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MODIFIED SERVQUAL MODEL OF SERVICE QUALITY MEASUREMENT IN HOTELS WITH BUSINESS FACILITIES

Abstract: Service quality is an important factor for successful business in the hotel industry. Hotels that attach great importance to measuring of service quality and continuously improve the quality can use this as a competitive advantage in relation to the hotels that do not attach particular significance to the quality. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate the importance of measuring of the service quality of the hotels offering business contents, whereby a new model of quality measuring has been created based on the existing SERVQUAL model. Another aim of this paper is the use of the new model as a starting point in further studies in order to gain an insight into the current situation in Serbia when it comes to the service quality of the hotels with business facilities.
Keywords: service quality, congress tourism, quality measurement, modified SERVQUAL model

1. INTRODUCTION

In terms of contemporary management, the quality is considered one of the most important factors of organization's competitiveness. For instance, in service organizations such as hotels the quality is observed from the customer's perspective. The standards define the service as "a created outcome, based on activities and interaction between supplier and users, as well as supplier's activity itself for satisfying the needs (demands) of the customers." Definition of a service cannot be adequate without wider definitions of quality that substantially complement the definition given by the standards. Thus, service quality is defined as an extent to which the specification of users/customers/guests is being satisfied.

Providing services to users/ customers/guests means consistent respect and fulfillment of their demands [1].

The definition of service quality depends on the type of service, but all services have in common the importance of basic performances, features, such as:
1) Reliability – the ability to provide service as specified in terms of content, quality and time.
2) Responsibility – relation of the top management, management and all employees to the demands of users/guests.
3) Competency – knowledge and ability of the employees to provide services;
4) Kindness – the ability to provide guests with fast service and help;
5) Access to the service – the service must always be available without waiting, in the right place and at the right time.
6) Communication – the user (guest) must be well informed.

7) Credibility – the staff members improve the image of the hotel with their actions and keep it positive.
8) Safety (guaranty) – knowledge of the staff and its willingness to bring trust and reliability. Appearance of every risk is prevented.
9) Knowing the users/customers/guests and – hotel management and staff are constantly getting to know the requirements, needs and expectations of the customers/guests.
10) Tangibility – physical facilities, equipment and contact persons [1].

Improvement of the quality has become the priority task not only for the hotel's top management, but also for all its employees. A comprehensive introduction and improvement of quality should contribute to achievement of overall improvement of people's life quality, which includes improving the living standards, environmental protection, protection of healthcare and safety [2]. Hotels, in which exists an interaction between employees and guests, highlight the doctrine of service quality as fundamental and pay even more attention to it.

The Paper is organized as follows: The Section 2 addresses the problem of measuring the quality of congress tourism, basics of the SERVQUAL method are given in the Section 3, the Section 4 comprises the principles of modification of the SERVQUAL method that can be used for measuring the service quality in congress tourism, conclusion is given in the Section 5.

2. CONGRESS TOURISM

Congress tourism is nowadays a growing segment of tourism market, due to globalization at all levels of business and life. There is a growing need of people to travel, meet other people with same or similar interests, learn from experts in various fields, in order to achieve professional and personal development, but also to present some new product (service) [3].

Conferences, congresses and conventions are particular kind of business events that bring people together to discuss topics that are in their field of interest. These events can be both commercial and noncommercial and can last from few hours to several days. What classifies such events in the area of business tourism is the fact that their participants use some services that are specific for regular tourists and that they usually reside on the destination over at least one night [4].

The importance of the congressional activity is evdent in respect of:
- Technological development and progress of world science in general.
- Economic and business cooperation.
- Overall communication among people of different beliefs, cultures, races and from different regions.
- Overall mobility of the new group of tourists.
- Economic effects for all factors of congressional activity.
- National advertising of all factors of congressional activity.
- Advertising of national and tourist values of the host country.
- Peace in the world [5].

Development of congress tourism requires a quality offer of congress-tourism activities that will meet the needs of both participants and organizers of the meetings. Quality tourist offer is very important, because the participants of business events always have some free time to take the advantage of visiting cultural and historical sites of the locality. The attractiveness of the destination should be higher if the participants stay longer in one place. When congresses are shorter, it is easier to organize a visit to the city, but when the number of days of stay is higher, it is more difficult to maintain the particular destination attractive.

Congress offer of the destination includes all objects that allow a smooth flow of business meetings. In the following table Davidson [6] points out the advantages and disadvantages of every type of facility in which business events can take place.

Table 1. Advantages and disadvantages of hotels with business meeting facilities

Building type	Advantages	Disadvantages
Congress and conference centers	The possibility of organizing an event with a large number of participants, access to modern technology and technical support, often have a showroom.	Usually no accommodation facilities on board, sometimes not suitable for smaller events.
Hotels	Everything under one roof, unique price for a package of services (accommodation, meals, conference services), sparing time (especially airport hotels) because there is no transfer.	Inevitable contact of business and regular hotel guests, not suitable for events with hundreds or thousands of participants, particularly in Europe, the lack of flexibility of meeting rooms, the lack of small rooms.
Universities	Service quality in accordance with the price, scientific environment, possibility of accommodation, availability of rooms of different size.	Lack of comfort and service in comparison to hotels, organization of events usually only during the holidays, disorientation in space possible because of the size of university campuses.
Specific facilities	Unique experience, unique price for package of services on ships.	Inflexibility due to the primary function and structure of the object, usually not providing services of accommodation, no long-term cooperation with organizers of the event.

Source: Davidson and Cope [6]

Hotels in Serbia are more and more popular when it comes to the congress tourism. Hotels offer a unique product, since they provide accommodation and meals in one place where also a business event is held. The majority of modern hotels are equipped with modern technical means in conference rooms that allow adequate seminars, congresses, conventions, business presentations, business meetings, as well as other forms of business events. Economic effects of business events taking place in a hotel are very significant since the participants of those events can use other hotel services (sports facilities, wellness, spa program etc.). It is particularly important for hotels to organize business events during the period when the capacities are not full i.e. off-season, because of better possibility to use the capacities and it is also easier for the hotel staff to meet the needs of its guests when there is not a lot of work.

3. SERQUAL METHOD IN SERVICE QUALITY MEASUREMENT

In the analysis of quality assurance it is important to point out three aspects:
- Customers evaluate service quality more difficult than product quality.
- Perception of service quality is a result of the comparison of customer's expectations and actual performances.
- Assessment of the quality does not provide only one outcome, but it includes also assessment of the overall process of providing the service [7].

One of the most commonly used methods for measuring the service quality is SERVQUAL [8], developed on basis of the model for determining customer satisfaction with quality of service in relation to their expectations, that was developed by the same authors.

These authors have defined the service quality as perception of specific qualities of service companies, which is based on a comparison of performances that particular company provided its customers with and general expectations of the customers that exist for all companies that provide the same services in some field. The SERVQUAL model is used by service companies in order for them to easier understand the expectations and perceptions of their customers.

The SERVQUAL consists of two sections:
- The section of expectations, containing 22 statements for noting the general customers' expectations.
- The section of perceptions, including the statements that measure the customers' assessment of the specific service category of the company.

The scale called Likert scale with a range from 7 (totally agree) to 1 (totally disagree) follows each statement. The SERVQUAL measuring instrument is updated twice in different forms: once to measure expectations and once to measure perceptions of service users. Afterwards the Gap, or the difference between perceptions and expectations, is calculated.
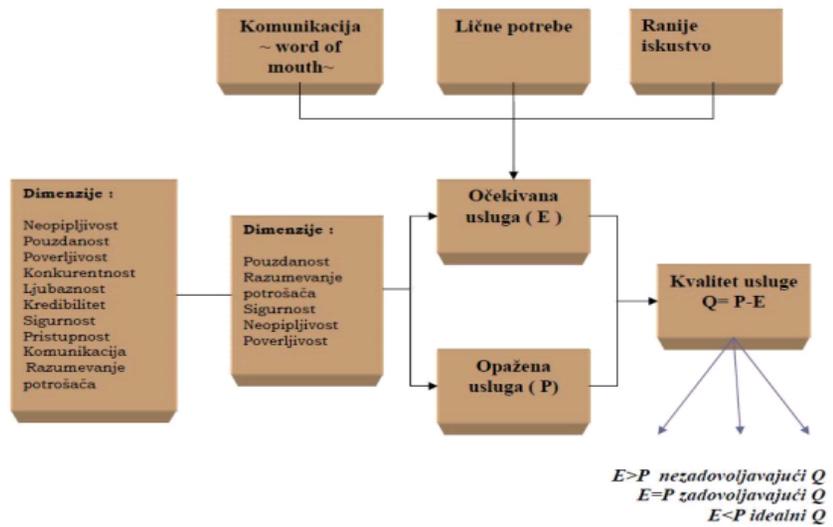

$$E>P \text{ nezadovoljavajući } Q$$
$$E=P \text{ zadovoljavajući } Q$$
$$E<P \text{ idealni } Q$$

Figure 1. Dimensions of SERVQUAL measuring instrument [9]

4. MODIFIED SERQUAL METHOD IN SERVICE QUALITY MEASUREMENT IN HOTEL INDUSTRY

This section presents the principles of the modified SERVQUAL method. The modified SERVQUAL method can be used for measuring the service quality of

hotels with business facilities. The first 11 questions were taken from the proposed model, referring to accommodation and hotel service in general. The other 11 questions were defined by the authors.

These additional questions cover all relevant aspects of the hotel business facilities. The modified SERVQUAL method is given in Table 2.

Table 2. Modified SERVQUAL method

Questions	Model
1. Hotel staff looks neat.	Servqual
2. When the hotel promises to do something until specific time, it does it.	Servqual
3. When guests have problems, the hotel shows sincere interest for solving them.	Servqual
4. Hotel provides its services at the time promised to do so.	Servqual
5. Hotel staff is very capable to inform the guests about a precise place where a service will be provided.	Servqual
6. Hotel staff is always ready to help the guests.	Servqual
7. Behavior of hotel employees gives confidence to the guests.	Servqual
8. Hotel employees have knowledge to answer the guests' questions.	Servqual
9. The hotel gives individual attention to its guests.	Servqual
10. The hotel wishes all the best to its guests.	Servqual
11. The hotel staff understands specific needs of its guests.	Servqual
12. The hotel has enough accommodation capacities for organizing business events.	New
13. Congress hall has enough seats holding business events.	New
14. Equipment for business events meets the users' demands.	New
15. Furniture in the conference room is comfortable enough and convenient.	New
16. The hotel has enough parking places for participants of business events.	New
17. Space arrangement in the congress hall is adjusted to users' requirements.	New
18. Hotel lobby is functional enough for breaks to take place during business events.	New
19. The hotel offers convenient services of food and beverage to the participants of business events.	New
20. Location of the hotel corresponds to business guests.	New
21. Equipment and furniture in the conference hall are visually appealing.	New
22. Hotel staff is flexible when it comes to sudden demands of business clients.	New

5. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The new model of measuring service quality in hotels offering business contents should enable better understanding of the needs of final users, which directly impacts the improvement of services. The proposed model will be used to survey participants of business events. On the basis of the results, service quality can be analyzed from different aspects: location of the hotel, congress hall, services provided etc. Based on the results of measurement, it is possible to draw conclusions relevant for a hotel with business facilities. The intention of the questionnaire is gaining of adequate knowledge about the possibilities of hotels in Serbia when it comes to congress tourism, as well as to outline to particular hotels which are their advantages over their competitors and which disadvantages they have to overcome in order to do business at a high level. Using the results of the study, it is also possible to identify the hotel with the highest number of satisfied clients, making it a role model for development of business space, as well as behavior of staff towards clients and performing of their tasks.

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