between experience-based norms and performances, concerning product/service benefits" [7].

In terms of further steps for improving the quality of tourism services in hotel industry the „champions” are focusing on one of the following issues: (1) creating a culture of service (conceiving a coherent and logical system of the providing process which is learned and respected by the employees); (2) developing a service providing system based on empowering staff (empowering employees to choose the most appropriate services for the situation given, the customer etc.); (3) facilitating an orientation towards „customer listening”(knowing in detail the customer’s needs and preferences and adapting practices to those); (4) conceiving a guarantee in the process of providing services [2].

3. Method of research

In order to emphasize the assessments of tourists who arrived in Poiana Braşov resort regarding the satisfaction level for the consumption of accommodation

services, a quantitative marketing research was organized with the topic: "Opinions, attitudes and behaviors of tourists regarding the satisfaction of accommodation services consumption in the Poiana Braşov resort". The analyzed accommodation units were the Alpin hotel and the units of the chain Ana Hotels (Sport, Bradul and Poiana hotels). In the research were questioned the customers who benefited from tourism services in the hotels mentioned for at least one night.

The population taken into consideration within this research is formed by tourists who visited the Poiana Braşov resort, all categories of individuals, regardless the sex, age or civil status. In order to establish the sample, a trust level of 95% and an admitted error of $\pm 5\%$ have been considered. The resulted sample size in case of the percentage estimation is of 384 persons. The distribution of respondents among the two companies was equal.

The most important objectives taken into account for conducting the research aim to determine the importance of the criteria used in choosing the hotel services, the way in which tourists appreciate the purchased tourism services, the loyalty/return degree and the identification of the tourists typology who use the analyzed hotel services. The systematic random sampling was used, the mechanic step established having the value 10.

4. Results

At the question showing the degree in which tourists have used for the first time the services of the analyzed accommodation units it was noticed the fact that at "Alpin" hotel 73% of the interviewed persons have used accommodation services within the hotel in the past, while in the chain Ana Hotels the percentage of those who have repeated the stay was 76%. The values show a high

level of repeatability of the tourism consumption in the researched hotel units.

Regarding the question showing the reasons for the decision to use the services of these hotels the distribution of answers is presented in figure 1.

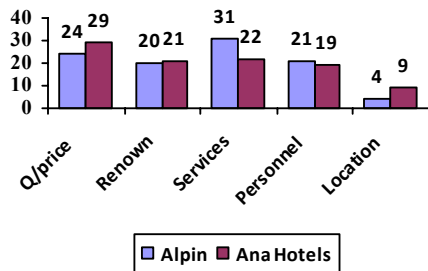


Fig. 1. *Motivations for choosing hotel (%)*

At “Alpin” hotel, the reason which had most answers regards the services offered with 31%, followed by quality/price ratio (24%) and by the employees’ professionalism (21%). Within “Ana Hotels” chain the quality/price ratio is considered the most important reason determining the customer to prefer these accommodation units, the ranking being continued with the services offered (22%) and the prestige on the market (21%). Another reason influencing tourists’ decision to choose to spend their vacation in Poiana Braşov in one of the hotels analyzed was location, percentage recorded being lower relative to other features, values obtained being 4% at “Alpin” hotel and 9% at Ana Hotels chain.

Regarding the respondents’ assessments on the satisfaction degree of the hotel services consumption the answers obtained for “Alpin” hotel are presented in figure 2.

Answers recorded show the fact that the highest percentage, namely 48% of the respondents assess the level of the service consumption satisfaction as being high, while 36% declare to be undecided.

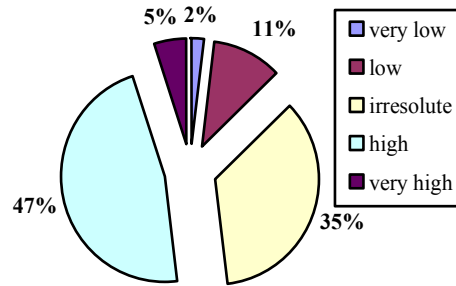


Fig. 2. *Frequency of the services consumption satisfaction level at “Alpin” hotel*

Further, 11% of the tourists staying in the hotel consider that the satisfaction level is low, 5% considered to be very high, while the answer "very low" was chosen by 2% of the respondents.

The distribution of answers at the same question within “Ana Hotels” chain is presented in figure 3.

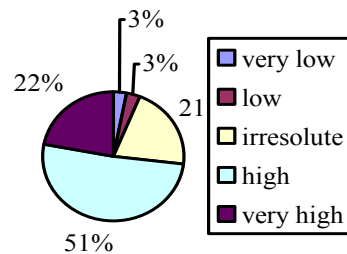


Fig. 3. *The frequency of the service consumption satisfaction level at “Ana Hotels” chain*

In the case of hotels composing the chain Ana Hotels 51% of the customers declare to be satisfied following the consumption of hotel services 22% consider that the satisfaction level is very high, 21% are undecided, and 3% is recorded for the tourists considering that the service level is low and very low.

Asked about their intention to return at the same hotel, the answers obtained are

shown in figure 4. In the case of “Alpin” hotel the intention to return is valid for 61% of the respondents, 28% of them do not know where they will stay when they come back in Poiana Brasov, while 11% will stay in other hotels.

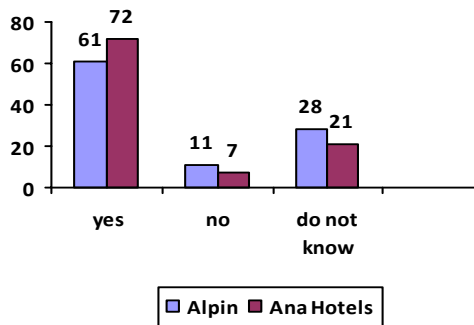


Fig. 4. The distribution of answers regarding the intention to return

The customers of “Ana” Hotels chain have mentioned the intention to return in a percentage of 72%, 21% of them do not know if they will return, and 7% of them answered that they do not intend to return.

Further, the tourists were asked to express their opinion regarding the holidays organized by the hotel for different celebrations (Christmas, Easter, New Years Eve, Haloween). The answers given by the respondents staying in hotel “Alpin” are shown in figure 5. According to the answers were calculated average values of the three features of the holidays offered. For the variety of holidays the average value is of 1,04, for the organization methods 1,51, and for their attractiveness the computed average value of opinions has the highest level, namely 1,84.

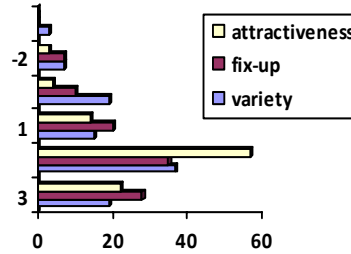


Fig. 5. The distribution of opinions regarding holiday features at “Alpin” hotel

The same analysis is presented in figure 6 for “Ana Hotels” chain.

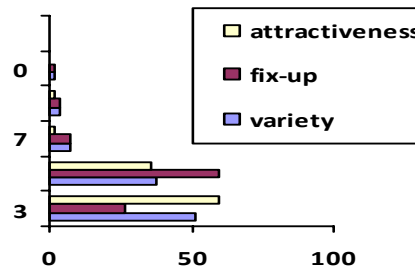


Fig. 6. The distribution of opinions regarding the features of holidays in “Ana Hotels” chain

The average values recorded for the assessment of features for holidays spent in Ana Hotels chain are 2, 32 for their variety, 2,00 for the organization method and 2,56 for attractiveness.

The sample was composed of women in a percentage of 46% and men 54%. Regarding the distribution on tourists’ areas of origin the situation is presented in figure 7. The most numerous segment is represented by tourists arrived from Bucharest, in a percentage of 29%, followed by those from Constanţa (21%), Cluj (17%), Timiş (12%), while from other areas of the country come 21% of the customers.

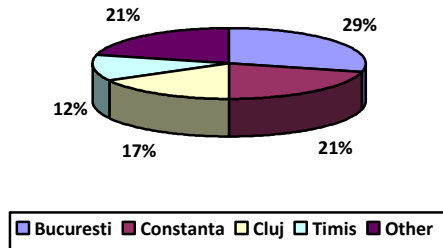


Fig. 7. *The distribution of respondents on areas of origin*

Distribution on age groups for the interviewed tourists is presented in figure 8.

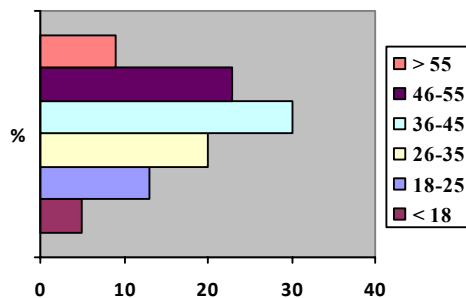


Fig. 8. *The distribution of respondents on age groups*

The best represented age group is of customers included in the range 36-45 years (30%), followed by those aged between 46-55 years (23%), 20% of the subjects were aged 26-35 years, 13% between 18-25 years, those aged over 55 years represent 9% of the researched sample, and those under 18 years have a 5% percentage.

5. Discussions

The two analyzed companies offering hospitality services are among the high comfort products offerings, both being symbolic for the profile market of the Poiana Brasov resort.

The intention to return is, according to answers recorded high, 76% at “Alpin” hotel and 73% at tourists staying in the hotels of Ana Hotels chain. The services provided, the price/quality ratio, the professionalism of the employees and the reputation of the hotels represent the main reasons for the customers in choosing to spend their holidays in Poiana Braşov in this units. The ranking is different among analyzed companies, but differences are not significant. It can be noticed, in this framework, the fact that customers’ expectations are high, as rates paid. The image of the hotel is important, speaking about a specific customer segment for which the social status impose the acquisition of expensive services, adapted to the position in society.

Regarding the satisfaction level after the tourism service consumption it can be noticed a percentage of approximately 50% of satisfied customers for both analyzed companies. On the other hand, for “Alpin” hotel the cumulative percentage of subjects undecided or not satisfied is of 42%. Similar, in the case of Ana Hotels chain the same percentage is of 27%. The high percentage of satisfied and very satisfied customers shows the concern of these hotels’ management to know and understand their customers’ requirements. In the same extent, it can be underlined at “Alpin” hotel especially the fact that an important number of customers are not fully satisfied with the tourism consumption, existing an image, perception or adaptation at tourists preferences deficit.

In the case of holidays offered by tourism units for celebrations or other events three features were analyzed as: their variety, organization method and attractiveness degree. It can be noticed also, the fact that the assessments of the Ana Hotels chain customers are superior to those recorded for “Alpin” hotel. Taking

into account this finding and the previous one it is outlined the increased interest of the management team of the “Ana Hotels” resort to diversify the offer of tourism services and to create the loyalty of the customers.

The answers showing the intention to return in the hotel are according with the previous results. 61% of the tourists staying at “Alpin” hotel will return, while 72% of the tourists who purchased services at “Ana Hotels” chain would like to renew the consumption experience.

Taking into account the type of customers for the two companies in Poiana Brasov, it can be noticed the high percentage of tourists coming from Bucharest, but also from Constanta, Cluj or Timisoara, the most developed areas in our country from the economic point of view and, as a consequence, the level of the population incomes is high. Also, the predominant age groups contain the range 25-55 years, being active consumers with important discretionary financial possibilities.

6. Conclusions

The permanent organization of marketing researches among customers represents the basis of the development, improvement and performances expected at the level of each company. More on the tourism market these actions are compulsory, as changes in the content of tourism demand are permanent and fast most often. Such approaches do not impose important human or financial efforts, but results can be spectacular. The present methodology for the classification of tourism units from our country eliminated among criteria the obligation to use questionnaires completed by tourists. An outstanding management team will understand the benefits of these actions, individual measures to convince the

customers to complete the questionnaires being a priority for each hotel and its staff.

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