IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF TOURIST SERVICES THROUGH STAFF INVOLVEMENT

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Abstract: *Treated as a distinct function of the company, quality presents particularities; some of its requirements will inevitably be fulfilled by the other functions. Quality is a strategic tool of the global management of organizations because it determines to the highest degree the competitiveness of products, services, firms, companies domestically and internationally. The large volume of new knowledge about the quality of products and services, the importance and implications of quality on economic and social indicators is just a few arguments in favour of the need for every organization to make special efforts for professionalism in the approach to quality.*

Key words*: quality, tourist services, competitiveness, economic and social indicators*

INTRODUCTION

The activity of hotel services starts from the perception that you have to be better than the other at any moment, which implies more information, training, competence. In order to provide a quality service, it is necessary to have a well-trained and motivated staff. The management training function is aimed at determining the participation of employees in fulfilling the company's objectives. Training support is the motivation that consists in correlating rewards or sanctions with the achievement of objectives [2,6].

In providing a quality hotel service, the customer contact staff is of great importance. This is the primary element in the success of the sale of the service, which is why it must possess a series of qualities necessary to achieve the established performances. So a good service seller must [3,4,7]:

- To be diplomatic and sympathetic - thinks about the interlocutor, refuses to contradict him, has the ability to change the word in a conflict situation. Sympathy is based on the natural smile and charisma;
- Be dynamic - have the courage and will not to refuse difficult contacts;
- To have the capacity for observation and reflection.

These requirements are part of a behavioral standard that customer contact personnel must meet [1,5,14,18].

The hotel service is a difficult chain to control, the manager's role being to control this chain and take the necessary measures to remedy any malfunctions by identifying their causes [10,16,17].

Being an element with a very large dose of subjectivity, the customer perceives the service differently from the quality conceived and the realization by the manager and employees of the service. This is the reason why the manager must involve the customer in communicating the satisfaction received from the service [9,12,15].

The direct contact of the reception staff with the client allows the analysis of the degree of satisfaction perceived by the client following the performance of the accommodation service [5,8,13].

This contact allows the identification of non-fulfilments for the client in terms of service quality, constituting the database, which allows the manager to conduct his action in order to eliminate the dysfunctions.[3]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

One of the most used methods of service quality control by measuring customer satisfaction is the opinion questionnaire. The opinion questionnaire offers the opportunity for the client to express his opinion on the service received [1,11,13].

In order to determine how to improve the offer of tourist services within the hotels, it was chosen to perform the analysis of the characterization of the tourists within the hotel mentioned in the previous chapter, respectively of the clientele segment.

This aspect involves a verification of the data obtained following the application of a questionnaire inside the hotel, followed by the coding of the questions and the answers obtained, the treatment and coding of the non-answers and, subsequently, the computerized recording of the data. The questionnaire was applied both in Romanian and in English, for foreign tourists, applicable to 40 tourists of different nationalities, in the period March-April 2022.

RESEARCH RESULTS

As we will see below, in the case of the analyzed hotel, those tourists predominate with a short or very short stay, of 2 to 5 days (70% of the total respondents), followed by a duration of 6 - 10 days (17.5% of the total respondents) and the duration of one day, which has a weight of 12.5% of the total respondents, an aspect due to the fact that the percentage of tourists who come to the hotel for different purposes varies. In our case, the predominant ones are tourists whose main motivation is business tourism, followed by leisure tourism and then transit tourism, respectively: business tourism (47.5%), leisure tourism (35%), transit tourism (12.5%)), for pleasure (5 %). The duration of a stay for business tourism is up to 7 days, the majority of tourists arriving at the hotel for this purpose registering a stay of up to 5 days. In terms of rest, tourists have an average stay of 2 - 10 days, and transit tourism registers a stay of 1 day.

Table 1.

The correlation between the number of days of stay and the purpose of the trip

Number of days/Purpose			**The purpose of the trip**				**TOTAL**
			of business	of rest	of pleasure	of transit	
Duration of stay	a day	Frequency (no. of respondents)				5	**5**
		% number of days				100%	100%
	between 2 - 5 days	Frequency	16	10	2		**28**
		% number of days	57,14%	35,71%	7,14%		100%
	between 6 - 10 days	Frequency	3	4			**7**
		% number of days	42,85%	57,14%			100%
TOTAL		Frequency	19	14	2	5	**40**
		% number of days	**47,5%**	**35%**	**5%**	**12,5%**	100%

Source: questionnaire data

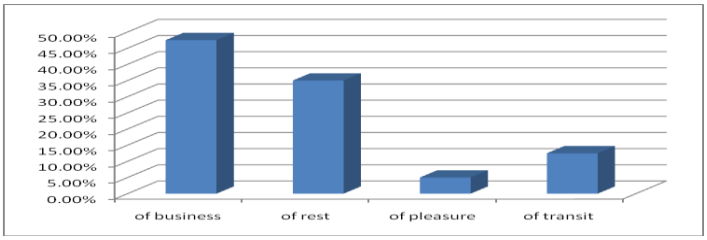

Figure 1. The purpose of the trip

Source: data obtained from the processing of the questionnaire

Regarding the purpose (type) of the trip and its practice, we note that during the analyzed period, the hotel recorded a maximum share of 50% of tourists who came accompanied, followed by tourists who arrived alone and then by those who came with their families.

Most of the tourists who came for business purposes are accompanied (68.4%), followed by those who came alone (26.3%).

Among the tourists who come for the purpose of rest, accompanied tourists and those who come with their family predominate, each registering a share of 42.8%.

Transit tourists register a weight of 80% for singles and 20% for those with family.

The main reason for choosing the hotel is a previous positive experience related to it, with a percentage share of 47.5% of the respondents, followed by the reason for recommending the hotel by friends or family (25%). The share of 17.5% of the respondents was found to have been influenced by the convenient location of the hotel. For the percentage of 7.5% respondents, they chose the hotel based on the recommendations of some local institutions, followed by the price level, with a percentage of 2.5%.

Regarding nationality, the highest percentage share is held by tourists with German citizenship (35% of all respondents), followed by Italian citizens (with 25%), Romanian citizens with a percentage share of 17.5%, followed by those from Denmark (12 .5%), the Netherlands (7.5%) and those from the Republic of Moldova (2.5%).

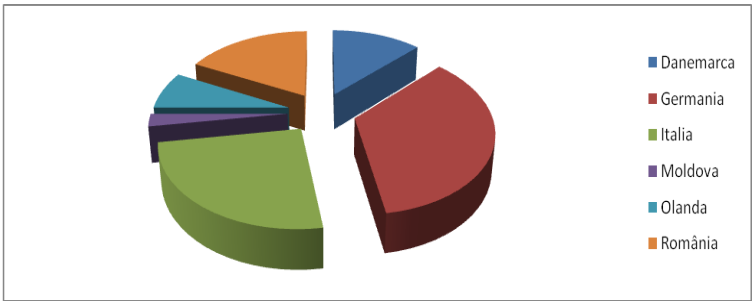

Figure 2. Nationality of tourists

Source: data obtained from the processing of the questionnaire

The hotel hosts 65% of salaried clients, respectively those sent by specific institutions (for example, industrial, agricultural enterprises, companies, etc.) and a percentage of 32.5% is held by business people (owners of specific enterprises). During the implementation period of the questionnaire, retired tourists and students were not registered and the non-responses are due to the fact that some customers did not want to answer or overlooked this variable.

Next, we highlight the level of appreciation of the tourists regarding the services offered by the hotel, based on some attributes established by the questionnaire, which the respondents were asked to note, depending on the degree of satisfaction offered by each one. The attributes were represented by means of a differential-semantic scale, each position of the scale was assigned a numerical value between 1 and 5: 5 - very satisfied, 4 - satisfied, 3 - satisfied, 2 - unsatisfied and 1 - for very unsatisfied. Then we calculated the individual score that corresponds to each attribute, and later the score by groups of attributes and finally the final score, a measure of the hotel's evaluation.

By evaluating the attributes related to the endowment, maintenance of accommodation spaces, sanitary spaces, comfort, quality of the hotel's fixed assets and others, final data represented in the table. We found that the most appreciated variables are the professionalism, kindness and good manners of the reception staff with a score of 4.82, the same score having the cleanliness and hygiene variable of the staff. The location and external appearance of the hotel obtained the most unfavorable score, respectively 3.02.

The evaluation of the attributes regarding the provision of services by the staff, demonstrates that the most favorably valued variable is the reception staff with 4.82, the restaurant staff, the least appreciated is the media travel agency staff of 3.65 having a level

satisfactorily. Other services, such as the food quality-price ratio, the score of 4.42, show the satisfactory level of the customers.

The general evaluation of the hotel, based on the attributes of the table, shows us that the strong score is: quietness inside and outside the hotel 4.27, satisfactory score; the standard of housekeeping, the cleanliness of the reception, hallways, stairs and rooms. The weakest points are recorded at: the location and the external appearance of the hotel 3.02 meaning a satisfactory level, respectively the standard of housekeeping and the cleanliness of the restaurant and others. The total average, following the general evaluation of the attributes, is a "satisfactory" score of 4.066.

Table 2.

Appreciation of the quality of the services provided

Appreciation of the quality of the services provided	No. respondents	The minimum value	Maximum value	Average
the location, the external appearance of the hotel	40	2	4	3,02
the professionalism, kindness, good manners of the staff	35	3	4	3,65
the standard of housekeeping, the cleanliness of the restaurant	40	3	5	3,75
the interior decoration, the ambience, the aesthetics of the hotel	39	3	5	3,97
the standard of housekeeping, the cleanliness of the bathroom	40	3	5	3,97
the standard of housekeeping, the cleanliness of the reception	40	3	5	4
the standard of housekeeping, the cleanliness of the room	40	3	5	4
the standard of housekeeping, the cleanliness of the hallways and stairs	40	3	5	4,02
the professionalism, kindness, good manners of the restaurant staff	40	3	5	4,15
the internal/external tranquility of the hotel	40	3	5	4,27
the quality of the food for the price paid	40	1	5	4,42
cleanliness, personal hygiene (general)	40	3	5	4,82
the professionalism, kindness, good manners of the accommodation staff	40	3	5	4,82
TOTAL AVERAGE				**4.066**

Source: questionnaire data

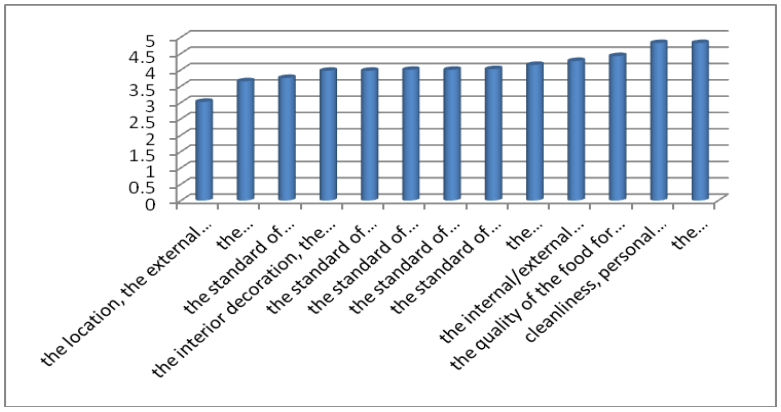

Figure 3. The quality of the services provided

Source: data obtained from the processing of the questionnaire

The level of appreciation of the tourists regarding the possible improvements of the services proposed by the hotel assigned each position of the scale a numerical value from 3 for "yes", 2 for "don't know or average" and 1 for "no".

The maximum desire of the customers regarding direct access to the Internet is highlighted with a maximum score of 2.948 and obtaining from the hotel reception leaflets and illustrations about the locality with a score of 2.692, respectively air conditioning in the rooms 2.538.

Neutral media records the proposals for the introduction of tourist programs, respectively radio in rooms and newspapers.

Negative average was obtained for stronger lighting in the rooms.

The total average, 2.32, related to the attributes explains the idea that tourists are not very interested in the changes and improvements of the services proposed by the management of the hotel unit, so that they, the hotel customers, themselves propose a series of proposals to improve the current or future services.

Table 3.

Improving the services offered by the hotel

Services proposed by the hotel for improvement	No. respondents	Average
stronger light in the room	39	1,358
radio, newspapers	39	2,025
tourist programs	39	2,333
comfort/quality of beds and linen	39	2,410
air conditioning in the room	39	2,538
advertising leaflets, illustrations	39	2,692
direct access to the internet	39	2,948
TOTAL (average)	39	**2,32**

Source: questionnaire data

Table 4.

Changes to services proposed by the customer

Changes to services proposed by customers		The frequency	Percentage
Answers	external appearance of the hotel	10	25%
	offering excursions	1	2,5%
	car park	7	17,5%
	reducing noise pollution	6	15%
	placing the reception in a more visible place	3	7,5%
	company indicator light (hotel)	9	22,5%
	transfer service from/to the airport	2	5%
	lower prices on the menu	2	5%
TOTAL		**40**	**100%**

Source: questionnaire data

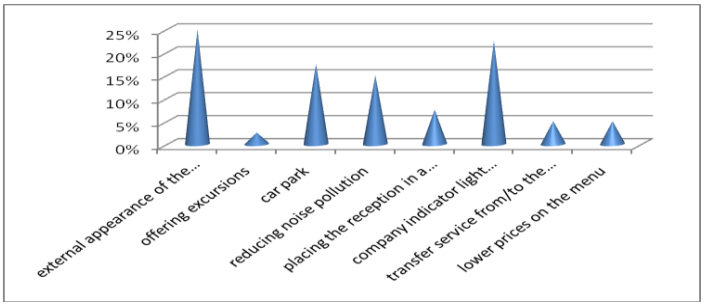

Figure 4. Service changes proposed by customers

Source: data obtained from the processing of the questionnaire

CONCLUSIONS

Quality does not refer exclusively to a company's product or service, but to the entire universe of the customer's relationship with the company. Quality is not something absolute, but must be defined by setting individual quality standards. It is necessary to communicate and then reach a harmonization between what is meant by quality to the service provider, what is promised to the client, what one expects and what is achieved.

The hotel still has its favorite customers at the moment, because it records, following the results obtained, highlighted by the percentage of 53% of the total respondents who will definitely return to the hotel and approximately 32% of those who will probably return.

The result is that the services are provided according to the wishes of the tourist segment that predominates in the hotel.

We have carried out an analysis on the improvement proposals specified by the customers, from which it appears that, at the hotel management level, the following actions should be applied: new differentiated product/service policies and strategies, new price policies and strategies, promotion, respectively long-term strategies, establishing budgets for all actions, followed by control and analysis of their realization. The actions will serve to attract new clients and keep existing clients.

Obtaining the information obtained from the analysis of the questionnaires, the management must compare them with the current services and with the services offered by the competitors.

Emphasis must be placed on providing facilities for consumers, such as: car parking, transport to the airport, change of reception location, etc.

The hotel, a model of functioning as an accommodation unit, hopes that through the united action of all its employees it will continue to remain in the top hotels and through what it offers and will offer, to become more and more known on the tourist map of Romania.

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