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Article

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Original scientific paper

ANALYSIS OF FOREIGN TOURISTS' SATISFACTION WITH THE QUALITY OF ACCOMMODATION OFFER IN THE CITY OF BELGRADE

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Abstract

The subject of Research in this paper is the satisfaction of foreign tourists with the quality of the accommodation offer in the city of Belgrade, which represents the most developed and most visited tourist destination in the Republic of Serbia. The research was conducted on a sample of 262 foreign respondents, who stayed and used accommodation services in Belgrade. The results of the research showed that foreign tourists are mostly satisfied with the quality of the accommodation offer, and it was concluded based on the average scores that the degree of satisfaction is highest in the case of the location of the accommodation facilities and the competence and friendliness of the employees. However, the degree of satisfaction of foreign tourists with the quality of the accommodation offer in Belgrade is not at an enviable level when it comes to the availability of additional facilities in the accommodation facility and the organization of various types of events. Based on the results of the research, the authors defined guidelines for improving the quality of the existing accommodation offer in the city of Belgrade, as well as recommendations for future research.

Keywords: satisfaction, foreign tourists, accommodation offer, Belgrade

JEL classification: L83, Z32, Z39

INTRODUCTION

The capital of the Republic of Serbia is a destination with the most developed tourist offer, which is adapted to the needs and motives of city tourists, which separates it from other cities on the level of state (Bučić et al., 2015; Podovac, 2021a). The primary elements of tourism offer in the city of Belgrade include a favorable geo-strategic position, suitable climatic conditions, a diverse structure of plant and animal species, water resources, but also a large number of anthropogenic elements in the form of built attractions (Dražić et al., 2014; Podovac, 2021b). The cultural and historical heritage, manifestations, natural resources with recreational areas, restaurants and other forms of catering facilities are base for tourism development while the key attractions are mostly located near the city center (Stevanović & Malinić, 2016; Pavlović & Jovanović 2021). One of the main predispositions for the development of tourism is the existence of a developed traffic infrastructure, respectively, primarily the development of air traffic. At Nikola Tesla Airport, a large number of flights to important world destinations are made

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on an annual basis, but it is also continuously being improved. According to official statistics, 3,286,000 flights were made in 2021, which is far more in relation to the 1,904,025 flights that were made in 2020 under the influence of the global health epidemic (VINCIS Airports, 2022). Rich cultural heritage consists of numerous cultural and historical monuments, sacral buildings, archaeological sites, memorials, respectively slightly more than 400 sites of cultural heritage that are under the protection of the state. In addition to the cultural heritage, part of the tourist offer of this destination is also protected natural assets, which cover about 2% of the total area of the city (Joksimović, et al., 2014; Podovac, 2021b). The cultural heritage sites are very significant, among which stand out the Belgrade Fortress, St. Sava Temple, Synagogue, etc., but also the natural assets such as Veliko ratno ostrvo, Danube and Sava rivers, Avala, Kosutnjak et al. (Štetić et al., 2014; Todorović & Deđanski, 2017). The event program consists of 11,000 events of predominantly cultural content that are held annually, some of which are of international importance (BEMUS, FEST, BITEF and Belef) (Official website of the city of Belgrade, 2022). The structure of the accommodation offer is very diverse, bearing in mind that primarily hotel accommodation is available to visitors. When it comes to the structure of accommodation, a total of 112 catering establishments for hotel-type accommodation are registered, of which 64 are hotels and 48 are garni hotels, which have 7,349 accommodation units and 10,583 beds (Strategy for the development of tourism in the city of Belgrade 2020-2025, 2019). According to the research results which was conducted in 2018 on a sample of slightly more than 2,000 tourists who visited Belgrade, it was determined that this destination is visited by the largest number of tourists from Europe (69.1%) and Asia (13.3%). The research results showed that over 70% of the respondents were in Belgrade for the first time and that the tourists are mainly people aged 35-50 years with an equal representation of men and women. They mostly gathered information about Belgrade and its offer via the Internet (55.8%), while the primary reasons for staying in the Serbian capital are leisure and entertainment (77.4%) and a smaller number of visits are motivated by business reasons. According to the results of the mentioned research, couples (42.1%) and families with children (25.2%) are primary visitors while the average daily consumption outside accommodation amounts to slightly more than 68 euros. Tourists use accommodation in hotels (54.4%) but also in private accommodation (30.5%) (Strategy of Tourism Development of the City of Belgrade 2020-2025, 2019).

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Some empirical studies indicated great level of tourists' satisfaction with the quality of tourist offer in city of Belgrade. In his paper, Paunović (2013) concluded, based on the results of the research, that tourists who visit Belgrade mostly do so for fun and leisure, and they often stay in private accommodation and hotels. On the other hand, Podovac (2021b) stated in her paper that tourists who visit Belgrade mostly do so also for business reasons, but in a large number of cases also for entertainment and family visits. Todorović and Jovičić (2016) pointed out, in addition to the profile of young tourists, that stay in the capital of Serbia predominantly choose to use accommodation services in hotels and hostels. Analyzing the degree of satisfaction with international cultural events in Belgrade, Zečević et al. (2016) stated that tourists are very satisfied with the offer of this destination, highlighting the cultural aspect as the dominant reason for visiting and

staying. According to Šimičević and Štetic (2015), Belgrade is mostly visited by business tourists, which is why the accommodation offer should be adapted to the requirements of this high-paying market segment. Focusing on researching the satisfaction of conference students in Belgrade, Dunjić et al. (2012) came to conclusion that business tourists are very satisfied with the quality of hotel services. When investigating the possibilities of evaluating the element of Belgrade's tourist offer from the perspective of service users (tourists/consumers), Tošić (2010) determined that the contents of the tourist offer of this destination, including the accommodation service, was very well perceived by tourists and singled out as one of the best segments of the offer. Although a certain number of papers have been published with the aim of defining the profile of tourists visiting Belgrade, the degree of satisfaction with the quality of individual elements of the tourist offer, especially when it comes to accommodation services, has not yet been sufficiently investigated. In this sense, the goal of the research was set, whose research results are presented in this paper. The analysis of the degree of satisfaction of foreign tourists with the quality of the accommodation offer of Belgrade will enable the definition of guidelines for improvement of quality of accommodation and adapting it to the needs of tourists.

2. METHODOLOGY

Empirical research was conducted in the period from May 15 to July 15, 2021, with a goal of determining the level of satisfaction of foreign tourists with the quality of the accommodation offer. The authors used a structured questionnaire, and a 5-point Likert Scale was applied. The questionnaire was distributed to tourists during their stay in the city of Belgrade. It consisted of 12 questions, divided into 4 segments. The first part of the questionnaire includes questions about the basic characteristics of the respondents. Respondents answered questions about the motives and length of stay in Belgrade, and about the used sources of information when choosing accommodation in the next section of questionnaire. In the third part of the questionnaire, respondents rated the degree of satisfaction with certain elements of Belgrade's accommodation offer on a scale from 1-completely dissatisfied to 5-completely satisfied. The fourth part of the questionnaire included questions about overall satisfaction with the accommodation service, the relationship between price and experience/value, as well as about future intentions. The research sample included 262 foreign respondents, who used accommodation services in Belgrade. The collected data were processed within the statistical package SPSS.26, where frequency and percentages, measures of central tendency (arithmetic mean) and measures of dispersion (standard deviation) were calculated.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Following, the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents will be presented. According to gender, male respondents are more represented in the sample, with 56.9%. When it comes to age, 35.1% of respondents belong to the 36-45 age group, while 24% of respondents are in the group 26-35. Majority of the respondents are highly educated (81.3%), with a completed master's or doctoral academic studies. According to the level of monthly income, 57.6% of respondents declared that they earn between 1,001-2,000 euros.

Table 1. Basic information about the respondents (N=262)

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	149	56.9
Female	113	43.1
Age		
18-25	14	5.3
26– 35	63	24.0
36-45	92	35.1
46-55	50	19.1
56-65	31	11.8
66 and older	12	4.6
Education		
Bachelor	49	18.7
Master/PhD	213	81.3
Monthly income		
Up to 1000 e	63	24.0
1001-2000	151	57.6
2001-3000	10	3.8
More than 3000e	38	14.5

Table 2 shows the results of processing collected data on travel motives, length of stay in accommodation facilities, as well as sources of information, which respondents used before booking accommodation services in a specific facility in Belgrade. It is visible that 53.1% of the respondents stayed in Belgrade for business reasons, while 46.9% visited Belgrade for a holiday. In terms of the length of stay, 47.3% of the respondents stayed in Belgrade in duration of four to five days. The main source of information for the largest number of respondents when choosing an accommodation facility in which they will be staying is the Internet (46.2%).

Table 2. Analysis of respondents' answers to questions about staying in the city of Belgrade

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Travelmotivation		
Leisure	123	46.9
Business	139	53.1
Lengthofstay		
2-3 days	92	35.1
4-5 days	124	47.3
6-7 days	30	11.5
More than 7 days	16	6.1
Source of information about accommodation		
Recommendations of relatives/friends	63	24.0
Browsing the Internet	121	46.2
Previous experience	38	14.5
Tourist information documentation (catalogs, brochures, etc.)	40	15.3

Table 3 presents the results of a descriptive statistical analysis about the degree of satisfaction with certain elements of the accommodation offer in the city of Belgrade.

Based on the average scores, the respondents are most satisfied with the location of the accommodation facility (M=4.27) as well as with the competence and kindness of the employees (M=4.20). Although in the majority of cases the average scores are over 4.00, the lowest average scores were calculated based on the respondents' answers for the availability of additional facilities in the accommodation facility (M=3.53) and the organization of different types of events (M=3.81).

Table 3. Results of descriptive statistical analysis

Items	\bar{x}	SD
Location of accommodation facility	4.27	.847
Structure of accommodation units	4.06	.918
The relationship between price and quality of services	4.07	.986
The availability of additional services	3.53	1.071
Organization of events	3.81	1.060
The quality of food and beverage services in the accommodation	4.03	.988
Competence and friendliness of the employees in the facility	4.20	1.020

When asked about overall satisfaction with the accommodation services in the Belgrade, 45.8% of respondents declared that they were completely satisfied, while 39.3% of respondents were partially satisfied. Respondents also answered questions about the relationship between the price of services and the experience, respectively achieved value for money. 47.3% of respondents expressed partial satisfaction with the relationship between price and experience, while in the case of the relationship between money and value received, 42.4% of the respondents also expressed partial satisfaction. When it comes to future intentions, 55.0% of respondents will recommend the facility they stayed in, and 45.0% will visit it again.

Table 4. Analysis of respondents' answers to questions about overall satisfaction with the quality of accommodation services in the city of Belgrade

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Assessment of overall satisfaction with the quality of accommodation facilities in Belgrade		
Completely unsatisfied	8	3.1
Dissatisfied	19	7.3
Undefined attitude	12	4.6
Partially satisfied	103	39.3
Completely satisfied	120	45.8
Assessment of experience for money		
Completely unsatisfied	4	1.5
Dissatisfied	7	2.7
Undefined attitude	60	22.9
Partially satisfied	124	47.3
Completely satisfied	67	25.6
Assessment of value for money		
Completely unsatisfied	2	0.8
Dissatisfied	13	5.0

Undefined attitude	46	17.6
Partially satisfied	111	42.4
Completely satisfied	90	34.4
Future intentions		
Re-visit	118	45.0
Recommend to others	144	55.0

CONCLUSION

In this paper the authors presented the research results focused on determining the level of satisfaction of foreign tourists with the quality of accommodation in Belgrade. The results indicated that tourists are mostly satisfied with the location of the accommodation facilities as well as with the competence and friendliness of the employees, while the level of satisfaction is the lowest when it comes to the availability of additional content in the accommodation facilities and the organization of various types of events. The important conclusion of this paper refers to the fact that tourists are very much satisfied with the entire stay as well as the relationship between the price they paid for the accommodation service and the experience/value they received. In addition to the previously mentioned, the high degree of satisfaction with the quality of the accommodation offer influenced the fact that tourists will largely recommend others to stay in the accommodation facility, whose services they used. Improving the structure and number of accommodation facilities is one of the most important measures in developing the accommodation offer in Belgrade. The quality of the accommodation offer could be improved by building more hotels in the city center in order to facilitate the movement of tourists during their stay in the city, as well as for business tourists. On the other hand, taking into account the degree of satisfaction of tourists with the quality of the accommodation offer, there is room for improvement of the facilities themselves (spa & wellness centers, conference rooms, sports and recreational facilities, retail facilities, etc.). The opening of new accommodation facilities would contribute to the creation of new jobs in the city, and thus significant economic effects of tourism development would be realized. Also, further success could be achieved with a more intensive promotional campaign, which would be aimed at foreign tourists. A higher degree of satisfaction with the quality of the accommodation offer would also contribute to the continuous education of employees as well as the improvement of the level of professionalism and hospitality towards tourists, but also the introduction of the concept of personalized service according to the characteristics of a certain type of tourist. The paper has a scientific contribution in theory, as well as empirically considering that it provides a new insight into the foreign tourist's attitudes when determining the level of satisfaction with the accommodation facilities in Belgrade. The paper also has some limitations, considering that the authors examined the degree of satisfaction with only one segment of the tourist offer and the focus was on foreign tourists, which could be extended by including domestic tourists as well.

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