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Advances in Economics, Law and Political Sciences

- **Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Risk Management, Assessment and Mitigation (RIMA '14)**
- **Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Economics, Political and Law Science (EPLS '14)**
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Quality of hotel services Case study: ARO Palace Hotel Braşov

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Abstract: Consumers today enjoy a wide choice of products and hotel services.. In the framework of services' diversification, quality of hotel services and increase of customer satisfaction and confidence in accommodation units should be the priority of any hotel administrator. This paper refers to the quality of services in the hotel field and how it is perceived by customers in the case of Aro Palace Hotel Brasov.

Key words: quality, customers, hotel, tourist services, accommodation, expectations, perceptions

1. Introduction

At the beginning of this century and millennium, travel and tourism industry, is on the world level, the most dynamic activity field and, at the same time, the most important generator of jobs. In light of this century is accepted the idea that the world economy will be driven by three over-service industries: information technology; telecommunications and tourism industry.

The tourism product is continuously demanded every year, season, or even daily, by a growing segment of the population from all over the world, regardless of the existence of circumstantial situations that manifest locally or regionally.

Today, almost unanimously, experts say there is a tourism industry, with many priorities for some countries due to business ties determined by domestic and international travel.

For Romania, tourism is one of the priority sectors. Through resources used and interconnections with other branches of the national economy tourism is an important factor for economic progress. Products quality is one of the essential elements of quality management through this standard being satisfied customers' requirements. The quality of hotel product is

accomplished by a sum of many achievements of all hotel unit employees whose work is carried out in the best conditions. All hotel unit activities are based on quality standards and legislation for guidance, so that the finished product is of the highest quality [2].

Overall quality is the sum of those characteristics of an entity (service, product, process, organization and their combination) that affect its ability to meet the defined and implied needs [4].

2. Conceptual issues concerning hotel services

In terms of hosting means diversification, currently, the hotel service is no longer limited to accommodation . It is complemented by a number of additional benefits being the result of combining a variety of activities. The range of additional services beside accommodation is almost unlimited and difficult to separate in relation to the basic function [3]. Their variety is dependent on the conditions offered by technical and material base in terms of building type, level of equipment, comfort category. Quality is an important factor on hotel services market.

Accommodation service varies through its content by creating conditions and comfort for traveler housing and leisure [1]. This service is presented as a complex activity, arising from the operation of the accommodation capacity and is made up of a group of benefits offered to tourist, during his stay in accommodation units.

Accommodation service development requires first, the existence of an appropriate technical infrastructure (hotels, motels, etc.), with adequate facilities that provide optimal conditions to the tourist and meet, as appropriate, other functions. Secondly, accommodation service is influenced by the quality of the staff and organization of work in hotels.

Hotel industry and accommodation service quality affects not only the development of tourism in general, but also the efficiency of this activity [5]. By attraction exerted, accommodation ensures better use of tourism potential, the availability of labor, material and technical base capacity, leading to the achievement of higher operating efficiency. Moreover, the complexity and diversity of accommodation services is a prestige factor in tourism.

3. Presentation of Aro Palace Brasov

Located in the historic center, ARO PALACE is the only five star hotel in Braşov, being a standard of refinement, good taste and professionalism. The hotel was opened in 1939 and was expanded in 1963 by construction of a new building. Aro Palace has undergone a modernization process consisting in raising comfort at 5 stars [7] by upgrading breakfast rooms, the lobby, arranging in the 8th floor a club Belvedere with restaurant, bar, Business Center and Europe Conference Center. Modernization continued with SPA Center [6] and banquet halls, night bar and the old 4 stars wing of the hotel. The hotel rooms are elegant, spacious and comfortable.

An important industrial, cultural and business center, Brasov is also a traditional university center. Due to the numerous historical and artistic monuments, it is one of the most important tourist centers of the country. In order to determine tourism market opportunities in Brasov and to define the position of SC Aro-Palace SA it is necessary to study the existing hotel supply in this market. In Brasov there are many hotels that can be competitors for Aro-Palace hotel, mainly hotels in the same category. Some of them are: Kronwell

****, Villa Prato ****, Ambient **** Ramada Brasov ****, Esprit, Belvedere ****, Golden Time ****. However, Aro-Palace hotel is differentiated from competition by the image created over the years and the high quality services they offer to customers. To be successful, a company must satisfy consumer needs and wishes better than its competitors. Aro-Palace, thanks to its privileged position that has on Brasov market, due to advantages such as: the location in the city center, having unique 4-star and 5-stars resort hotel, due to additional services they offer, large spaces for organizing conferences, dinners, receptions and conference room equipped with simultaneous translation system, may use a number of strategies that small businesses can not afford to apply.

On December 27th, 2005 was opened the new wing of the hotel Aro Palace, which received 5-star classification following an investment of EUR 15 million. The upgrading of the wings of the hotel started in 2002. During this stage of modernization were taken actions in order to raise the 5-star comfort by rearranging breakfast rooms, the lobby, arranging the 8th floor for Belvedere club with restaurant, bar, business center, and the achievement of Europe Conference Centre, which has a capacity of about 600 seats. [8]

Currently, the new wing has 198 rooms, including 7 suites, a luxury bar, a VIP club, a conference center with a capacity of 600 seats.

In Romania there are a few 5 star hotels located in the capital and major cities including: Bucharest - Crowne Plaza Hotel, Athenee Palace Hilton, Opera Plaza Cluj-Napoca, Hilton Sibiu and on the seaside (Palm Beach Hotel, Club Scandinavia Hotel) [9].

4. Research on quality of services offered by Aro Palace Brasov

The quality of a service is the result of the comparison between what the consumer wanted from the company and what he received, or the degree in which the service provided meets consumer expectations. The quality of service is the company's ability to meet or exceed consumer expectations, "expectations" meaning everything consumers want from a service.

SERVQUAL was the first method developed and applied in the assessment of service quality and has been the subject of a large number of experiments reported in publications. This method has been tested in a variety of settings:

professional, health, tourism, transport, library, telecommunications, trade services, etc.

For each dimension (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, trust and empathy) is determined a number of 4-5 questions specifying the consumer expectations from the requested service and perceptions (performance or results) that they have after getting the service ..

This research was intended to determine the quality of services offered by Aro Palace Hotel Brasov. There were calculated indicators of service quality provided by this hotel and the results were interpreted.

The objective of this research is to assess customer expectations and perceptions about the services offered by the Aro Palace hotel from Brasov city.

There were analyzed the 5 elements that define the services quality: tangibility, reliability, trust, responsiveness and empathy. It was made a comparison between the tourists' expectations statements and perceptions statements on Aro Palace Hotel. The differences between these statements represent tourists' satisfaction whether they are positive or their dissatisfaction if the differences are negative.

Most respondents (68.4%) have used 3 times the hotel services offered by Aro Palace, 11.6% of respondents used them for the second time, and for 20% is the first time when they stay in the hotel.

In Table no. 1 are presented the values that have resulted from this research on the overall quality of services provided by ARO PALACE Hotel.

Tabel 1 The overall quality of service

No.	Dimension	The average value of the quality of service
1.	tangibility	-0,823
2.	reliability	+0,0211
3.	responsiveness	+0,3883
4.	trust	+0,253
5.	empathy	-0,1150
	The overall quality of hotel services offered by Aro Palace	-0.2756

-0.823 value of tangibility is a negative value, indicating a lower quality of service. Analyzing items tangibility of the 17 statements, 9 had positive difference, customers being satisfied. These were related to location, number of parking spaces, cleanliness of the eating establishments, the rooms, bathrooms, appropriate behavior and outfit of employees, leisure facilities (spa), as well as internet facilities and satellite television. These positive differences indicate that tourists are satisfied, their expectations are surpassed. Instead, customers are disappointed with the exterior and interior of the building, attractiveness of the brochures, menus, quality and variety of food, employee training programs, entertainment and equipments.

Reliability has emerged with a positive value of 0.0211. It can be noticed a satisfaction of tourists towards flexibility, understanding employees, keeping promises made. Of the four statements, only one showed a negative value,

tourists being unhappy because they had to wait when dining.

The value of 0.3883 indicates a satisfactory level of responsiveness, showing tourist satisfaction regarding the availability of the hotel Aro Palace employees to help, answer questions quickly and without delay and to be easily found when guests need them.

Confidence in the services offered by Aro Palace hotel has a value of 0.253. Of the five questions was only a negative value, in terms of addressing the needs of tourists, being satisfied with the level of confidence that inspires the hotel accommodation, and staff. It is important to mention that inside, customers feel safe with all the security features that have been implemented at Aro Palace.

Last dimension studied, empathy, has a negative value of -0.1150. Analyzing statements within the elements of empathy, we can see that 2 of the 3 had negative difference, which means that

to a low extent individual attention given to each individual and the sincerity with which they are treated did not reach customer expectations. However, in case of special needs employees treat tourists in a specific and appropriate way.

The overall quality of hotel services is negative, of -0.2756, due to internal factors that can be changed over time by learning, understanding and fairness. It is a value that by perseverance can be easily improved, but also has to be maintained over time.

Customers must always be satisfied, and at the same time, the hotel must be able to attract new customers and to retain the reputation it enjoys.

60% of respondents in the research will return to the hotel, while 40% of respondents do not know, but it is important to note that none rejected the idea of using the services offered by Aro Palace.

Some tourists have complained about high prices in relation to recreation services quality at especially the pool. A large proportion of respondents said they were very satisfied with the hotel program, the central position, the quality of service and especially the staff, who demonstrated professionalism.

5. Conclusions

Aro Palace met the highest quality standards and successfully implemented all standards governing the quality of services so that they exceed customer expectations.

With the hotel's renovation in 2005 regarding the new wing, quality management was one of the highest class satisfying the most rigorous quality standards.

With the implementation of quality standards in management of Aro Palace hotel were established several strategies in the short, medium and long term, depending on the complexity, so that it can meet customers' needs regardless of the period.

The result of SERVQUAL research showed that customers are generally satisfied with quality-price ratio, the hotel's location and additional services.

Finally it can be said that investments made to upgrade the hotel and strategies implemented and put into practice over the years have made a good impression to the tourists leading to increased hotel occupancy.

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