

## Selected Quality Factors in the Function of Creating Guests' Satisfaction

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### INTRODUCTION

In tourism and hotel management, the quality of material and intangible elements of hotel service (Al-Ababneh, 2013) is very important, because they play a very important role in creating the satisfaction, trust, and loyalty of visitors. Mountain centers are specific in providing their narrow and quality-achieving methods, because in themselves are a specific offer of seasonal character. For this reason, studying services to hotel facilities in the mountains is of great importance to maintain continuity in terms of quality and satisfaction of visitors (Gajić et al., 2018). Sivakumar and Dong (2019), in their research, point out that many satisfied guests remain loyal, meaning a re-entry to a particular hotel and destination. It is this loyalty that occurs because of the great importance of human resources in the entire process of hotel services (Vujić et al., 2020). In modern business conditions, hotel companies, to be competitive in the market, must deal with and emphasise the immense importance of quality of services (Nair & Choudhari, 2016). The importance of human resources, ie. intangible dimensions of hotel services are that they increase the value of services and guest satisfaction (Arbelo-Perez et al., 2017). If the intangible dimension of the service is not in line with guests' expectations, then a high level of material components cannot compensate for customer dissatisfaction with the overall service at the hotel (Vujić et al., 2020). Modern business conditions also impose factors that create visitors with increasingly sophisticated requirements, and there is an additional desire of service providers to achieve excellence (Sun & Pang, 2017).

However, there are different attitudes regarding the importance of quality, as the only component that affects guests' loyalty. Many theorists point out that too much attention has been paid to the loyalty and satisfaction of guests, but that the position on creating full quality should become a priority habit (Anabila i sar., 2022; Grain et al., 2021).

Pursuant to the quality problems and everything listed in the literary review of personal research, the authors conducted a survey aimed at determining the current quality of the offer at the Hotel Maljen Divčibare mountain in the Republic of Serbia. The primary objective of the research was to determine to what extent the factors (material and intangible) can

**Abstract:** The quality of service is an ongoing problem of research in the world in all service sectors and dictates potential expectations among guests and their satisfaction. Pursuant to the problem and theoretical setting of similar research, the authors identified the quality factors of hotel service in Divčibare, to determine their impact on guest satisfaction. Methods used in research are descriptive and regressive analysis. The authors used a modified questionnaire from the author of Akbab (2006), for the international community. The survey was conducted during 2022, with a total sample of 442 respondents. The study showed that the material component of the hotel service has a positive impact on the loyalty of visitors to the hotel building, in relation to the intangible component. In addition, by observing the behaviour of guests, it is possible to respond to their demands and needs which are a major factor in creating loyalty.

**Key words:** *quality, service, loyalty, Divčibare.*

affect guests' loyalty based on the quality of hotel services achieved. When compiling survey questions to explore the quality of the services of the aforementioned hotel, the authors used a modified questionnaire by the author of Akbab (2006) who conducted research and measurement of the quality of services in the hotel. A descriptive statistical analysis was used to determine the median average score for each service, and then regressive analysis to determine the importance of the material and intangible factors in the impact on loyalty among visitors, in relation to the quality of services achieved. The survey was conducted from January to April in 2022. on a total sample of 442 respondents. The results obtained unequivocally indicate that quality dictates the satisfaction of visitors, and that material quality factors directly and to the greatest extent affect their trust and loyalty.

The importance of the research is reflected primarily in determining the current state of the quality of the offer in the mountainous area of Serbia, in this case the Hotel Maljen (\*\*), on mountain Divčibare. The results obtained can serve as a broader and more significant research into the problem of the quality of hotel offers in the state, thus highlighting all existing deficiencies. Therefore, it will be possible to reduce risks in business, and achieve greater quality, satisfaction and loyalty with hotel service users in the future. The importance of determining quality is reflected especially when it comes to lower-category hotel facilities in mountainous parts of the state that were not visited during the season sufficiently and expectedly, and strategic measures need to be established to increase business and profitability, as well as to preserve reputation in the market.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In today's modern hotel business, quality of services is key to the satisfaction of visitors, and hotel service users will be satisfied if they receive fast and quality service (Gajić et al., 2019). In the hotel business sectors, acquiring a competitive advantage requires satisfied guests (Amin et al., 2013; Minh et al., 2015). According to the results of the Alauddin et al. (2019) quality of services is one of the most important aspects of the organization's success due to its close relationship with the satisfaction and loyalty of visitors, especially in the service industry (Dortyol et al., 2014). On the other hand, Arbelo-Perez et al. (2017) argues that the quality of services in hotels is seen as the organization's ability to meet the expectations, needs and wish-

es of guests. Bucak (2014) sees the quality of hotel service as a comparison between guest expectations and ultimately elevated performance (Shafik et al., 2013; Sharma & Srivastava, 2018; Sookie, 2014). People who work in the service business of the hotel industry strive to provide the best possible services through improving the performance and quality of service (Teshome, 2018; Chua et al. 2015). Identifying the needs of visitors will help hoteliers provide high quality services (Zabkar et al., 2010). Research shows that continued concern about the quality of the hotel offer and implementation of the quality improvement system creates the trust and loyalty of guests to products and services (Gajić et al., 2020). In case all the needs of guests are met in hotel facilities, an important form of oral marketing can be achieved that has a great effect in the world of attracting visitors, which is for clients to share their tourist experience (Al-Ghaswyneh, 2020). In this way, it promotes the market reputation of hotel services, and achieves a competitive advantage at the local and international level of hotel services (Zaitseva et al., 2016). Ahmad et al. (2018) states that hotel companies emphasize quality standards of services and products to meet the basic needs and expectations of guests. One of the primary goals of hotel facilities is to provide quality service to guests, which potentially leads to the satisfaction of hotel service users (Steiger, 2011), and if hotel management succeeds, they will be able to successfully run their business (Varley & Medwey, 2011). In order to be competitive, all service organizations should strive to provide the best quality services to their guests regardless of weather conditions, business season, etc. (Bohdanowicz & Zientara, 2008; Gumussoi & Koseoglu, 2016; Bello & Bello, 2017). Pleasure can be seen as a sense of satisfaction or disappointment of a guest (Haiati & Novitasari, 2017), i.e. as a result of comparing the perceived performance (or outcome) of the product/service to his or her expectations (Lu et al., 2015; Oh & kim, 2017; Nunkoo et al., 2020). Guest satisfaction according to Rao and Sah (2013) is the gap between guests' expectations before using the services and buying hotel products and their service/product rating after using them (Suki et al., 2013; Sharma, 2014). The authors of Kandampulli et al. (2015) point out that research on guest loyalty can be categorized as holistic. Loyalty of guests is necessary for every job (Liat et al., 2014). According to Kuddus and Hudrasiah (2014), guest loyalty is a state of faithful commitment to the product and/or service of the hotel.

Moreover, guest loyalty refers to the behavior when purchasing products and/or services used by guests

over a certain period of time (Tefera & Govender, 2017). Nurcahio et al. (2017) on the other hand, believe that behavior, not just thoughts, actually represents a full expression of the satisfaction and loyalty of service users towards the hotel brand (Saleem and Raja, 2014). As a result, guest satisfaction is one of the most sought-after topics in the hospitality literature (Liat et al., 2017).

Seočanac & Sekulić (2020) explored the quality of the hotel offer in 26 facilities in the mountains in Serbia. Their results suggest that the offer is at a satisfactory level, and that it certainly dictates future visits by the same visitors. A similar survey was conducted by Duglio and Beltramo (2014), interviewing 372 visitors to hotel facilities in the Piedmont Region in the north-western Italian Alps. The results they have obtained speak of the great importance of achieving excellence in quality, and the impact of quality service on the loyalty of visitors. The research included hotel facilities, but in a special kind of accommodation, the mountain hus. Scott et al. (2007), explores the impact of quality offerings that can be provided to visitors in small hotels in the Canadian Rocky Mountains. Also, their research yields positive results in attitudes towards the quality of services and the creation of loyal consumers in the future. Using a sample of 217 visitors to Obudu Mountain Resort, Banki et al., (2014), they come up with key results confirming the hypothesis that there is a direct link between the quality and loyalty of visitors.

In accordance with the above review of similar investigations, the authors started from the following hypothesis:

**H1:** The intangible component of the hotel service has a positive statistical impact on guest satisfaction relative to the material component.

## METHODOLOGY

### Operationalization and measuring model

A survey questionnaire was created to collect primary data, which was used to examine the views and opinions of guests about the quality of services at hotel Maljen (2\*) in Divčibare mountain. For writing survey questions, authors used example questions model of author Akbab (2006), where was measured quality of services in business hotel in Turkey, with 29 elements of service quality using the SERVQUAL model. Additionally, this study looked at the expectations and perceptions of guests in terms of the quality of hotel service.

The questionnaire was distributed to respondents in print, from January to April 2022. Out of 500 divided questionnaires, only 442 questionnaires were processed due to lack of values, namely incomplete responses from respondents, 215 of them men and 227 women. The questionnaire consisted of three parts: the first part refers to statements that reflect satisfaction with the material components of hotel services during hotel stays (10 questions); The second part refers to statements that reflect guests' satisfaction with intangible components of hotel services (7 questions); part three includes issues relating to the overall satisfaction of visitors, which could potentially be the reason for their re-arrival (3 questions). Respondents pointed out their statements on the seven-stage Likert scale. The above-mentioned statements are evaluated by respondents on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 marking „absolute dissatisfaction“, while 7 marks „absolute satisfaction. The data analysis was conducted using the statistical programme IBM SPSS 21.00 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences SPSS 21.00).

For each statement, the descriptive statistical analysis calculated the arithmetic mean and the standard deviation to determine with which statements the subjects showed the highest and with which the lowest degree of agreement, as well as on the basis of which the statements of the subjects are the most homogeneous/heterogeneous.

The reliability analysis determines cronbach's alpha ratio for each variable in the model, which shows whether the statements used to measure subject variants are internally consistent. The regression analysis was conducted to determine the independent's impact on dependent variables, specifically the impact of given quality factors on satisfaction.

## RESULTS

A total of 215 men and 227 women participated in the survey. As for the demographic structure of respondents, 132% are aged 18 to 25, followed by 46.8% from 26 to 40 years old, and 40% over the age of 41. A total of 69.4% have completed university education, and 30.6% have a high school education. Of the respondents, 28.5% have monthly income below 400 euros. Then, 52.3% from 400 to 800 euros, while 19.2% above 800 euros.

In table 1. the results of the descriptive statistical analysis are displayed. Favourable attitudes of respondents are present in a statement where the value of the arithmetic environment is higher, and homo-

**TABLE NO. 1.** Descriptive statistical analysis results

Variable	Statement	m	sd
<b>Material component of hotel service</b>	Location and appearance of the hotel	6,09	0,748
	Visual appearance of the hotel (building, hall, reception)	5,52	0,764
	Layout and design of the room	5,52	0,855
	Quality of furniture and equipment	5,23	0,722
	Comfortablest beds	5,35	0,942
	Equippedst rooms (mini bar, telephone, TV, Internet, coffee maker, tea...)	5,23	0,897
	Visual appearance of restaurants and bars	6,16	1,078
	Choice of food and drink	5,54	0,913
	Spa facilities	4,90	0,743
	Additional facilities of the hotel (meeting rooms, sports corner, sports courts, etc.)	4,92	1,0332
<b>Non-motherly component of hotel service</b>	Professionalism of employees	5,76	0,924
	Editorial staff	5,50	0,788
	Courtesy of employees	6,11	0,854
	Employee service	6,19	0,865
	Check-in and check-out speed	6,28	0,867
	Reservation Accuracy	6,42	1,213
	Availability inReserved/Assigned Rooms Pie	6,42	1,213
<b>Satisfaction</b>	General satisfaction with the services provided in this hotel/destination	5,92	0,756
	I have a positive opinion of the hotel	6,14	0,786
	In the future, I'm preparing to visit this hotel again	6,00	0,662

SOURCE: authors research \*m- arithmetic mean; \*sd- standard deviance

photoc attitudes are present in a statement where the value of standard deviation is lower. Arithmetic environment and deviation standard were calculated for all individual statements.

The most favourable views of respondents are present in the observations with the accuracy of the reservation (6.42) and the „availability of the reserved/assigned room“ (6.42) related to the variable of the hotel’s intangible component, followed by constant „visual appearance of the restaurant and bar“ (6.16) related to the material component of the hotel service.

The most disadvantaged views of respondents are present based on „spa and additional amenities“, where the arithmetic environment has the lowest value, and is generally around 4.90.

In this situation, when a particular variant is measured through multiple statements, it is very important

to calculate whether the variant of the data is set, or whether the statements through which it is measured are internally consistent. For this analysis, cronbach’s alpha coefficient value is calculated, ranging from 0 to 1. The statements are internally consistent, i.e., the variable is reliable if the value of this coefficient is 0.7 and higher. The results of the reliability analysis are shown in table 2. as well as the results of descriptive analysis for formed variables.

How can you see it in table 2? there is a high degree of internal consistency between the variants in the model. The results of the descriptive analysis show that hotel guests are most satisfied with the variant of intangible components of hotel services (m=6.18), maximum satisfaction (m=6.02) and highest quality of materials, service component (m=6.08).

**TABLE 2.** Analysis of reliability results and descriptive analysis for variable formation

Variable	Cronbach’s alpha	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
Material component of hotel service	0.845	5,269	0.869
Intangible component of hotel service	0.930	6,184	0,792
Satisfaction	0,860	6,023	0,716

SOURCE: authors research

**TABLE 3.** Impact of independent variants on guest satisfaction

Variable	B	T	itself.	bright
Material component of hotel service	0,292*	2,652	0.008	1,475
Non-motherly component of hotel service	0.457*	3,250	0.000	1,765

R<sup>2</sup>=0.950

SOURCE: authors research

The result of the standard deviation shows that the highest homogeneity is present in the content variable for the material component (m=0.86), then in the variability of intangible components (m=0.79) and at the end of the satisfaction (m=0.71). Results specified. show that the statements related to intangible elements mostly have higher marks than others. Also, descriptive analysis showed that the variables „person and reception“ have a higher result of the arithmetic mean than the others. The statements and variables formed based on them belong to the group of the most homogenic attitudes.

Regression analysis measures the impact of an independent variable on an additive variant, and then it is a simple regression analysis. The beta coefficient ( $\beta$ ) shows the intensity of the influence dependent on the dependent variable.

If the sig value is greater than 0.05, then the given independent variable does not have a statistically significant impact on the dependent variable. Also, the regressive analysis uses the Determination Coefficient (R<sup>2</sup>) indicator, which shows how much of the dependency variability of the dependent variable is described in the given regression model, i.e., how much of the variability of dependent variables is influenced by independent variables.

The value of the determination coefficient ranges from 0 to 1. If it is greater than 0.4, it can be found that the regression model is good. A model of regression will be formed in the regression analysis. It will measure the impact of intangible components of hotel services and intangible cultural heritage on satisfaction. In table 3. a graphical and tabular view of third-party variants regarding guest satisfaction has been given.

The data in the given regression model is suitable for analysis because the values of the variance growth factor (last column) are less than 5. The coefficient of the described determination is 0.95, which means that 95% of the variability of satisfaction (dependent variability), described by this model, means that this regression model is good. The determination coefficient value is statistically significant at level 0.01. Both variables have a statistically significant impact on guest satisfaction (all sig values are less than 0.05). When

you compare the impact of these varieties processed in this regression model, it concludes that the intangible component has a greater impact on satisfaction than the material components of hotel services (B 0.427 > 0.429).

### CONCLUSION WITH FUTURE IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Quality problems in hotels are reflected in establishing quality standards of services, maintaining them as well as improving defined ones. The quality of the service can vary from hotel to hotel and directly affect guests' satisfaction and therefore loyalty to the hotel. The aim of the research was to determine which factors had a significant impact on the creation of loyalty among visitors. The operation of hotels in mountainous regions is very specific, therefore it requires continuous monitoring of the quality of tangible and intangible factors, to attract new visitors but also to keep guests satisfied. The authors of the paper conducted a survey in January 2022. at the Hotel Maljen in Divčbare mountain. The aim of the research was primarily to general assessment of material and intangible factors, as well as the views of visitors on factors that may be the implication of their loyalty. Out of 500 questionnaires, 442 questionnaires were taken into analysis for full answers. In a descriptive statistical analysis, the authors gave a view of average scores and standard deviations for all three groups of quality models. They then approached reliability determination, as well as regression analysis, to determine the impact of selected quality factors. The results confirm the H1, which is that non-tertiary factors have a more significant impact on loyalty than material factors of the quality of the offer.

The importance of the research is reflected in the expansion of knowledge, opinions and placing guests on the quality of services/products and the satisfaction of service users to hotel facilities. Also, due to the specificity of the seasonal business, knowledge, and results on the quality of the offer at hotel Maljen, they can certainly point to deficiencies that need to be re-

moved to keep the hotel on the market and continue profitable business. The research certainly has applicant, theoretical, economic, and social significance. Although it is a small sample and only one hotel, it is possible to link the research to similar research in the wider area and obtain much more relevant data, which can serve to address any possible irregularities in the work.

The limitations of the study relate to a small sample of respondents due to Covid-19 pandemic. Several respondents inadequately filled out the questionnaire,

therefore could not be used for statistical processing. On the other hand, the lack of research comes to the point that several respondents certainly provided socially anticipated answers, which the authors could not influence. The research area is small, but it is possible to expand into the region in the future. Recommendations for further research may be the inclusion of other hotels in the Divčbare area, to get a broader picture of the views and opinions of guests about satisfying service users, quality of service and the impact of quality on guests' satisfaction to hotel facilities.

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## Apstrakt

### Odabrani faktori kvaliteta u funkciji stvaranja lojalnosti

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Kvalitet usluge je stalni problem istraživanja u svetu u svim uslužnim sektorima i diktira potencijalna očekivanja gostiju i njihovo zadovoljstvo. Na osnovu problema i teorijske postavke sličnih istraživanja, autori su identifikovali faktore kvaliteta hotelske usluge na Divčibarama, kako bi utvrdili njihov uticaj na zadovoljstvo gostiju. Metode koje se koriste u istraživanju su deskriptivna i regresivna analiza. Autori su koristili modifikovani upitnik autora Akbaba (2006), za međunarodnu zajednicu. Istraživanje

je sprovedeno tokom 2022. godine, sa ukupnim uzorkom od 442 ispitanika. Studija je pokazala da materijalna komponenta hotelske usluge pozitivno utiče na lojalnost posetilaca hotelskoj zgradi, u odnosu na nematerijalnu komponentu. Pored toga, posmatranjem ponašanja gostiju moguće je odgovoriti na njihove zahteve i potrebe koje su glavni faktor u stvaranju lojalnosti.

**Ključne reči:** *kvalitet, usluga, lojalnost, Divčibare.*

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