



New challenges for the tourism environment, heritage and companies

ISSN: 2183-0800

www.isce-turismo.com

Volume 10 | Número 1 | Março 2018
Volume 10 | Number 1 | March 2018
Volumen 10 | Número 1 | Marzo 2018

Patrocinadores:



THE LOYALTY CHALLENGES IN HOTEL RESTAURANTS IN LISBON

Raquel Fernandes Cunha

Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias, Portugal

Eduardo Moraes Sarmento

CEsA/ISEG - Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal | Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias,
Portugal

Cunha, R. F & Sarmento, E. M. (2018). The loyalty challenges in hotel restaurants in Lisbon. *Tourism and Hospitality International Journal*, 10(1), 35-54.

Resumo

O presente artigo pretende efectuar uma análise dos restaurantes hoteleiros do ponto de vista do consumidor em termos de estratégia de captação e fidelização dos seus clientes. Para tal, foram aplicados 200 questionários tendo concluído sobre a importância da lealdade como uma questão principal nos tempos modernos, bem como uma eficiente provisão de serviços. Também se verificou que neste mundo global e competitivo, os programas de fidelidade devem mudar seus objetivos e os restaurantes do hotel devem alterar o seu posicionamento e resolver alguns problemas operacionais não só para conseguir atrair novos clientes, mas também para manter os outros.

Palavras-Chave

Restaurante de hotel, Consumidor, Satisfação, Qualidade, Fidelização, Estratégias

Abstract

The present article aims to do an analysis of hotel restaurants from a consumer point of view in terms of funding strategy and client's loyalty. To achieve this issue, we applied 200 questionnaires. We found the importance of loyalty as a main issue in modern times as well as efficient service provision. We also concluded that in this global and competitive word, loyalty programs must change their goals as hotel restaurants must change their positioning and solve some operational issues in order to succeed not only in attracting new clients but as keeping the other ones.

Keywords

Hotel restaurant, Consumer, Satisfaction, Quality, Engagement, Strategies

Introduction

The growing evolution of tourist activity creates new challenges to answer to customers' needs and to assure their fidelization as well as new tourist paths. We live in a world where the client's satisfaction must be one vital issue (Du Tang, 2014) and in other words, service quality appears as a determinant instrument since it has many benefits, such as providing a competitive advantage to a business, establishing customer satisfaction and customer loyalty and contributing to its image (Dedeoglu & Demirer, 2014).

Worldwide, stakeholders' perceptions of service quality performance and perception may be different between employee, manager and customer. In this field of study, researchers and practitioners have been constantly searching for ways to improve the quality of service.

Understanding customer expectations as well as meeting or exceeding these expectations is critical for hotel restaurants.

In this competitive and global world, most of the companies cannot keep leadership for a long time since they can no longer keep their competitive advantages only the diversification of their products because they are easily copied by their rivals and this situation is determinant in hotel restaurants (Bose & ao, 2011). So, to achieve success, it is necessary to identify weak points and promote new strategies to attract and capture new consumers as well as turning them loyal.

Today's consumer is more informed, demanding and little or nothing predictable and, therefore, more difficult to maintain loyalty. They seek the maximum match among their expectations to their experiences and demand a more diversified offer increasingly adapted to their needs.

Managers must ensure that the services they provide satisfy customers. Food and beverage services are one of the most important services in hotels and must complement the other services and be tailored to meet individual customers' specific dietary requirements (Giritlioglu, 2014).

Restaurant hotel guests have expectations of receiving freshly-prepared, healthy, organic foods rather than artificial, pre-prepared foods (Bastic & Gojcic, 2012). Individual guests have different tastes and hotel restaurants must ensure that their type of food and beverage responds to each individual guest's requirements (Saar, 2010). Thematic hotel restaurants must provide their guests (internal or external) with personalized dietary programmes in order to ensure an unforgettable experience (Giritlioglu, 2014).

Since we find a highly-personalized nature of the food and beverage provision in hotels restaurants, employees are a particularly important factor in relation to service provision. They must be friendly, courteous in their interactions with guests, well-educated and have a positive attitude towards the special needs of guests on dietary programmes (Saar, 2010; Giritlioglu, 2014).

Considering this reality, business relevance has in perspective the situations of the present societies in which unpredictability is a factor to be considered, since tourism plans, and strategies can easily adapt to change (Cooper, et al., 2001).

So, the purpose of this paper was two-fold: first, to evaluate food and beverage service quality in hotel restaurants; second, to identify the key dimensions of food and beverage service quality.

Methodologically, questionnaires were applied in a way that more accurately identifies the difficulties that most hotels in the sample have in attracting their guests to their restaurants and identifying their causes, the main positive and negative aspects that costumers find in a hotel restaurant, the type of offer they usually find in hotel restaurants, the main motivations of consumers and what other aspects identify as negative

The article is divided into four sections. The first theoretically frames the main concepts underlying the theme. The second section describes the tourism evolution in the world and in Portugal. The third section is linked to the methodological approach. The fourth section is the case study and finally we have the conclusions and some managerial implications.

Literature Review

Nowadays, in this global market, service quality and its measurement in hotels became critical to gaining competitive advantage and in enhancing the business performance of hotel restaurants s other businesses. It can be defined as the conformance to requirements for use and meeting customers' expectations (Giritlioglu, 2014). In the service industry, traditional definitions of service quality generally focus on meeting customer expectations as well as the services delivered in order to match their expectations (Munhurrun et al., 2009) since due to the intangible nature of service products, measuring service quality is often more difficult than measuring the quality of physical products.

Most of the models used to study service quality identify five dimensions based on the SERVQUAL model: tangibles; reliability; responsiveness; assurance; empathy (Giritlioglu, 2014). In the specific context of quality of hotel enterprises, we have the LODGSERV model while in the specific context of restaurant industry we find the DINESERV model (Tang & Bougoure, 2011).

The hotelier sector is nowadays a major element in the tourism industry and therefore it is extremely competitive. In this competitive scenario, service quality naturally become a critical success factor (Avcikurt et al., 2011) and hotel managers must permanently get feedback from their customers about the quality of their services, so they can enhance them (Giritlioglu, 2014).

This model is better than the general one. However, there is still no consensus on the number of dimensions of the hotel service quality construct (Salazar et al., 2010) and several researches refer that more studies are needed to address this.

Service quality is a determinant issue in achieving a competitive advantage to any business.

In the literature, we have found many different approaches to the perception or determination of service quality by researchers. Some identify service quality with the comparison of a customer's specific expectations/requests regarding service with the performance after use of that service; others identify it with the perception of the customer

after the act of purchasing or as the long-term cognitive evaluation of business service offerings by customers (Dedeoglu & Demirer, 2014).

Other authors have stated that the perception of service quality must be related to internal environment that fosters employee awareness of service quality. A satisfied and productive employee will offer high-quality services. This highlights that the internal quality of a working environment will be decisive to employee satisfaction and therefore leaders must encourage to take both the employees' and customers' perceptions into consideration in management decisions (Chen, 2013).

For this reason, how employees perceive the quality of service performance becomes also important (Dedeoglu & Demirer, 2014).

In terms of the role of the customer, manager and employee on service quality, we can conclude that a positive service quality is a determinant issue for success. If customers are pleased with the quality of the services provided, they will not only choose the business again but will also promote it within their immediate surroundings (Dedeoglu & Demirer, 2014).

Wu (2013) also concluded that customers with the highest levels of perception of service quality contribute positively to the business image via word-of-mouth communication.

So, it is mandatory for managers to know customers' demands/expectations and be able to pass them on to their employees since it is expected for them to have an accurate perception of the quality of the service offered. On the other side, employees can be understood as the bridge between customers and hotel businesses and they will have a direct influence over customers' perceptions of service quality performance (Dedeoglu & Demirer, 2014).

Nowadays, we can no longer attempt to determine the service quality level of customers by focusing solely on customers' evaluations of service quality, but we must focus on the determination of how employees perceive the services they deliver (Dedeoglu & Demirer, 2014).

A possible problem arises when managers and employees may think that the quality of services they deliver is better than customers' perceptions. This situation will diminish the quality of their service performance and decrease their work motivation and performance decrease (Dedeoglu & Demirer, 2014).

Under this discussion, it is important to acknowledge that the service quality perceptions between employees and managers may differ to a certain degree, but if managers have a higher service quality perception than their subordinates, they may become incapable of leading their employees to reach the desired level of service quality. Likewise, it would be impossible for managers to transfer things they did not perceive accurately to subordinates. (Dedeoglu & Demirer, 2014).

We can therefore conclude that service quality is directly influenced by employees while managers struggle to set service quality standards regarding customers' evaluations (Dedeoglu & Demirer, 2014).

The increasing recognition of perceived service quality has been attributed to its positive effects on service loyalty, which in turn affects corporate business performance such as

profitability and market share. The quality of a customer's service experience craves the development of a positive value perception about the service provider leading to loyalty. Furthermore, the success of a destination depends on a thorough environmental analysis of tourist motivations and on customer satisfaction and loyalty (Akroush, 2016).

A destination image, which triggers emotions, is likely to create consumer experience, results with purchase and, if justified with his expectations, create the destination brand loyalty (Akroush, 2016).

In this competitive world, Quality is of crucial importance. In general, quality can be defined as a set of characteristics of a product or service that give it the ability, whatever the activity, to satisfy stated or implied needs (Kotler, 2000). In other words, companies must take on a process of "identifying customer needs (company interface with the market), followed by what can be called functional expression of need (what the product / service should do)" (Pires, 2012: p. 43).

It is important to note that quality is not only linked to production / service delivery, but increasingly in the interface of the organization with its customers (Pires, 2012). In this context, the focus of companies should be on meeting multiple consumer needs and care should be taken to manage the multiple elements that can affect the quality of a product / service as this can contribute to the strategic fragility of the company (Paladini, 2012).

The quality of the service has a direct and significant impact on the company's performance, its costs and revenues, customer satisfaction and loyalty (Seth et al., 2005) and it is so important.

Briefly, we can mention that the service provision integrates four characteristics (Kotler, 2000): (i) intangibility. There is no possession but consumption. It is acquired not the object but the provision of the service (Hoffman & Bateson, 2003); (ii) simultaneity / inseparability because it "reflects the interconnections between the service provider and the customer involved in receiving the service and other customers who share the service experience" (Hoffman & Bateson, 2003: 35). negatively influence the customer experience, as for example with delayed service; (iii) heterogeneity and (iv) perishability due to the impossibility of being able to store the services if they are not consumed (Hoffman & Bateson, 2003).

Quality expectations can be affected by the consumer's image of the company and word-of-mouth. These factors pose obstacles to companies because they are difficult to control, although they can be altered and exercised through adequate marketing communication (advertising, sales, public relations and promotions campaigns) (Saías, 2007; Cota, 2006).

Finally, customer loyalty may be due to several factors, namely the affective link to the brand (Shaw, 2003) and the "deep commitment" of the customer to the product or service or to the company (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

Being the clients one of the most valuable assets of a company, it is important to be cautious about this reaction as these are the biggest and best sources of publicity and company improvement and recommendation (Amin et al, 2013). Not all consumers have the same level of commitment or engagement with a brand, although those who are more

committed to it enjoy more of the experience, resist less to change (Brodie et al, 2011; Higgins & Scholer, 2009) and therefore, are fundamental to increase sales, improve the company image and above all help to anticipate the moment of customer arrival, and maintain a good relationship with them (Stegemann, 2002).

In this context, for loyalty programs to be properly built, it is necessary that companies effectively segment their databases, thus enabling them to know the most important customers, their customer groups and their characteristics (Allaway et al., 2006).

There are different methods of loyalty, such as: bonuses, discounts, prizes (Laskarin, 2013), information, counselling and access services (Smith, 2000) and access to exclusive free events without any restrictions (Wijaya, 2005).

In the case of a hotel unit and its corresponding restaurant, in order to provide a satisfactory and quality service to its customer, all departments from the front office to the back office must be constantly interconnected by a database and by an integrated information system that allows you to collect and use information about guests and hotel operations (Debata et al, 2015).

If the strategy is duly fulfilled, it is expected that a number of benefits will be obtained from loyal customers (Siebel, 2002): (i) purchases of more products or services from the company that gives them a better product and trust, and purchases of other products different from the same brand as they get to know it better; (ii) increased repeat purchase which leads to an increase in the company's long-term purchasing volume; (iii) greater patience and lower cost to serve; (iv) source of publicity and recommendation, which is crucial for attracting and attracting new customers; (v) less sensitivity to price and less interest in the products and services of competing companies.

However, loyalty also has some problems, namely that its structure can be easily copied, it is not possible to measure results effectively and it is not possible to distinguish loyal clients Laškarin (2013). This situation leads to an incessant demand and need for overcoming the competition among companies. Loyalty programs should be based on more direct personalization of the service, such as upgrades or special offers that are less copiable than discounts and points (Wijaya, 2005).

In conclusion, a loyalty program should have as its vital structural basis: (i) a database that integrates all the information of the clients and their history in the company; (ii) the targets defined for this loyalty program; (iii) definition of rewards in order to demonstrate to the client the value he represents for the company; (iv) be simple and intuitive so that the client can easily understand and participate; (v) should promote rewards in order to create a focus of attraction; (vi) the control and management process must be carried out in such a way as to ensure consistency of the program along the way; (vii) must be designed to be profitable in the short and long term (Shoemaker & Camille, 2008).

Tourism Trends

In the modern society, tourism has progressively become a powerful system with major effects on economic growth, economic diversification, involvement of a considerable

amount of monetary funds, and formation of additional workplaces (Khrimenko, 2017). Hence, tourism has developed into a powerful, world-wide economic force (Sharpley et al., 2002) that must not be neglected.

As a matter of fact, in 2016 international tourist arrivals kept their upward trajectory despite several worldwide challenges like economic shocks, terrorism, uncertainties and other threats to progress (Babu et al, 2008), reaching 1.2 billion tourists (a 4% increase). In addition to receipts earned in destinations, international tourism also generated US\$ 216 billion in exports through international passenger transport services rendered to non-residents in 2016, bringing the total value of tourism exports up to US\$ 1.4 trillion, or US\$ 4 billion a day on average (WTO, 2017).

Europe was the main tourist destination with 49.8% of the international tourist's arrivals (615.2 million). This represented a 2.1% increase compared with 2015. In regional terms, we found an increase in the number of tourist arrivals in Asia and the Pacific (+8.7%) and Africa (+8.2%) and in opposition a reduction of the arrivals to the Middle East (-4.1%) (UNWTO, 2017).

In Portugal, considering the item "Travel and Tourism" from the Balance of Payments, we can conclude that revenue growth +10.7% while expenditures slowdown -2.3%. Thus, the balance for this item revealed a 12.7% increase (+1.9% in comparison to 2015), reaching EUR 8.8 billion (INE, 2017).

The number of tourist trips, in 2016, reached 20.2 million (+5.4%, following +7.0% in 2015), of which 18.2 million were made within the national territory, corresponding to a 5.7% increase (+6.1% in 2015). The main reason to travel was "visit to relatives or friends" corresponding to 8.9 million trips (44.1% of the total), followed by "leisure, recreational or holiday" reasons with 8.84 million trips (43.8% share) and "professional or business" motivations (1.65 million; 8.2% of the total) (INE, 2017).

If we consider the **tourist accommodation activity** (hotels and similar, tourism in rural areas, lodging and local accommodation¹), we conclude that in July 2016 there were 4,805 establishments in operation with a capacity of 380.8 thousand bed places (+5.2%). The number of guests amounted to 21.3 million and overnight stays stood at 59.4 million, corresponding to increases of 11.1% and 11.6% respectively (+10.9% and +9.1% in the previous year) (INE, 2017) (Table 1).

The total revenue and the one from accommodation, in the tourist accommodation activity, reached EUR 3.1 billion and EUR 2.3 billion, respectively, with notable increases of 18.1% and 19.2% (INE, 2017).

The **hotel activity** establishments (hotels, apartment hotels, "Pousadas" and "Quintas da Madeira", tourist villages and tourist apartments) accounted for 79.4% of the total accommodation sector capacity (bed places), 84.2% of guests and 86.5% of overnight stays. This subsector represented 1,669 establishments and 302.5 thousand beds in July 2016 (+4.9% and +4.0% respectively, compared to the same month of 2015).

Hotel accommodation establishments hosted 17.95 million guests and recorded 51.4 million overnight stays. Overnight stays increased in all regions, significantly in the AR Açores (+21.1%), Norte (+14.4%), Alentejo (+12.0%), Centro (+11.8%) and AR Madeira

(+10.9%). Hotels accounted for 71% of overnight stays from the hotel activity, followed by apartment hotels (14.7%) (INE, 2017).

So, total revenue in hotel activity reached EUR 2.8 billion and the revenue from accommodation totalled EUR 2.0 billion, revealing significant annual change rates: +17.9% and +18.9% respectively (INE, 2017) (Graphic 1).

In 2016, the total staying capacity of establishments was 181,2 beds (182,8 in 2015).

Methodology

We applied a random simple probabilistic sampling and data was collected from 200 questionnaires with individuals, aged over 18 years residing in Portugal.

Questionnaires have many advantages such as the ability to better describe characteristics and measure specific variables of a given group. This is a useful, effective and fast mean of being able to apply and collect a big range of information in a short period of time, also to deepen knowledge (Tomás García, 2003), to accurately compare the response among several individuals; (Giddens, 2000) and to obtain specific information about the population in a systematic and orderly manner (Richardson, 1989).

However, some authors argue that the construction of a questionnaire is an "imperfect art" given that from this perspective it is possible to consider that the questionnaires, as well as all other methods of data collection, are not infallible (Aaker et al. 2001).

A five-person pre-test was performed where some imperfections related to the lack of clarity of some issues were verified and corrected. Positively, the questionnaires were delivered face-to-face to each of the participants (over 18 years old) and collected at the end of their completion, which allowed the clarification of small doubts.

Questionnaires had a total of 16 questions and 4 sub-questions. The five initial questions are about general data (marital status, age, gender, etc.). We had a filter question to find out if people had already gone to a hotel restaurant. Other questions were about consumer experience and attitude. Whenever possible, questions were based on a Likert scale (1- less important; 5 – most important).

Next, we present the questions focused on the theme of the study.

Case Study

Of the 200 respondents, 63% (126 respondents) are males. The clear majority are between 18 and 25 years old (90%), single (95%), student (95%) and live in Lisbon (77%) (Table 2).

Regarding the analysis of consumer choices and motivations, only 18% (37 respondents) did not eat or ate at hotel restaurants while the remaining 82% answered affirmatively.

Respondents who do not consume in hotel restaurants do so mainly because of the price (32%), because they are gourmet meals (15%), because the place is associated with higher classes (11%), not having access through the exterior and they must go through the lobby (9%), dress code demands (7%), unknown space (6%), not being visible to the public (6%)

and lastly because this is a too exuberant space (4%). Regarding the "Other" answers (10%) referred: "It does not create much interest" or "Never appeared an opportunity".

As for those who answered affirmatively about their consumption in hotel restaurants, the most consumed or consumed meals in these spaces are breakfast (37% - 143 respondents), lunch (28%), dinner (27%) and brunch (8%).

As for the frequency with which they consume in hotel restaurants for one year, 72% of the respondents in a great majority claimed to be between 1 and 4 times. 17% do it between 5-9 times, 4% between 10-14 times, 3% between 15-19 times, 3% between 20-24 times and 1% said to move to these spaces by more than 25 times per year.

Regarding the question, if one attends the same hotel restaurant, we found 111 positive answers (68%) and 52 negative ones (32%).

As main reasons to return we found the following: "Quality is good (service, meal and price)"; "It's the hotel where I normally spend holidays"; "It's the one that's closer to home"; "I enjoyed the meal of the same"; "The value of breakfast is often included in the stay"; "It's where I usually dine when I'm on vacation because it's closer and good quality"; "When I go on vacation is the most practical"; "Because it has become a family tradition"; "It offers the best brunch".

Taking into account the reasons for not returning to the same place, the following arguments were pointed out: "I always travel to different hotels"; "I like variety, diversity of experiences, meals, hotels and sites"; "It was a punctual case"; "It is far from my residence"; "I almost never go to hotels, just camping"; "I have no need because I do not travel much"; "It never stunk"; "I appreciate and opt for cheaper meals; "I never go to the same restaurant and I only go to special events or special occasions such as Valentine's Day."

Taking into consideration the most important criteria led to their decision making, the following was concluded (Table 3).

In the previous table, we grouped data that resulted from the main level 5 motivations, that is, the ones of the greatest importance and we found: food quality (61%); quality of service provision (53%); speed of service (44%); food diversity (41%); location (40%); accessibility (36%) and price (34%).

Regarding the main motivations pointed out as level 4 (a lot of importance) were considered: tourist package (44%); speed of service (42%); recognition of the hotel and restaurant (39%); accessibility (37%); quality of service provision (37%); meal promotions (34%); and food diversity (33%).

Concerning the level 3 motivations most identified by the respondents were: exuberant space (45%); art and presentation of dishes (39%); recognition of the hotel and restaurant (35%); enhances my identity / personality (35%); design and decoration of space (34%); online booking system (34%); information available on social networks; (33%) specials at meals (33%); typicity (31%) and thematic meals (31%).

In response to the question of where hotel restaurants go, with "in-house," "out-client," or "both," respondents who consume in hotel restaurants identified themselves, for the most

part (71%), while internal hotel customer. Only 9% of respondents identified themselves in the situation as an external client and 20% in both situations.

When asked about ideas to attract more customers, we got several suggestions.

- The most mentioned proposal by the respondents is related to a greater control and attention to be able to make prices more attractive and accessible to all type of customers;
- Provide the customer with an improvement and balance in the quality / price ratio;
- Provide current and future clients with the creation of events and activities (e.g. tastings, live music ...), in addition to events during special seasons;
- Bet on specific days of the workweek to prepare a thematic day at the hotel's restaurant by encouraging "non-habitual" customers (workers) to eat a thematic meal;
- Provide customers, especially external customers or so-called passers-by, with direct access to the hotel restaurant from outside, without having to pass through the hotel's common areas and, consequently, greater visibility from outside;
- Promote the hotel restaurant to the part of the hotel to which it belongs, attracting and creating a greater connection with the external client.
- Increased investment in marketing, promoting and publicizing the space (hotel restaurant) its service and the varied offer at meal level;
- Provide more detailed information about what space can offer, its services, its menus and various alternatives and corresponding prices;
- Betting on a greater variety of foods and their quality, being able to create and make unique menus delighting all the senses of the consumer, focusing on the flavour and presentation;
- Investment in the care of presentation of the dishes and differentiation through their design and design;
- Investment in the training of the employees so that a maximum excellence in the customer service is possible, being this the first aspect of analysis;
- From the point of view of the consumer it is intended that a more friendly, informal and informal environment be provided so that they can identify with the hotel restaurant and its space;
- A commitment to personalization of the service, considered an efficient method of satisfaction and loyalty;

Analysing the answers obtained regarding the degree of satisfaction of the respondent when consumed in hotel restaurants, it is possible to verify that most of the respondents are satisfied (level 4 - 61%), 13% are extremely satisfied (level 5) and the remaining 26% showed good satisfaction (level 3).

Since loyalty programs are an important strategy for attracting, satisfying and retaining customers, it has become crucial to determine whether consumers of hotel restaurants often adhere to these programs. It was found that 80% of the respondents answered that they do not usually join loyalty programs against the 20% that join. The last 92 respondents identified the promotion and discount programs (43%) as the main strategy.

Concerning the question about whether they would like to receive information about the hotel restaurant, 70% (140) of the respondents answered negatively. Regarding the question about what information they would like to receive, only 47 respondents replied. Of these 47 responses we obtained as information proposals: promotions, news or initiatives, prices, events, offers, menus and special menus, workshops, recognition awards.

The type of contact between a hotel restaurant and clients varied, especially email (44%), social networks (40%), SMS (15%) and 1% related to the answers obtained through opinion of two respondents who would like to receive the information "personally" and "through the hotel's own website".

Conclusions

In today's competitive world, measuring customer expectations and perceptions of the service quality of food and beverage provision in hotel restaurants is crucial for success as well as to provide effective quality services and to develop long-term relationships.

From the 163 questionnaires that used to go to hotel restaurants, 71% do it as internal hotel clients.

We identified through our inquiries in our empirical study several key dimensions of service quality related to customer expectations: "accessibility/convenience", "assurance and employee competence"; "healthy and attractive food"; "empathy and courtesy"; "physical environment features"; "responsiveness of service delivery"; "reliability", "promptness" and "prices".

These dimensions may be a contribute to hotel restaurant managers and administrators to understand the dimensions of this service, to improve the perceived service quality of their services to their guests on a permanent basis and to achieve more lucrative paths and loyalty since previous studies have demonstrated a direct relationship between tourism service quality and destination loyalty.

As we saw before, tangible aspects of the food and beverage provision are a key issue for customers. So, hotel restaurants managers should pay attention to tangible characteristics. In other words, these restaurants must have modern tools and equipment, the food halls must look good and clean, employees must be well-educated/experienced and well-informed. They also must be courteous and respectful towards costumers.

The operating hours of food and beverage restaurants must be convenient for all customers. The service offered to customers must be reliable which means that food must be served according to customers' orders at the times promised. It is therefore critical to provide specific educational programs for food and beverage employees to ensure the adequacy of their skills and knowledge of these hotel restaurants.

The food offer should be both healthy and attractive. Menu cards should be customized to meet customers' specific health agendas and must provide information on the nutritional and calorific value of menu items.

Employee empathy is a critical aspect of food and beverage service provision. They must fulfill customer's requirements and requests in a timely fashion and tell guests exactly when the services will be performed.

From our questionnaires costumers stressed the importance on the balance between quality/price to be more competitive. They also alerted to the need of having more activities and experiences all year long in post labor hours and at weekends in a relaxed environment. Hotel restaurants should be visible from the exterior and the access should be direct instead of going through the hotel hall.

Although costumers concluded that they did not want loyalty programs, they want to receive information about promotions, initiatives, events mainly through e mail and social networks.

So, once we live in a new competitive era, hotel restaurant managers must be creative. However, in today's world, we find numerous instruments that can be successfully used to achieve new clients as well as to maintain the regular ones. Anyway, as we observed, these conclusions were obtained from a young sample group, and therefore, they must be carefully analyzed if we try to extrapolate them to other age classes.

References

- Aaker, et al (2001). *Marketing research*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Akroush, M., Jraisat, L., Kurdieh, D., AL-Faouri, R., & Qatu, L. (2016). Tourism service quality and destination loyalty – the mediating role of destination image from international tourists' perspectives. *Tourism Review*, 71(1), 18-44.
- Allaway, A., Gooner, R., Berkowitz, D. & Davis, L. (2006). Deriving and exploring behavior segments within a retail loyalty card program. *European Journal of Marketing*, 40 (11), 1317- 1339.
- Amin, M., Yahya, Z. Ismayatim, F., Nasharuddin, Z., & Kassim, E. (2013). Service quality dimension and customer satisfaction: an empirical study in the Malaysian hotel industry. *Services Marketing Quarterly*, 34(2), 115-125.
- Avcikurt, C., Giritlioglu, I., & Sahin, S. (2011). An evaluation of thermal hotel web sites and the use/non-use of the internet as a marketing tool by thermal hotels in Turkey. *African Journal of Business Management*, 5(7), 2817-2827.
- Babu, S. (2008). Tourism development and its emerging paradigms: A synthesis. In S. Babu & S. Mishra (eds.), *Tourism Development Revisited. Concepts, Issues and Paradigms* (pp. 177-198). New Delhi: Response Books.
- Bastic, M., & Gojcic, S. (2012). Measurement scale for eco-component of hotel service quality. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 31(3), 1012-1020.
- Chen, J. (2013). Factors influencing internal service quality at international tourist hotels. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 35, 152-160.
- Choudhury, K. (2013). Service quality and customers' purchase intentions: an empirical study of the Indian banking sector, *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 31(7), 529-543.

- Debata, B. Patnail, B., Mahapatra, S., & Sree, K. (2015). Interrelations of service quality and service loyalty dimensions in medical tourism A structural equation modeling Approach. *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, 22(1), 18-55.
- Dedeoglu, B., & Demirer, H. (2014). Differences in service quality perceptions of stakeholders in the hotel industry. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 27(1), 130-146.
- Giritlioglu, I., Jones, E., Avcikurt, C. (2014). Measuring food and beverage service quality in spa hotels: A case study in Balikesir, Turkey. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 26(2), 183-204.
- Jeon, M., Magnini, P., Kim, I., & Hyun, S. (2013). Causal relationships between table game players' perceptions of service quality, perceived winning, and game spending moderating effects of demographic factors. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 25(6), 922-944.
- Khrimenko, A. (2017). Strategic vectors of transformational shifts in the national tourism system of Ukraine. *CES Working Papers*, 9(3), 506-528.
- Kotler, P. (2000). *Administração de marketing*. São Paulo: Prentice Hall.
- Laskarin, M., (2013). Development of loyalty programmes in the hotel industry. *Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 19(1), 109-123.
- Munhurrun, R., Naidoo, P., & Bhiwajee, L. (2009). Employee perceptions of service quality in a call centre. *Managing Service Quality*, 19(5), 541-557.
- Paladini, P. & Carvalho, M. (2012). *Gestão da qualidade - Teoria e casos*. Rio de Janeiro: Elsevier.
- Pires, A. R. (2012). *Sistemas de gestão da qualidade: Ambiente, segurança, responsabilidade social, indústria, serviços, administração pública e educação*. Lisboa-Edições Silabo.
- Saar, M. (2010). *Cultural differences in spa tourism and the expectations of Finnish spa goers*. Turku University. Turku, unpublished MSc thesis.
- Saias, L. (2007). *Marketing de serviço: Qualidade e fidelização de clientes*. Lisboa: Universidade Católica Editora
- Salazar, A., Costa, J. & Rita, P. (2010). A service quality evaluation scale for the hospitality sector: Dimensions, attributes and behavioural intentions. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, 2(4), 383-397.
- Seth, N., Deshmukh, S. G., & Vrat, P. (2005). Service quality models: A review. *International journal of quality & reliability management*, 22(9), 913-949.
- Sharpley, R., & Telfer, J. (2002). *Tourism and development. Concepts and issues*. Clevedon: Channel View Publications.
- Shaw, R. (2003). *Marketing: Renovação e eficiência*. Lisboa: Caminho.
- Shoemaker, S., & Camille, K. (2008). Relationship and loyalty marketing. In A. P. Haemmon, O., *Handbook of Hospitality Marketing Management* (pp. 119-152). Oxford: Elsevier Ltd.
- Siebel, T. M. (2002). *Princípios de e-business*. Paris: Maxima

- Smith, E. (2000). *E-loyalty: How to keep customers coming back to your website*. England: HarperCollins.
- Stegemann, N. (2002). Loyalty programs in Australia: Who is in bed with whom? 18th Annual International Research Conference on Industrial marketing and Purchasing, France.
- Tang, M., & Bougoure, U. (2011). Service quality: An investigation into Malaysian consumers using DINESERV. Available at: http://smib.vuw.ac.nz:8081/WWW/ANZMAC2006/documents/Tang_Keang%20Meng.pdf (accessed 2 February 2011).
- Turismo de Portugal (2007). *Plano Estratégico Nacional do Turismo para o desenvolvimento do turismo em Portugal*. Lisboa: Turismo de Portugal.
- Wijaya, S. (2005). The effect of loyalty programs on customer loyalty in the hospitality industry. *Lecture hotel management program*. Faculty of Economics, Petra Christian University, 24-29.
- World Tourism Organization [WTO] (2017). *Tourism Highlights*, retrieved from http://wto/WTO_highlights_2017.pdf.
- Wu, H. C. (2013). An empirical study of the effects of service quality, perceived value, corporate image, and customer satisfaction on behavioral intentions in the Taiwan quick service restaurant industry. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality and Tourism*, 14(4), 364-390.

Table 1

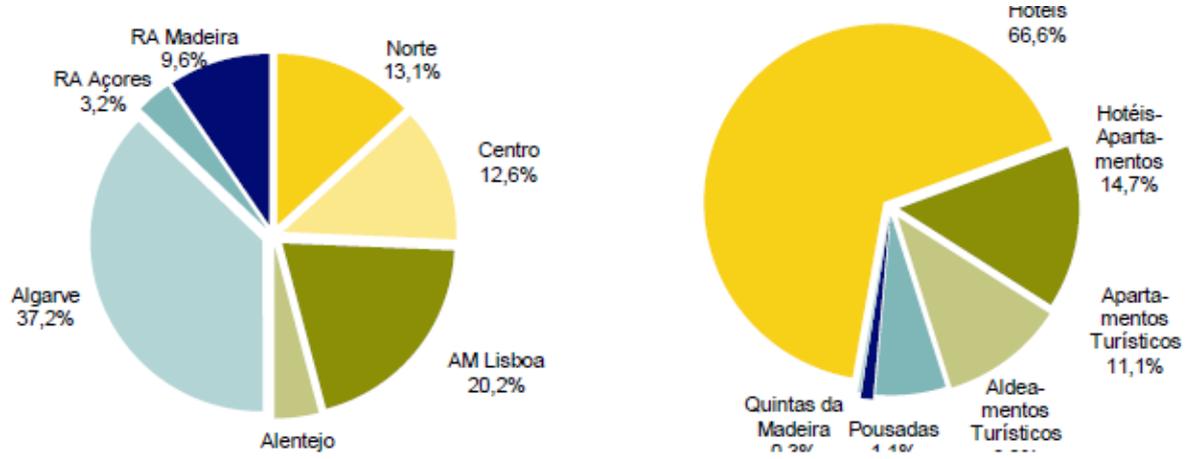
Global results in tourist accommodation

	Units	2015	2016	(Δ %)
Establishments	n.er	4 339	4 805	10,7
Capacity	n.er	362 005	380 818	5,2
Hosts	10 ³	19 201	21 327	11,1
Overnight stays	10 ³	53 237	59 429	11,6
Total income	10 ⁵ €	2 628	3 103	18,1

Source: Adapted from INE (2017)

Graphic 1

Hotel capacity (Beds) in 31-07-2016



Source: INE (2017)

Table 2

Characterization of the sample

Gender	Age (years)	Civil Situation	Residence place
Male (126 - 63%)	18-25 (90%)	Single (95%)	Lisboa (77%)
Female (74 - 37%)	26-35 (7%)	Married (4%)	Setúbal (19%)
	36-45 (1%)	Divorced (1%)	Santarém (3%)
Profession	46-55 (1%)		Coimbra (1%)
Student (190 - 95%)	56-65 (0%)		
Worker (10 - 5%)	+ 65 (1%)		
Total answers: 200			

Source: Author's elaboration

Table 3

Criteria that motivated the option to travel to a restaurant in the hotel.

Criteria	Classification level				
	1	2	3	4	5
Price	2%	7%	23%	34%	34%
Typicity	0%	5%	31%	34%	31%
Location	1%	4%	23%	31%	40%
Accessibility	0%	4%	22%	37%	36%
Space Design and Decoration	4%	10%	34%	29%	23%
Quality of service provision	0%	0%	10%	37%	53%
Speed of service	0%	0%	14%	42%	44%
Quality of food	0%	0%	9%	29%	61%
Food diversity	0%	2%	24%	33%	41%
WIFI	13%	16%	25%	25%	22%
Online booking system	16%	13%	34%	23%	14%
Information available on social networks	12%	9%	33%	30%	16%
Specials at meals	4%	7%	33%	34%	22%
Tourist package (stay + meal)	4%	3%	17%	44%	33%
Thematic Meals	10%	19%	31%	25%	14%
Recognition of hotel and restaurant	2%	8%	35%	39%	16%
Exuberant space	9%	22%	45%	18%	7%
Art and presentation of the dishes	7%	20%	39%	22%	14%
It enhances my identity	18%	25%	35%	17%	5%

Note: 1 – minimum value and 5 – maximum value.

Source: Author’s elaboration