

# How to improve the entertainment program in order to increase customer satisfaction

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<p>The objective of this Bachelor's thesis is to improve the entertainment program in order to increase the customer satisfaction. The research is conducted in two hotels of Med Playa hotel chain in Benidorm, Spain. Hotel Flamingo Oasis and Hotel Rio Park are well-known for their entertainment programs, especially among Spanish and English tourists. The thesis is commissioned by Med Playa and conducted by an author working for the company. The research problem came from the commissioning party.</p> <p>The thesis begins with a company introduction and justification of the study. After the introduction, the theory framework is introduced. It is based on experience economy, customer satisfaction, recreation and participation. The research methodology focuses on both quantitative survey and qualitative interviews, and how they were created based on the theory. After the methodology, the results are analysed and future improvements are suggested.</p> <p>The key issue is to discover if the winter season customer group together with the current entertainment program function, and how the company can make some improvements. The aim of the thesis is to find out the current situation of the participation and satisfaction of the guests and offer solutions how to improve them.</p> <p>The theory framework goes through elements of experience economy. Also, customer experience, customer satisfaction and recreation are explored to understand the situation in the hotels. The theory base helps to make future suggestions, too. Some figures, such as the experience realms, are introduced. The theoretical framework forms the base for the questionnaire.</p> <p>This thesis is research oriented and it uses both quantitative and qualitative methods. This mixed method allows the author to approach the research problem from different perspectives. The quantitative survey was conducted in both hotels. The target group of the survey were the guests staying in the hotels in February 2017, when the research was conducted. The qualitative part of the research was made with a structured interview. The target group of the interview was the entertainment staff.</p> <p>By researching both guests and employees of Hotel Flamingo Oasis and Hotel Rio Park, the different viewpoints were taken into a consideration. The results of the questionnaire supported the interview outcomes especially when comparing the guests' responses with the management responses.</p> <p>As a result, the night time entertainment was considered great, which showed that the day time program would be the one to focus on in the future. The outcome of the research helps Med Playa to develop their entertainment program, but further research is recommended to be able to compare the results between winter and summer season.</p>	
<b>Keywords</b> Hotel entertainment, experience, recreation, customer satisfaction, Hotel Flamingo Oasis, Hotel Rio Park	

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# 1 Introduction

Hotel entertainment in Spain is a well-known part of a holiday package. Many hotels offer entertainment and activities to their guests, but the satisfaction of the guests depends on many circumstances. The objective of this Bachelor's thesis is to improve the entertainment program in order to increase the customer satisfaction in two hotels of Med Playa hotel chain in Benidorm, Spain. The two hotels, Flamingo Oasis and Rio Park, are well-known for their entertainment programs in the area. The thesis is commissioned by Med Playa and conducted by an author working for the company.

The study explores the customer satisfaction with the recreational services and looks for new solutions to increase the participation of the guests. The key issue is to find out if the current customer segment goes well together with the entertainment program, and how the company can introduce new solutions and this way improve the customer experience. The objectives of the thesis are to find out the current situation of the participation of the guests and offer ways how to improve it in the future.

The theory framework is based on experiences, customer satisfaction, customer experiences, recreation and play. Hotel entertainment is all about experiences. In order to be able to improve and analyse their quality, the basic tools such as the experience realms by Pine & Gilmore (1999), will be used. In addition, the different customer segments help to define the current customer profile and this way improve the entertainment so that the customer satisfaction rises. The customer segmentation by Kotler (2017) is used when creating the quantitative customer satisfaction survey in hotel Flamingo Oasis and hotel Rio Park. The same theories apply when creating the qualitative interviews for the staff members.

Oxford dictionary defines entertainment as “the action of providing or being provided amusement or enjoyment” and as “an event, performance, or activity designed to entertain others (2017). Additionally, hotel entertainment is based on same definitions. A hotel is the facilitator of the entertainment that the guests can enjoy during their stay.

Customer satisfaction, “a measure of how happy customers feel when they do business with a company” (Cambridge dictionary, 2017a) together with customer experiences, “the way someone feels at all stages of doing business with a company or organization” (Cambridge dictionary, 2017b) will clarify the object of the research. By asking the customers about their satisfaction and experiences, the commissioner can get very useful data to im-

prove the current program. Furthermore, recreation and play are an essential part of a hotel entertainment program. Especially recreational games and play connect with the offered entertainment, and will be used as factor in the quantitative part of the research.

Researching entertainment program, participation and customer satisfaction have a few considerations. The clientele varies a lot depending of the season, therefore a general overview is hard to create, as the study was conducted during only one week. The results can be used for testing a new program for the winter season, but the program and participation vary a lot depending of the customer segment and season. Also, not many previous studies were made. The commissioner stated that it has been difficult to collect data from the guest participation and satisfaction in comparison to the number of guests staying in the hotel. The study will help to map the current situation of the two hotels and to see, if there were any differences between the respondent groups.

### **1.1 Company information**

Med Playa is a Spanish hotel chain operating 16 hotels in the coasts of Spain. The hotels are located on the most touristic coastal areas; Costa Brava, Costa Barcelona, Salou, Costa del Sol and Benidorm. The company was founded in 1967 and it specialises in beach hotels. The chain manages a total of 3,929 rooms providing accommodation for up to 8,080 guests. The mission of Med Playa is to provide quality holiday at competitive prices with friendly service and pleasant atmosphere (Med Playa 2017).

All the Med Playa hotels have their own entertainment programs created for different customer segments. The smaller hotels have 1 to 2 entertainers and the bigger ones up to a team of 20 entertainers. This thesis focuses on two of the biggest hotels of the company, and their entertainment programs.

The entertainment is provided by an entertainment team and a show team. The entertainment team takes care of both day and night time activities, such as sports, games and theme nights. The goal of the team is to please the guests and create unforgettable holiday experiences. The team has a day and night time program with various activities for all age groups. The show team consists of professional dancers and singers, who perform in the night time. The goal of the team is to offer professional, high quality shows in the Med Playa hotels.

## **1. Hotel Flamingo Oasis**

Hotel Flamingo Oasis is a 4-star all-inclusive hotel with 2 outdoor swimming pools, tennis court, gym and an indoor pool to name a few of the facilities. The entertainment team of the hotel varies depending of the demand from 6 up to 12 entertainers in addition to the show team that performs in the hotel few nights a week. The entertainers are only working in Flamingo Oasis whereas the show team performs in four different hotels. The entertainment in Flamingo Oasis started in 2004 and when this research took place there were 10 entertainers plus the show team working. Some of the shows are done with the help of the show team, as there is live singing involved. Twice a week, when the entertainers have their days off there is some external night time entertainment, such as singers or acrobatic shows.

## **2. Hotel Rio Park**

Hotel Rio Park is located in the centre of Benidorm. The mission of the hotel is to stand out from the others with their excellent customer service and friendly staff members. The hotel has a big pool area offering space for big events, too. The entertainment team together with the show team started in Rio Park in 2014. The entertainment has been divided so that the entertainers work with the guests and their activities, while the show team performs at night. The days when the show team is not performing there are professional musicians, acrobatic shows or games done by the entertainers (Rio Park entertainment team, 2017).

### **1.2 Justification for the study**

The topic was chosen due to the author's background and interest in hotel entertainment. After a discussion of possible subjects the entertainment coordinator of Med Playa, Maria Gomez, offered a possibility to collect the data from customer satisfaction of the entertainment program. The results of the research will help the company to improve the current program and find out the strengths and weaknesses of the offered services.

In summer 2016, a similar research was conducted by the same author in other hotels of Med Playa, but the results were not answering the research questions clear enough. Therefore, the new research for this thesis was conducted with a different set of questions to find out the reasons and answers to the research problem.

As hotel entertainment is not very common in Finland, there were not many previous researches made about the subject in Finnish or English. The material found was not updated and the author wanted to find as fresh information as possible. Therefore, the theory framework of the thesis consists of experiences, customer satisfaction and recreation.

### **1.3 Limitations of the study**

As the research was conducted during the low season in February 2017, the results do not apply for the summer season. The clientele varies significantly depending of the season and therefore the results will be used for the winter season entertainment program.

The research was done online, and this limited the amount of results. The guests during the low season are mainly pensioners. When conducting the research, there were some issues with the technology. Help was provided in case of some problems when filling the questionnaire but the motivation to reply was lower than expected.

### **1.4 Structure of the thesis**

The thesis starts with an introduction to the main topics. After the introduction, the theory framework goes through three different parts. The first part considers experiences and their meaningfulness to the guests. The second part is about customer satisfaction and different customer segments. The third part of the theory goes through recreation and participation.

After theoretical framework, the research is introduced. The research was made in February 2017 and conducted in both hotels. The quantitative part includes the guests of the hotels and the qualitative part the staff members. The research is followed by an analysis of the results and as last, improvements and suggestions for the future. The surveys and interviews are found in the appendices of the thesis. All in all, the thesis is introducing the objectives and going through selected theories and methods, that later will form the base for the actual study. The study results will be compared in between the two hotels' customers, staff and theory. This three-folded way offers various viewpoints and suggestion options for the future.

## 2 Experience, customer satisfaction and recreation

This chapter introduces and explains the main theories behind the study. The theoretical framework concentrates on elements of experience, customer satisfaction, recreation and entertainment. These aspects will form the base for the research done in the Med Playa hotels.

### 2.1 Experience

As Pine and Gilmore state (2011,17), experiences occur within all individuals who have been engaged on an emotional, physical, intellectual or spiritual level. The experiences are highly personal and two people cannot have the same experience. "Experiences inevitably involve perception, emotion, and unexpected behaviours on the parts of customers" (Richardson 2010). "An experience is not an amorphous construct; it is as real an offering as any service, good, or commodity." (Pine & Gilmore 1998).

When talking about experiences at a company level, the article of Pine and Gilmore, *Welcome to the experience economy*, explains that an experience occurs when a company uses services as a stage, props and goods to engage the customer and this way creates memorable experiences (1998). "Experiences and entertainment are available for everyone, but the well planned staged experiences are most likely the ones to stand out." As Pine and Gilmore define, staging experiences is not about entertaining customers, it's about engaging them (2011, 45). The hotel entertainment has an image of being only something amusing to the guests. However, most of the activities are based on participation. This way the guests can learn new skills and experience while enjoying the entertainment.

Although the Experience Economy by Pine and Gilmore is a well-known and appreciated publication, there are authors with differing opinions. The customer satisfaction strategy blog wrote about the "death of the experience economy". This rather strong expression states that though the memorable experiences are great, the implementation and planning are making it difficult to execute in real-life (Customer satisfaction strategy 2011). The author states that charging more from experiences than regular services are outdated in the web-centric period.

Even though some authors think that the experience economy might be outdated and company centric, the 2017 trends clearly state, that experience economy keeps getting stronger. A consumer trend website Buzzbooster talks about virtual experience economy



as a rising trend. Virtual experience allows the people to interact without location, accessibility and personal capacity factors. The time is the only factor affecting the experience (Virtual experience economy 2016). These virtual reality experiences no longer serve only as amusement, but also become more convenient and helpful. For example, it allows you to visit places you have never been before or an activity you wouldn't dare to try in the physical world. These kinds of experiences carry on growing and offer the consumers value for their money.

## 2.2 Four realms of an experience

The four realms of an experience introduced by Pine and Gilmore (1999) explain the different elements of an experience for a guest. The realms are divided into four main categories: entertainment, educational, esthetic and escapist. The horizontal line represents the level of participation while the vertical line shows the connection to the actual experience. The middle, so called 'sweet spot' is the ideal spot, where an experience should take place.

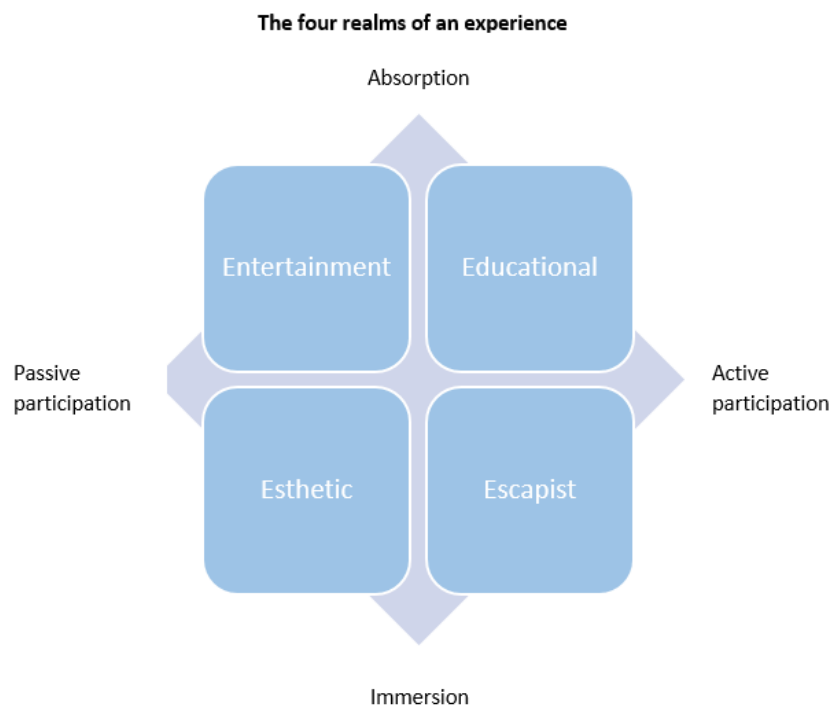


Figure 1. Experience realms (Pine, & Gilmore 2011, 46)

**The educational** - Educational experiences need active participation from the guest. As Pine and Gilmore state, knowledge and skills must actively engage the mind or body, depending on whether it is intellectual or physical education (2011,46). In the case of hotel entertainment in Med Playa hotels, the educational part can come from the activities, where the guests are learning new skills, like dancing, for example.

**The escapist** – “Guests of escapist experiences are completely immersed in them as actively involved participants” (Pine, & Gilmore 2011, 50). The experiences of this level, such as room escape, allows the guest to take a certain role in the experience. In Vuosaari Finland, hotel Best Western Rantapuisto together with an escape room company InsideOut has implemented this kind of room escape experience into a hotel environment. “Real-life Room Escape Game by InsideOut Escape Games is a 1 hour long live adventure experience for adults, which combines entertainment, theatre, science and fun. You have 60 minutes to solve our puzzles and riddles to escape the room!” (www.rantapuisto.fi). This could bring a completely new element to the hotel entertainment, too.

**The entertainment** - As shown in the figure above, entertainment is passive absorption, where the guest is observing from the outside rather than participating, for example watching a movie. It’s all about amusement. Entertainment as its simplest can be watching a movie, or a show.

**The esthetic** – “Individuals are immersed in an event or environment but have little or no effect on it, leaving the environment (but not themselves) essentially untouched”. (Pine & Gilmore 2011, 53). Esthetic experiences are about being, observing, but not actively taking part, such as a museum tour.

“Companies that create such happiness-generating experiences not only earn a place in the hearts of consumers but also capture their hard-earned dollars -and harder earned time (Pine & Gilmore 2011, 19).

The experience realms can be used as a tool when analysing and designing experiences. These elements will be taken into a consideration in the research survey, too. The survey has questions about the entertainment programs strengths and weaknesses. The respondents are asked to choose their favourites and least interesting parts of the program. Also, future changes are asked in order to see what kind of experiences are the most appealing to the customers.

### **2.3 Customer satisfaction**

“Customer satisfaction is a relative concept based on the extent to which an organisation has met its customers’ requirements”. (Hill, Roche & Allen 2007,39). Cambridge dictionary defines customer satisfaction as “a measure of how happy customers feel when they do business with a company” (Cambridge Dictionary 2017). To be able to reach this goal, the company must be able to look through the customer’s lens to see what are the real

needs. The organization is more focused on the products, processes and people, where the customer is looking at the benefits for himself from his own perspective. If the offer and the benefits do not meet, the customer will more likely be dissatisfied. (Hill & al. 2007, 37).

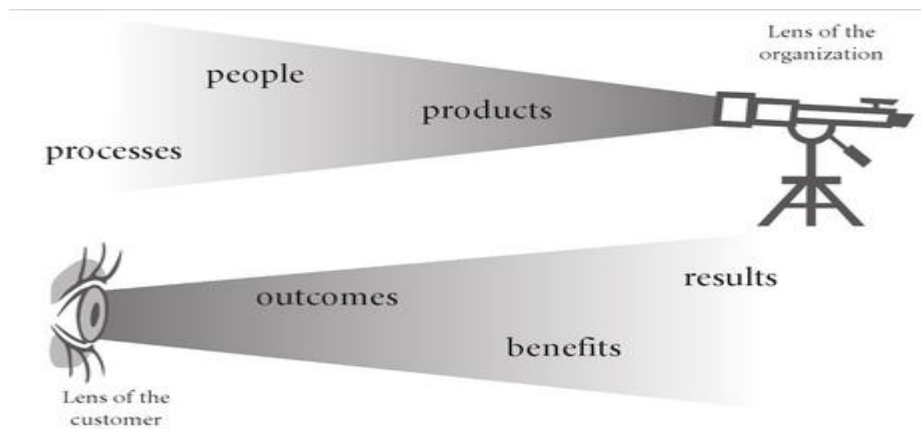


Figure 2. The lens of the customer (Hill & al. 2007, 37)

Objectively measured customer satisfaction is a combination of inner needs and expectations and the perceived quality of the product (Goddard, Ajami & Gargeya 2010, 61). People’s expectations come by their previous experiences with a company. Customers automatically compare each new experience, positive or negative, with their previous ones and judge it accordingly. Expectations can also be shaped by the competition and the customer’s personal situation (Meyer & Schwager 2007). All these aspects will shape the base for the customer satisfaction.

Measuring customer satisfaction is a lead indicator of future customer behaviour towards it (Hill & al. 2007, 3). Customers’ attitudes provide useful data for managing organisational performance, as seen in the figure below. The attitude of the customer becomes behaviour if the relationship between the customer and the company forms and this leads to organisational outcomes.

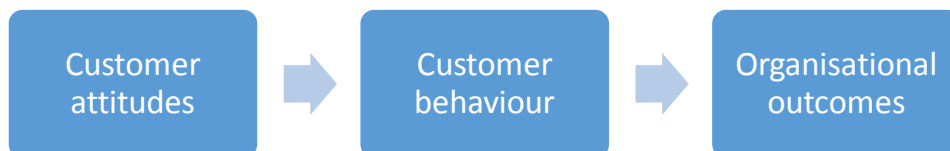


Figure 3. Attitudes and Behaviours (Hill & al. 2007, 4)

In tourism industry, the customer satisfaction comes from the correlation of the expectations and the actual perception. If there is a gap between the expectations and reality, the

customer is more likely unsatisfied. The level of satisfaction will also determine the future holiday planning. If the expectations meet the experience, the customers are more likely coming back (Ryan 2003, 119). It is important to create something that will meet the customer expectations. The product's perceived performance is relative to the expectations. If the product fails the expectations, customer is dissatisfied. If the expectations match the product, customer is satisfied. Additionally, if the product exceeds the expectations the customer is more likely highly satisfied and delighted. (Kotler, Bowen & Markens 2017, 39).

## **1. Customer segments**

Customer segmentation can be defined as the “process of dividing a market into groups of similar consumers and selecting the most appropriate groups for the firm the serve” (Peter & Olson 2002, 552). In addition, it is important that a company reorganises itself around the customer for a competitive viewpoint (Alhert 2000, 263). Therefore, the segments are important. From the aspect of satisfaction, the company should think what is best for the customer and how to achieve the individual needs of each segment.

Defining different segments will help the company to answer the needs of these customer groups more individually. There are many ways to define the segments. The segmentation can be done based on geographic, demographic, psychographic and behavioural segments (Kotler 2017, 225-230). Below the elements of these matters will be explained more thoroughly.

*Geographic units* define the customers according to their geographic location. For example, in 2016 the two main touristic groups travelling to southern Spain were from UK and France (Tourism Statistics 2016). This information can help for instance to offer services for the target groups in their languages.

*Demographic segmentation* is based on variables such as age, life cycle and gender. These elements are easy to measure and offer useful information (Kotler 2010, 202). The consumer preferences change according to the age. Different age groups travel for different reasons. In Spain, so called *imserso*, pensioner trips, are a very important part of the demographic segmentation. “Imserso is the holiday scheme for pensioners sponsored by the Spanish Government. During the off-peak season, from October to June, cheaper holidays are made available to resident pensioners in Spain, whatever their nationality.” (Abaco Taxes 2017). For instance, in Med Playa Hotel Santa Monica, these groups visit the hotel between February and March and again between September and October (Hotel

Santa Mónica, Calella 2017). Moreover, the age cannot be the guiding segment. Many elder people are still active and by stereotyping the elderly, they might not get exactly what they want (Kotler 2017, 227).

*Psychographic segmentation* uses people's lifestyle, opinions, interests and activities as the base of a segment. Psychographic segmentation is very subjective, as everybody have their own opinions and lifestyles and therefore it is suitable for individualization of services (Bhasin 2017).

*Behavioural segmentation* divides customers into groups based on their knowledge, attitude and response to a product (Kotler 2010, 206). For example, Hilton Hotels offer their potential and existing customers luxury, high status in society and sense of achievement as their demographic customer segment is based on middle and senior aged professionals with elevated level of income (Dudoskiyv 2016). Behavioural segmentation can be used together with the demographic units.

To be able to effectively divide customer segments, they must be measurable (Kotler 2010, 209). This has been taken into a consideration when making the quantitative research in both hotel Flamingo Oasis and Rio Park. The respondents will be asked to state their age, country of origin, gender, travel company and opinions about the entertainment program. These questions are based on the segmentation and will help to analyse the results.

## **2. Customer experience**

“Customer experience is the internal and subjective response customers have to any direct or indirect contact with a company” (Meyer & Schwager 2007). Every company serving customers works with customer experiences, that effect the overall satisfaction of the customers. It is the totality of how customers engage with the company and brand, not just in a snapshot in time, but throughout the entire arc of being a customer. (Richardson 2010).

There are tools that can be identified and controlled by the company to increase customer experiences. Creating outstanding customer experiences does not require knowledge of incredible invocations. “Customer experiences spring from concrete, controllable elements — the touchpoints”. (Richardson 2010). Those touchpoints are illustrations of direct contact either with the product or service itself or with representations of it by the company or some third party (Meyer & Schwager 2007). By creating different touch points to different

customers, the experience and satisfaction will increase. As an example of a great experience, Andaz hotels offer a complimentary beverage in the lobby while waiting for the host to finish the check-in. Later, the guest will be escorted to his room (MacKenzie 2012). This kind of welcoming to the guests, done by the entertainers, could be a terrific way to start the experience from the moment the guests arrive to the hotel.

A good and simple tool to use in creating and evaluating customer experiences is the customer journey map. In tourism and recreational services customers are always part of the service, and this makes the journey very important. "A customer journey map tells the story of the customer's experience: from initial contact, through the process of engagement and into a long-term relationship." (Boag 2015). Creating a customer journey could both increase the amount of participation and improve the satisfaction of the guests. The customer journey map is based on the steps the customer goes through before, during and after the service. The map can be created through different touchpoints the experience has. The more touchpoints there are, more necessary the customer journey map becomes (Richardson 2010). Customer experience and engagement in general will be questioned in the survey. The customer journey tool will be used in the suggestions for the future in hotel Flamingo Oasis and Rio Park.

## **2.4 Recreation and leisure**

"The word 'recreation' stems from the Latin *recreatio*, 'restoration to health'. Hence traditionally the term has been thought of as a process that restores or recreates the individual. The historic approach in defining recreation has been to consider it as an activity that renews people for work, an approach which has obvious limitations" (Torkildsen 2005, 47).

Recreation is often mixed with leisure. These two concepts are related to each other yet defined in a slightly different way. Both concepts have various definitions. "Leisure is an experience most likely to occur during freely chosen interactions characterized by a high degree of personal engagement that is motivated by the intrinsic satisfaction that is expected to result" (Rossman 2003, 6). Recreation can be defined from the leisure time point of view as such: "Recreation allows people to have fun together and to form lasting relationships built on the experiences they have enjoyed together" (Walker 2013, 376). As both concepts are rather broad, the study focuses on recreation and especially on the element of play.

As Torkildsen states (2005, 55), recreation can be described and defined in many ways. Two main ways of perceiving recreation are from an activity focus and from an experience

focus. In activity focus the recreation is seen as the activities we call recreation and from the experience point of view it is an experience enjoyed actively or passively. For Med Playa, it is important to discover which kind of experiences the customers want in the future.

## **1. Play, games and sport in leisure**

“Play can pervade all aspects of life; not just physical play, but also the play of the mind, the play of words and the play of communications with people” (Torkildsen 2005, 15). Play-based leisure activities are often related with children. These activities can take place in several leisure facilities such as parks, play areas and beaches (Leisure and Tourism 2017). Even though play is considered to be something for the children, adults want to play too. Play is done for its own sake. It's voluntary, pleasurable and engages the person. The act itself is more important than the outcome. Playing is how people connect and communicate. (Yenigun 2014). All these elements are combined in hotel entertainment, too. People play together, learn, engage and simply have fun. “Play is the most spontaneous form of leisure behavior, and its occurrence depends totally on the consent and conscious participation of the players.” (Rossman 2003, 11).

*Games* are part of leisure experience with rules, players and a problematic outcome. Some games require skills, others chance. The leisure games must be programmed so that these two are in balance with the customers skills. Sport in leisure time involves physical participation. Like games, sports have some rules and required skills. (Rossman 2003, 9-12).

Both play and games are part of an entertainment program. As no previous studies were made, this study will explore what kind of play and games the guests prefer. Also, elements of sports and recreation in general affect the program and the guests. These terms are linked together and can be seen as a combination, as the figure below shows.



Figure 4. Relationships among central definitions of leisure, recreation, play and games (Rossman 2003, 12)

As seen above in figure 4, recreation, play, games and sport are seen as different forms of leisure. These elements are used when programming leisure. “A program is a designed opportunity for leisure experience to occur” (Rossman 2003,3). The elements can be combined in order to create a diverse program.

An entertainment program is based on activities offered to the customers. “An activity is focused participation in a specific occasion or interaction” (Rossman 2003, 68). Activities are essential unit of recreational and leisure participation and this way create sales. As Chiu expresses (2014), the challenge for sport and recreation programmers in tourism is to provide experiences that improve the quality of life. Additionally, the contribution of sport and recreation consumers to the development of their emotional, physical, social, and intellectual lives is a challenge. The elements of recreation, play, sports and leisure will be used when analyzing the data of the research. Both current program and future suggestion are based in the recreational activities.



## 2. Factors influencing leisure participation

As Torkildsen affirms (2005, 114), there are many factors affecting the participation of a person. These factors can be divided into personal, social and opportunity factors. The personal factors relate to the individual and his stage in life, needs, interests and attitudes. The social and circumstantial group defines the situation where the individual lives and how he lives. The third group, opportunity factors, relates to the services and opportunities available. The table below illustrates to complexity of the participation in recreational activities.

Table 1. Influences on leisure participation (Torkildsen 2005, 114)

Personal	Social and circumstantial	Opportunity factors
Age	Occupation	Resources available
Stage in life-cycle	Income	Facilities – type and quality
Gender	Disposable income	Awareness
Marital status	Material wealth and goods	Perception of opportunities
Dependants and ages	Car ownership and mobility	Recreation services
Will and purpose of life	Time available	Distribution of facilities
Personal obligations	Duties and obligations	Access and location
Resourcefulness	Home and social environment	Choice of activity
Leisure perception	Friends and peer groups	Transport
Attitudes and motivation	Social roles and contacts	Costs; before, during, after
Interests and preoccupation	Environment factors	Management: policy and support
Skills and ability – physical, social and intellectual	Mass leisure factors	Marketing
Personality and confidence	Education and attainment	Programming
Culture born into	Population factors	Organization and leadership
Upbringing and background	Cultural factors	Social accessibility
		Political policies

As the figure demonstrates, there can be differences between individuals. Looking from a life-cycle perspective, people in different age groups have unique needs and interests. Also, gender, status and geographical aspect varies. By identifying the factors can be used as a tool when researching the participation of the guests.

There can be individual, personal and family influences that affect the participation. Personality, individual interests and needs and physical and social activeness impact the participation (Torkildsen 2005, 114). This study focuses on three different elements that effect the leisure participation; age, life cycle and gender. These elements are used when constructing the questionnaire in order to cross-tabulate the results.

Although *age* has a significant impact in participation its effect varies depending on the person and the activity (Torkildsen 2005, 115). Children change a lot in a fast period and their participation changes on the way. In addition, the adults can have differences depending on their age. Even though the age effects the person's participation, *the life-cycle* can be more effective way to measure it. People who are alone, with children or with their

partner will most likely have different timetables and this way see the importance of participation in a different way. As Torkildsen states (2005,116), children, teenagers, adults and elderly people in different life situations will most likely participate in distinct ways.

When considering genders, participation rates do not normally differ between men and women. The women take a larger part in cultural activities, whereas men participate more actively in sport related activities. When taking leisure into account, then the similarities in participation between men and women are more striking than the differences.” (Torkildsen 2005, 116).

In conclusion, the literature review forms the base for the quantitative research. The experience realms will be used in the creation of quantitative survey to find out, what kind of experiences the guests prefer. The customer segmentation forms a base for identification of the customer groups of the hotels. This way the results can be compared between different segments. The customer experience and satisfaction will be used in analysing the data and when making new suggestions. The recreation and play theory is also used in survey creation. This way to respondents get to choose what kind of activities they prefer.

The next chapter goes through the methodology of the research. The methodology consists of both research methods used; quantitative and qualitative. The research methods are introduced and their use explained.

### 3 Methodology

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches are used together in this research as a convergent parallel mixed method. This way the research includes both customers' and staff members' points of view and allows to compare the results. The target group of the quantitative survey are the guests of both hotel Rio Park and Hotel Flamingo Oasis in February 2017. The qualitative interviews were held at the same time with three staff members of the entertainment teams in the two hotels.

#### 3.1 Research position

The mixed research method was chosen because it allows to examine the connection of theory, staff members and guests of the hotels and this way create future suggestions on how to improve the entertainment program. Mixed research is an approach involving the collection of both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Quantitative and qualitative research methods provide different kind of information. Qualitative responses are usually open ended, when quantitative more closed ended (Creswell 2014, 215). The core assumption of this method is to combine the approaches and this way understand the research problem better (Creswell 2014, 4).

#### 3.2 Research method

The convergent parallel mixed method is used to find out the connection between the staff's and the customers' opinions. A convergent parallel mixed method design is a method that uses both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis as tools. When the data is collected both results are analysed and compared side-by-side. After analysis, interpretation and discussion are created based on the analysis of both parts of the data. (Creswell 2014).

**Convergent Parallel Mixed Method**

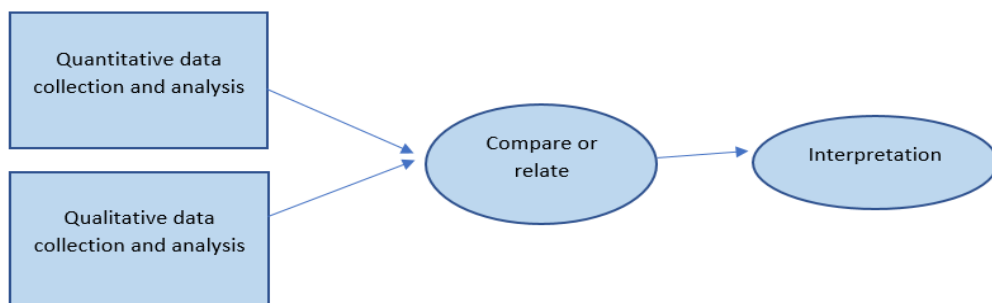


Figure 5. A convergent parallel mixed method design (Creswell 2014, 220)

The quantitative part of the research focuses on the customers of both Hotel Flamingo Oasis and Rio Park and the results were collected as an online survey. The survey links were given by the author in both hotels in February 2017 with a goal of 100 respondents in total. The research was made with a respondent completion. If the respondents needed help with the online questionnaire it was provided. Some found the online link confusing, but after instructions they managed to respond to the survey. The survey was done with stratified sampling. "Researchers also employ stratified random sampling when they want to observe existing relationships between two or more subgroups" (Explorable 2017). These two subgroups are the guests of hotel Flamingo Oasis and hotel Rio Park.

The qualitative part of the research focuses on the staff of the entertainment teams. The coordinator of the entertainment, a second manager and an entertainer were interviewed. The interview was structured. In structured interview the questions are prepared beforehand and they are presented in the same order with each interviewee. (Business Dictionary 2017). The questions are based both on theory and the qualitative survey to find the correlation between the different respondents. The respondents were chosen according to their positions in the company. The research results were compared to each other. This helps to analyse the strong and weak points of the entertainment program and find future suggestions.

## **1. Customer satisfaction survey**

The customer satisfaction survey forms the quantitative part of the study.

"An accurate measure of how satisfied or dissatisfied customers feel can be generated only if the survey is based on the lens of the customer" (Hill & al. 2007, 37). The survey conducted in hotel Flamingo Oasis and Rio Park was based on the idea to understand the customers point of view about the entertainment.

The content of the questionnaire was based in the theory framework and the research problem given by the company. The questionnaire was created using Webropol. There was a total of 17 questions in the survey. To make the data comparison possible between the two hotels, the respondents had to select which hotel they are staying at. Correspondingly, the number of visits in the hotel was asked to perceive, if there are any changes between the people coming for the first time and the ones who have visited the hotel several times. An open question about the reasons to come back was created to get open answers from the guests.

As Torkildsen states (2005) various aspects affect the leisure participation. To see if these aspects affect the participation in Hotel Flamingo Oasis and Rio Park, the respondents

were asked if they participated in day and night time entertainment and if not, why. This way several reasons behind recreational participation can be stated and used to improve the program. Additionally, the age, gender and travelling partner were inquired to see, if this had any affect in the participation. Finally, the most essential element while participating was questioned.

The survey goes through the most and least interesting parts of the entertainment program. Some of the options are more passive entertainment like watching a performance, others more participative, such as sports. Like Pine and Gilmore state (2010), the four realms of an experience can be used in creating and evaluating experiences. The survey will help to discover the most important realms for the Med Playa hotel entertainment.

The customer satisfaction will also be measured with Net Promoter Score, that shows how many people recommend the place to their friends and this way market the hotel. "Use your NPS as the key measure of your customers' overall perception of your brand. Because NPS is a leading indicator from growth, it provides the best anchor for your customer experience management program" (Net Promoter Network, 2017). Free comments were added in the questionnaire to notice the general opinions about the entertainment program and the satisfaction of the customers.

Furthermore, to identify the customer segments, basic questions were asked in the questionnaire. The guests answering the survey had to fill in their age, country of origin, gender and with who they were travelling with. These questions were based in the geographic, demographic, psychographic and behavioural segmentation (Kotler 2010).

Table 2. Survey question creation

Questions	Theory/method	Reference
1. Which hotel are you staying in?	Convergent parallel mixed method design	(Creswell, 2014)
2. How many times have you visited the hotel?		
3. If more than once, why?	Customer experience	(Meyer & Schwager, 2007)
4. Do you participate in the day time entertainment? If not, why?	Leisure participation factors	(Kotler, 2010)
5. Do you participate in the night time entertainment? if not, why?	Leisure participation factors	(Kotler, 2010)

6. What was the most interesting part of the program?	Experience realms, recreation and play	(Pine & Gilmore 2011), (Rossmann 2003)
7. What was the least interesting part of the program?	Experience realms, recreation and play	(Pine & Gilmore 2011), (Rossmann 2003)
8. On what did you focus when participating?	Leisure participation factors	(Torkildsen, 2005)
9. What would you change in the program?	Customer experience	(Meyer & Schwager 2007)
10. What is your favourite activity?	Customer experience	(Meyer & Schwager, 2007)
11. If you could add any activity in the program, what would it be?	Customer experience	(Meyer & Schwager, 2007)
12. How likely would you recommend to a friend? (1-10)	Net Promoter Score	(Net Promoter Network, 2017)
13. Open comments	Psychographic and behavioural segmentation	(Kotler 2017)
14. Country of origin	Customer segmentation (Geographic & Demographic)	(Kotler 2017), (Peter & Olson 2002)
15. Age		
16. Gender		
17. Travel company		

As seen above in the table, the questions were based in different theories mentioned in the framework, that supported the study. The first two questions were basic information in order to compare the results later. Question 3 was created based on customer experiences. By asking the respondents the reason why they returned, the author can analyse if there were links to positive customer experiences and what created them. Questions 4 and 5 are about leisure participation, in order to find out how many percent of the people participate and if they didn't, what was the reason. Experience realms together with recreation and play theory are the base of questions 6 and 7 where the respondents are asked to choose their favourite and least favourite parts of the program, and what could be changed in the program. Leisure participation factors were included again in question 8, where the respondents were asked to choose their focus point when participating between fun, competition, spending time with others, challenging themselves and sports. Questions 9,10 and 11 were based in customer experience theories, when the respondents were requested to choose what they would change, what was their favourite activity and what

would they add in the already existing program. Question 12 measured customer satisfaction with Net Promoter Score theory, that calculates the average of the satisfaction. Question 13, open comments, was offered to respondents who wanted to specify their wants, needs or give general comments. This question helps to analyse the individual psychographic and behavioural segments and needs better. Questions from 14 to 17 formed the base of the geographic and demographic segmentation, which helps when comparing the results and cross-tabulating.

## **2. Structured Interviews**

Qualitative structured interview was made to control the set of questions and this way compare and reflect the results to the quantitative survey. There are many benefits when using structured interviews. They allow to have more control over the process and this way keep the conversation focused. They also maximize the reliability and validity of data (Altinay & Paraskevas 2008, 113).

The questions were created after the quantitative survey and this way based on the same theory framework. When creating the questions, the goal was to discover the opinions of the employees working for the company. The responses can be used in comparison with the customer survey and when finding the links and gaps between the responses.

The interview questions were:

- Short job description
- How long has the person worked with the company
- How has the entertainment program changed during the time worked in the company?
- What are the strengths of the entertainment program?
- What are the weaknesses of the program?
- Are there any changes you would like to see in the near future?
- Are there any changes you would like to see in the far future?
- In your opinion, what is the main reason the guests come back?

These questions were based on the same theories as the quantitative customer satisfaction survey. This way the reflection of the respondent groups could be considered and this way create interpretations and suggestions that support both theory and results.

### **3.3 Data collection process**

The data collection for the research was done in February 2017. Both surveys and interviews were conducted in the hotels for one week. The online survey was made with links offered to the research group.

In February 2017 when the survey took place, hotel Rio Park had approximately 550 guests, from which 45 responded. In hotel Flamingo Oasis, the number of the guests was around 600, from which 49 responded. The result was less than expected, as 140 online survey links were given to the guests. Some of the people decided to answer in groups, which reduced the amount of responses while others found an online survey inconvenient. Even though these groups answered together they expressed their opinions to be that mutual, that they preferred to answer together. The most efficient way of conducting the survey was to demonstrate a paper version for the guests to see what kind of questions the survey had and then offer an online link. The data was collected online because the paper version would have been 4 pages long.

### **3.4 Data analysing process**

Quantitative research was analysed by using Webropol, an easy-to-use online tool that allows to create surveys with adjustable questions (Webropol 2017). As the survey was made online, the responses were saved in Webropol and later analysed. The author used Webropol 3.0, which offered more visual approach and an opportunity to cross-tabulate effectively between different respondent groups.

Qualitative interviews were analysed with the same theory base as the quantitative part. The interviews were transcript and a collection of useful data was made from the results by creating a figure of the respondents and the main points of their answers. This way the responses are in a similar format than the quantitative answers.

As the convert parallel mixed method was used, the results were analysed side-by-side. The challenge when using mixed method is to merge the data, as the sample sizes are usually unequal. The strength of this method is the discussion between two different ways of collecting data, that can be compared (Creswell, 227)

Cross-tabulation was used between the different age-groups of both hotels. Other segmentation factors were not cross tabulated due to very similar responses between distinct groups.



### **3.5 Reliability of the study**

The results of the study will apply for the winter season. The seasonal changes in the clientele are significant and therefore the results should be used mainly for the winter program.

The quantitative research was made during one week, and this must be taken into consideration, too. An amount of 94 responses were collected during one week, which only responds to the questions at that moment. To be able to create a bigger picture of the results, more time should have been spent in the data collecting part. As the author was in the hotels in February, one week was agreed to be the time for the research.

Some ethical considerations were taken into account. The quantitative research part is anonymous, protecting the guests and giving them a possibility to respond unidentified. Additionally, the names of the interviewed people were taken out in order to keep the study anonymous. The study has no further ethical considerations.

## **4 Findings and analysis**

In this chapter both quantitative survey and qualitative interview results are explained and analysed. The results will be compared in order to find similarities and differences between the respondents and the theory.

### **4.1 Survey results**

There was a total of 93 responses of the quantitative survey from which 49 were from hotel Flamingo Oasis and 44 respondents from hotel Rio Park. Both survey results are shown below. The results are shown separately from both hotels and crosstabulation was made according to the age groups in the questions where significant differences can be found. The other demographic segments, gender and country of origin, were not considered, as the results in both hotels were very similar. In the beginning of the survey the respondents were asked to state in which hotel they were staying in. This way the responses were easy to divide. Following the starting question, they were asked to tell how many times they have visited the hotel.

How many times have you visited the hotel?

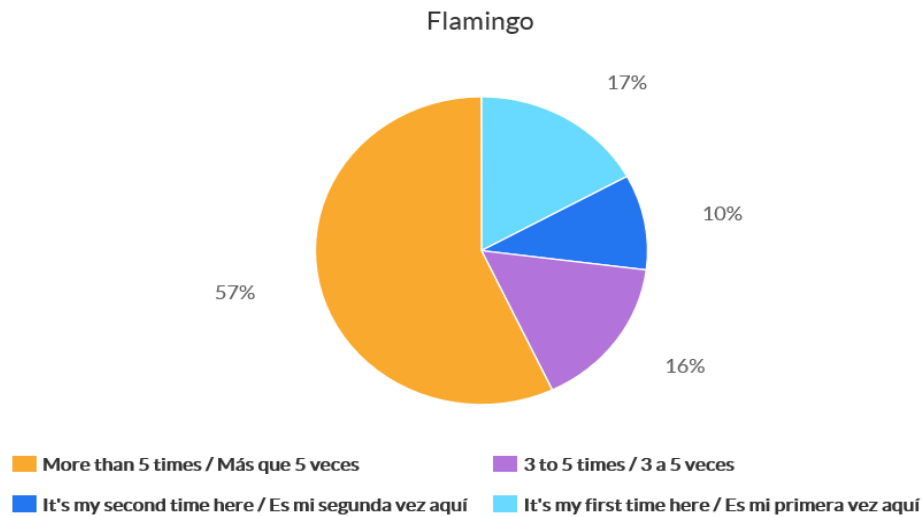


Figure 6. Visits in Hotel Flamingo Oasis

In hotel Flamingo Oasis, 57% of the respondents have visited the hotel more than five times, 16 % 3 to 5 times, 10 % for the second time and 17 % for the first time.

The respondents were also asked to explain with their own words the reasons why they returned to this hotel. 37 of the 41 respondents who had stayed in the hotel more than once answered this question, from which 70% stated that the excellent entertainment team was the main reason to come back. In addition, 30% said friendliness and convenient location were the main reasons.

The fact that over half of the respondents have stayed in the hotel more than five times states that some qualities of the hotel have impacted their decision. Also, the results of the open-ended question show that most the respondents chose to return to Flamingo Oasis because of the entertainment.

How many times have you visited hotel Rio Park?

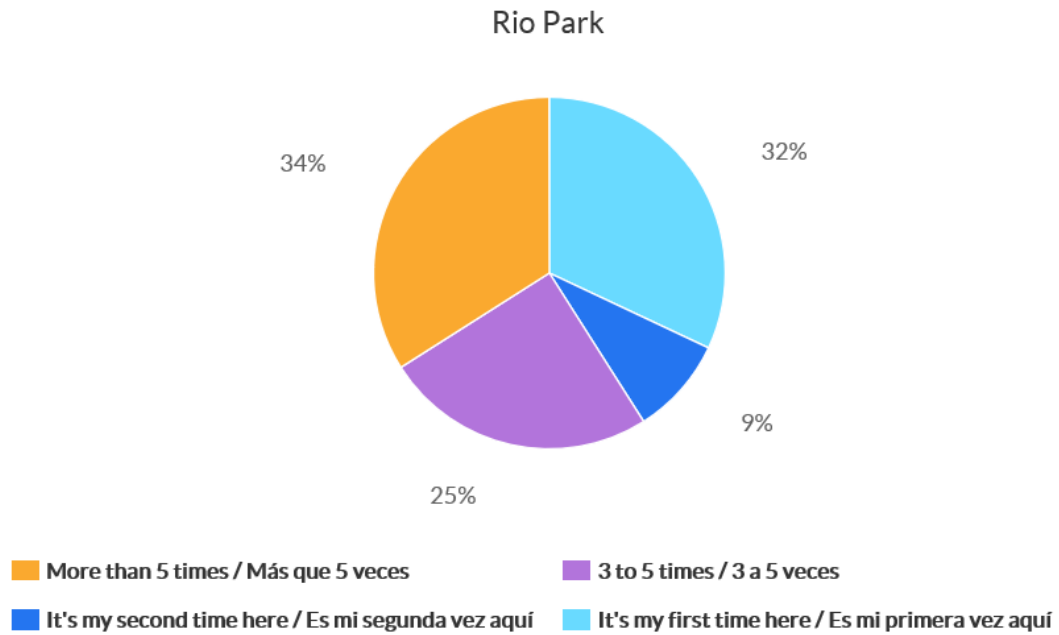


Figure 7. Visits in hotel Rio Park

In Rio Park, the percentages were divided rather evenly. 34% percent of the respondents had stayed in the hotel more than 5 times, when 32% were visiting the hotel for the first time. 25% had stayed in the hotel 3 to 5 times and 9 % were there for the second time. When the respondents were asked to explain their reason to return to the hotel, 24 of 30 people who returned answered this open question, from which 41% told the lovely staff to be the main reason to return. 38% of the respondents mentioned entertainment as the most important reason. Additionally, 21% added competitive price and location.

The respondents were questioned, if they take part in the day time activities of the entertainment team (table 6). In Flamingo Oasis (n=49), 88% were taking part in the day time activities. Only 12% (n=6) neither participated nor gave any reasons why. In Rio Park (n=44) 68% said they participated during the day. 32% of respondents (n=14) did not take part from which 9% (n=3) commented the reason to be meeting friends and going out during the day.

Table 3. Day time participation

	Flamingo Oasis	Rio Park	Total
Yes	43	30	73
No, if not, why?	6	14	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>93</b>

Table 4. Reason not to participate

No, if not, why?	Meeting friends, going out
No, if not, why?	Going out
No, if not, why?	Going out during the day

As tables 3 and 4 present, most of the respondents took part in the day time entertainment. The only mentioned reason the respondents did not participate was that they were not in the hotel during the day.

When cross tabulating, in hotel Flamingo Oasis, all the respondents between 18 and 35 years old stated that they participated in the daytime activities. 88% of the 36 to 55-year-olds participated and 69% from 55-65+ took part. In hotel Rio Park 75% of the respondents between 18 to 25-years-old participated during the day. 80% of the 26-35 age group and 83% of 36 to 45-year-olds stated that they participated in the day time entertainment. 67% of the 46 to 55-year-olds and 36% of the 56 to 65-year-olds said that they took part during the day. 33% of the respondents over 65-years-old participated.

The night time entertainment was also taken into consideration. The respondents were asked, if they participated in the night time entertainment. In hotel Flamingo Oasis, all the respondents stated that they take part in the night time entertainment. In hotel Rio Park, only 3 people said they do not take part neither did they justify why they did not participate.

Table 5. Night time participation

	Flamingo Oasis	Rio Park	Total
Yes	49	41	90
No, if not, why?	0	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>93</b>

The results of the night time participation state, that the respondents find the night time entertainment interesting. In Flamingo Oasis, all the respondents were participating during the night time and in Rio Park 91% were taking part at night. This shows that the night time program interests the respondents slightly more than the day time program.

As demonstrated above, all the age-groups in Flamingo Oasis participated in the night time entertainment. In Rio Park, all the respondents between 18 to 25-years-old took part

in the night time entertainment. 80% of the 26 to 35-year-olds participated, while all the respondents between 36 and 55-year-olds took part at night time. 92% of the responses between 56 to over 65-years-old stated that they participate at night time.

As seen in the figure 8 below, the respondents were asked to choose the three most interesting part of the entertainment program.

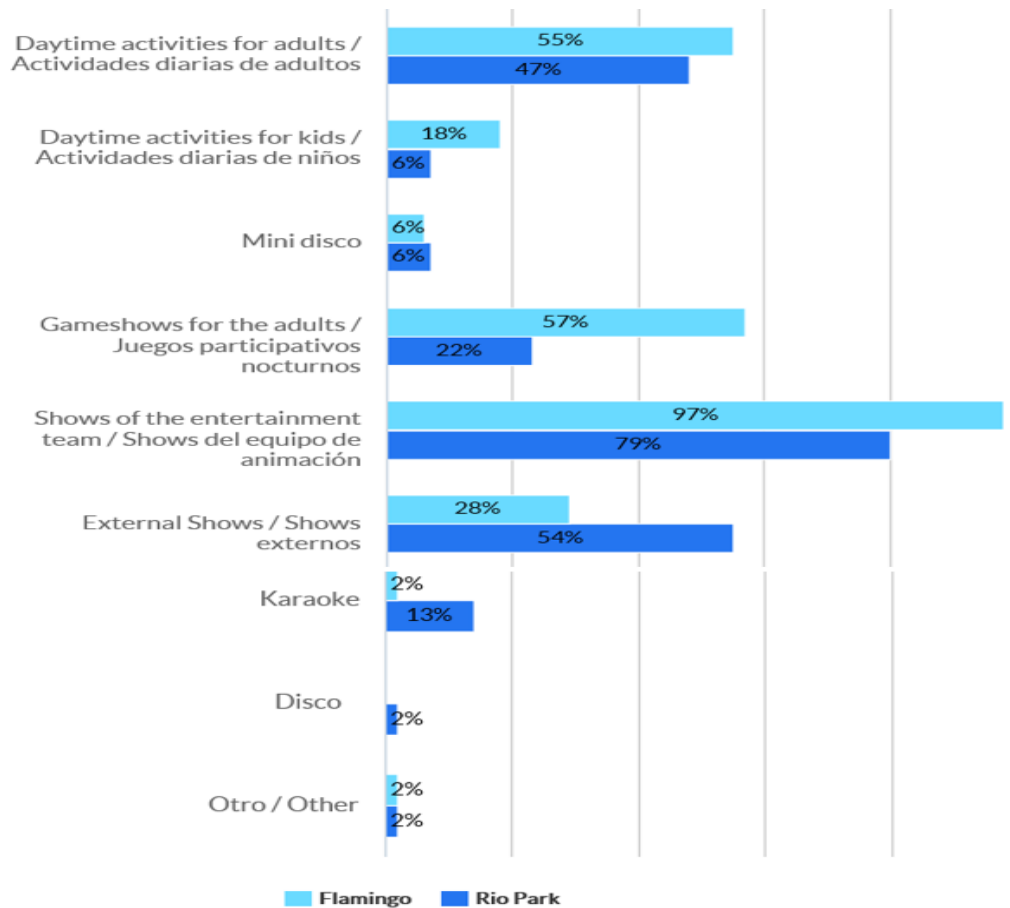


Figure 8. Most interesting activities

The respondents could choose up to three most interesting activities. In hotel Flamingo Oasis, 97% of the respondents thought that the shows done by the entertainment team were the most interesting part of the program. 57% though that the game shows for the adults were the most interesting and 55% said the day time activities to be the most interesting part. The results show that the entertainment teams effort is highly appreciated. The team's shows are found more interesting than for example external shows, that only got 27% of the responses. Additionally, the participative game shows and adults' activities were found very interesting, which demonstrates that the role of the entertainment team itself is significant.

In hotel Rio Park's results, the night time entertainment was more visible than the day time entertainment. When the respondents chose 3 most interesting things about the entertainment program, 79% said that the entertainment team's shows were the most interesting ones. 54% enjoyed the external shows and 47% the adult's day time activities. It must be mentioned that in Rio Park the entertainment team's shows are always done by the show team. This means that the shows the respondents like to watch are all professional level. The result shows that the respondents enjoy watching and being part of more passive entertainment than for example participative games, that only got 22% of the responses.

When comparing with the different age groups, in hotel Flamingo Oasis, all groups thought that the most interesting part of the entertainment program were the shows of the entertainment team. As the second most interesting activity among the 18 to 25-year-olds were the game shows for the adults. For 26 to 35-year-olds, day time activities were the second most interesting part of the program. For 36 to 45-year-olds the results went even with the options. 46-55-year olds selected the gameshows and the 56 to 65-year-olds the day time activities as the second most interesting part of the program. Over 65-year-olds thought that the external shows were the second-best part of the program.

In Rio Park, all the age-groups agreed on the shows of the entertainment team to be the most interesting part of the program, just like in hotel Flamingo Oasis. The respondents between 18 and 25-years-old together with 56 to 65-years-old stated external shows as the second most interesting part of the program. The rest of the responses were divided equally.

As seen below in figure 9, the respondents were asked to state the three least interesting parts of the program

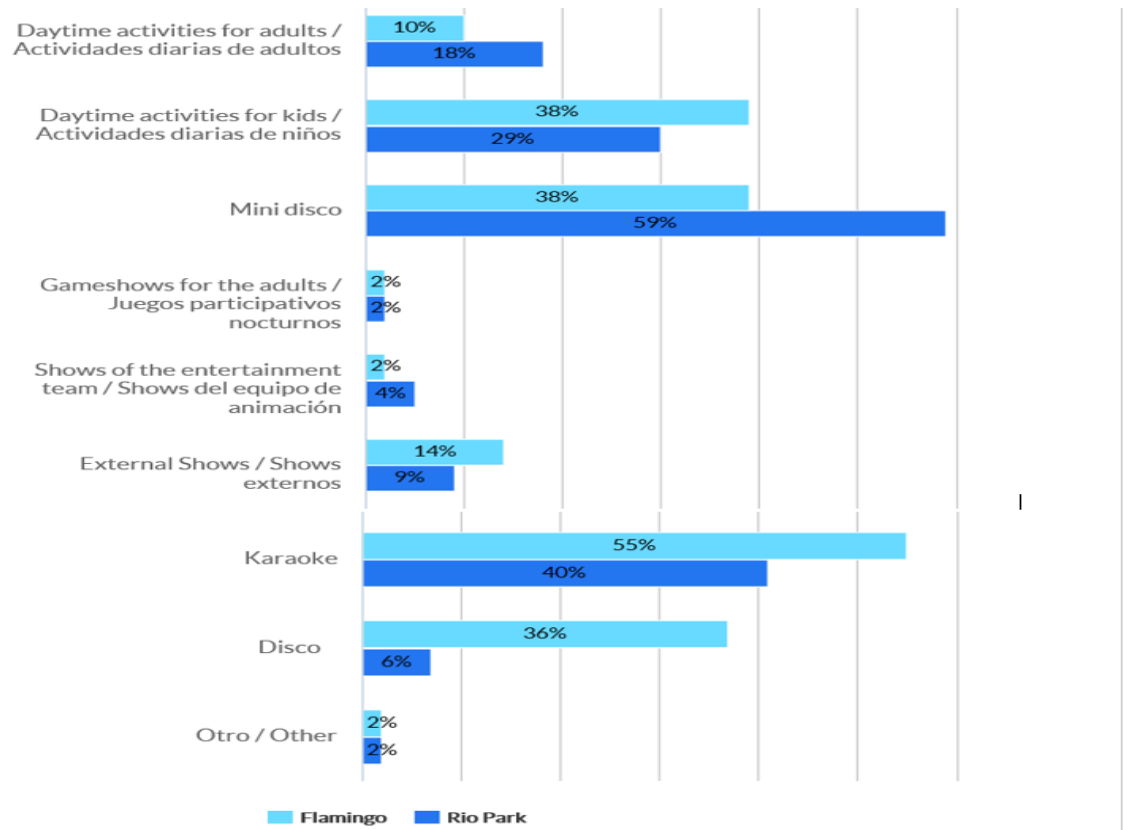


Figure 9. Least interesting parts of the entertainment programs

In Hotel Flamingo Oasis, 55% of the respondents said that karaoke was the least interesting part of the program. 38% replied that both mini disco and kid’s activities were the least interesting part of the entertainment program.

In Hotel Rio Park the mini disco was said to be the least interesting part of the program by 58%. Karaoke got 40% of the responses and kids’ activities 29%.

Both hotels had similar responses and it must be stated that these results only apply to the winter season. During the winter, the participation of kids is very low, which can be one of the reasons why the children’s activities were not found very interesting. However, the lack of interest in karaoke can be taken into consideration when making future suggestions.

When comparing between the age-groups, in hotel Flamingo Oasis 18-35-year-olds thought that karaoke was the least interesting part of the program. 36-55-year-olds considered mini disco as the least interesting activity. Among 56-65-year-olds the results were even between the options. Over 65-year-olds thought that both mini disco and day

time activities. In hotel Rio Park, no major differences between the age-groups were made.

As stated below in figure 10, the respondents were asked to select 1-3 options on what did they focus while participating in the activities.

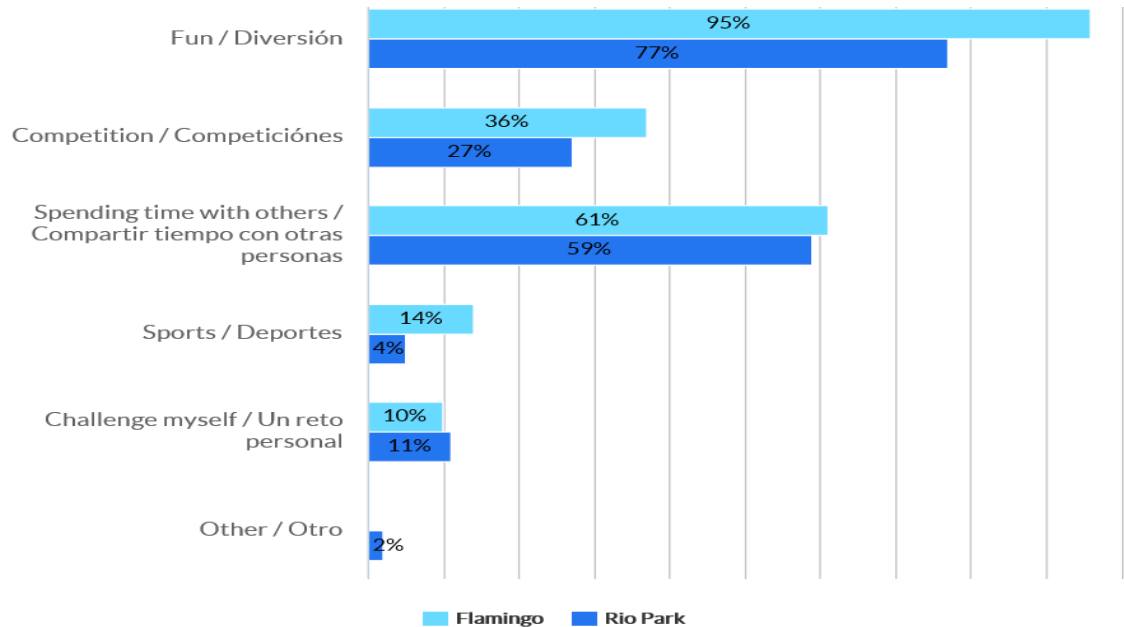


Figure 10. Focus points of participation

In Hotel Flamingo Oasis, 95% said that they focused on having fun, 61% spending time with others and 36% in competition. In hotel Rio Park, 77% stated the fun to be their focus point, where 59% focused on spending time with others and 27% in competition. The results in both hotels were rather similar, which can help the future suggestions.

Between different age-groups, all the respondents in Flamingo Oasis chose fun as the main focus. Respondents between 18 to 45-year-olds and 56 to over 65-year-olds thought spending time with others was the second key factor, where 46 to 55-year-olds considered competition as the second factor. In Rio Park, 75% of the respondents between 18 and 25-year-old participated during the day. From 26 to 35-year-olds 80% stated that they participate in the day time entertainment. 83% of the 36 to 45-year olds took part during the day. 50% of the respondents between 46 and 55-years old took part and 67% of the respondents over 65-years-old.

In hotel Rio Park, 18 to 25-year-olds stated competition to be the focus point, whereas the rest of the age-groups thought they focus on fun. All the age-groups added spending time with others as at the second important thing.



As the respondents already chose the most and least interesting parts of the program, they were asked to choose some activities they would like to have more.

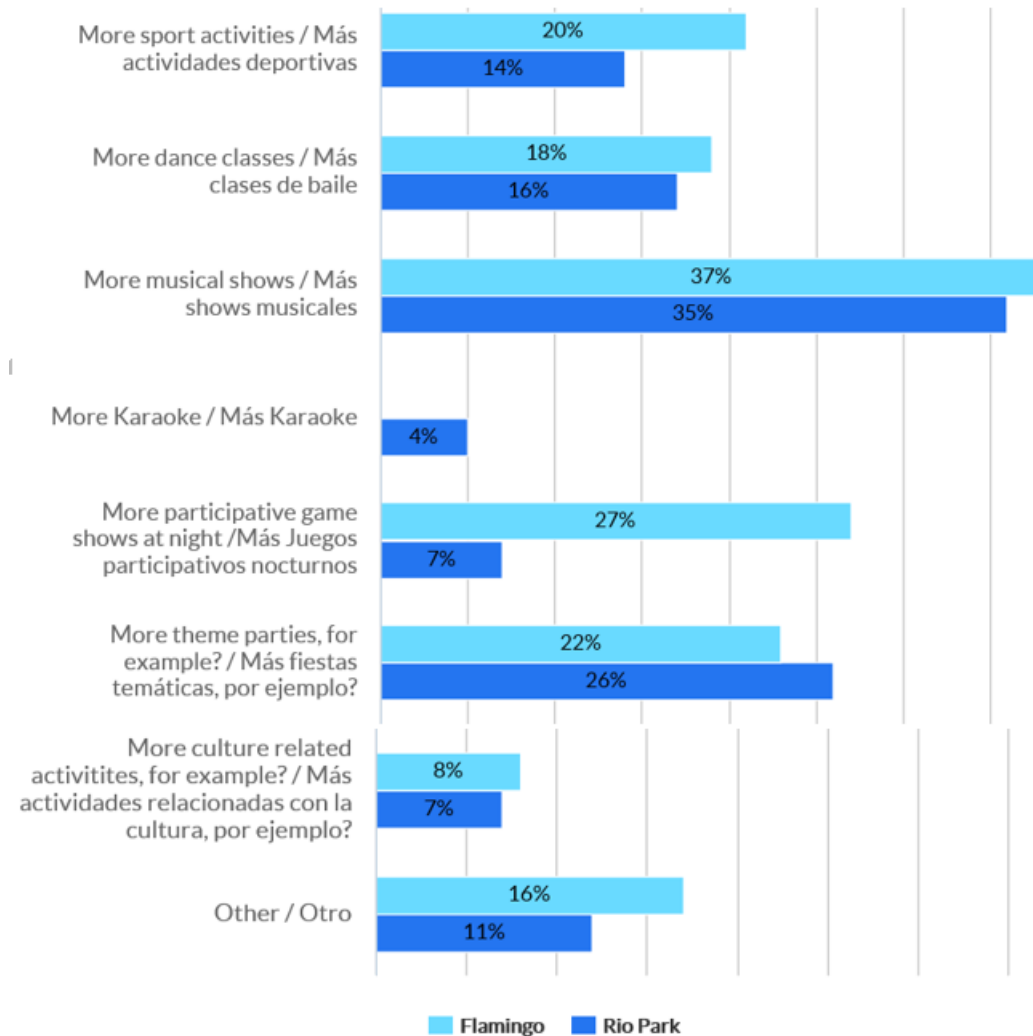


Figure 11. Improvements in the entertainment program

As seen in figure 11 above, in Hotel Flamingo Oasis 37% would wish to have more musical shows, 27% more participative games, 22% more theme parties and 20% more sport activities. There were two open responses in cultural activities suggesting Spanish lessons. Two responses wished for theme parties; Flamenco night and retro party. In other option, music during the day in the bar was suggested.

In Rio Park, 35% hoped for more musical shows. 26% wanted more theme parties, 16% dance classes and 14% more sport activities. There were 2 new theme party suggestions in the open responses; Valentine’s ball and an 80’s party. Compared between different age-groups, no major differences were seen.

The respondents were asked with an open question to choose their favourite activity of the program. In Flamingo Oasis, 44 respondents from 49 answered the questions, from which 53% chose the shows done by the entertainment team as their favourite. 17% said the daytime activities in general were great and 14% chose archery as their favourite. The rest of the responses varied a lot from aqua gym to rifle shooting and water polo.

In Rio Park 36 respondents from 44 answered the question from which 68% said the shows done by the show team of Med Playa were the most interesting part of the program. 8% liked the sangria demonstrations the most. 7% of the respondents enjoyed the morning fitness classes and other 7% said watching external shows was the best part.

The respondents were asked to mention as an open comment any activity they would like to add in the program. In Flamingo Oasis, 26 respondents from 49 answered from which 54% were water related activities such as water polo, swimming lessons and aqua cycling.

In Rio Park, 16 people from 44 answered the question from which 20% wanted more activities related to the Spanish culture, such as Spanish lessons and flamenco. Other 20% wished for more dance classes, and another 20% bingo. The rest of the respondents said that the program is good as it is.

The respondents were asked to mark from 0 to 10 how likely they recommend the hotel to a friend. This Net promoter score (NPS) question gave the average of 9.0 to hotel Rio Park and a 9.4 average to hotel Flamingo Oasis. All 49 respondents from Flamingo Oasis answered the question. From Rio Park, 42 from 44 respondents replied.

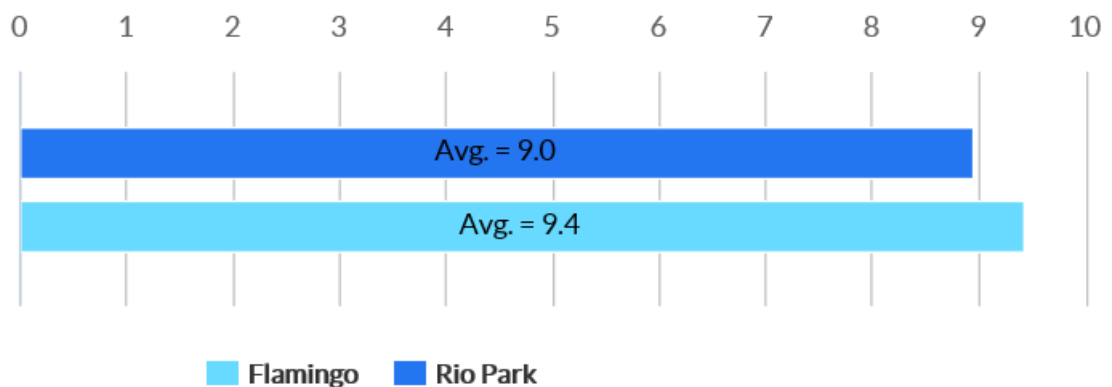


Figure 12. Net Promoter Score

The net promoter score shows that the overall image of both hotels is great, and that most of the respondents are promoters of the hotel, meaning that they would recommend the hotel to their friends very likely.

The respondents were offered to leave some open comments, too. In Hotel Flamingo Oasis, 28 people left comments. 76% were very happy with the entertainment, from which 50% had a strong relationship with the entertainment team. 19% hoped that the entertainers would be doing all the night time shows instead of the show team. Only 5% commented that the shows were too early and repeated too often. The open comments of Flamingo Oasis state that the entertainers are highly valued and their shows appreciated.

In Rio Park, 20 people left open comments. 54% commented that the entertainment in general was fantastic and 46% mentioned to hotel as a great place to stay.

The geographic measures are seen in the results of the respondent's country of origin in the figure below.

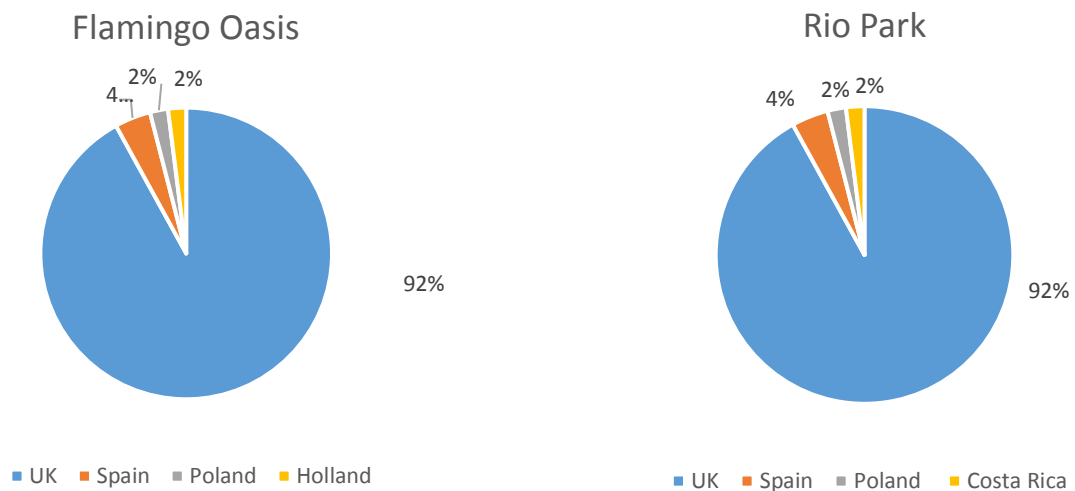


Figure 13. Geographic measures

In Hotel Flamingo Oasis, 92% of the respondents are from the United Kingdom. Only 4 % of the respondents were Spanish, 2% Polish and 2% Dutch. Geographically the focus segment is the travellers from the UK. The results of hotel Rio Park were significantly similar. 92% of the respondents were from the UK, 4 % Spanish, 2 % Polish and 2% Costa Rican. The results show the typical geographically defined customer segment for the winter season.

The demographic measures, age, gender and travel partner were questioned in the end of the survey.

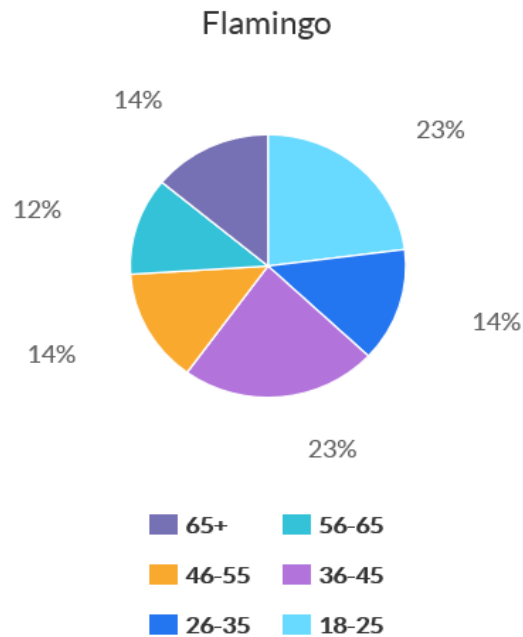


Figure 14. The age groups of hotel Flamingo Oasis.

The age groups of the respondents in Flamingo Oasis were divided quite even. 23% of the respondents were 18 to 25-year-olds and other 23% 36 to 45-year-olds. 14% of the respondents were 26-35, 14 % 46 to 55-year-olds and another 14% over 65-year-olds. 12% of the customers responding were 56 to 65 year olds. The division of the age groups can come from the fact that some of the elderly people struggled with the online surveys, when the younger guests helped them.

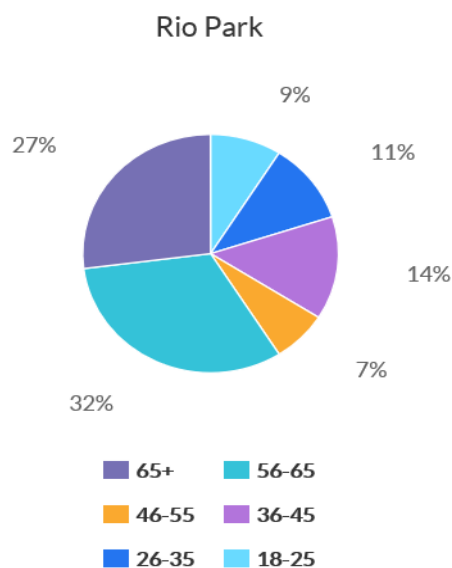


Figure 15. The age groups of hotel Rio Park.

In Rio Park, 32% of the respondents were 56-65-year-olds and 27% over 65-year-olds, meaning that 58% of the respondents were over 56-year-olds. Only 9% of the respondents were between 18-25.

Other demographic segment taken into a consideration was the gender as shown in figure 20.

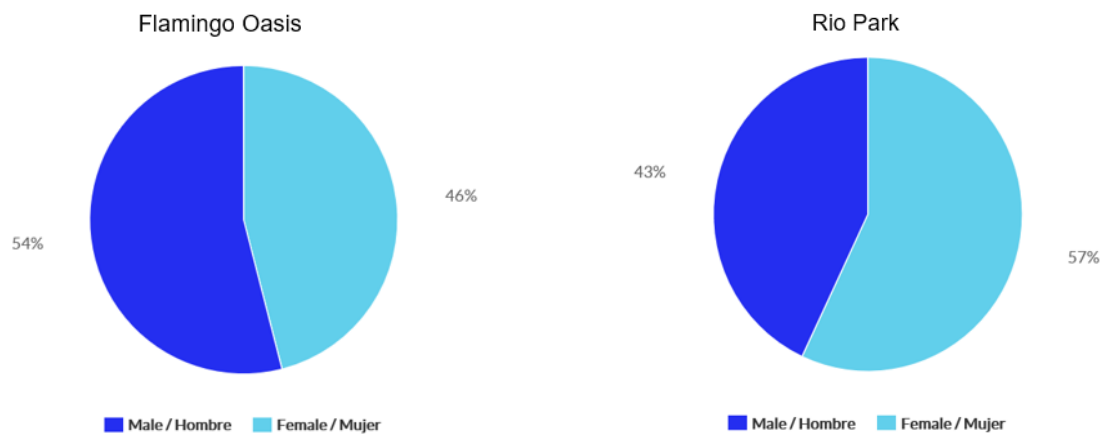


Figure 16. Gender of the respondents

In Hotel Flamingo Oasis, 54% of the respondents were males and 46% females. In Hotel Rio Park, 57% of the respondents were females and 43 % males. As the results are very even in both hotels with a small percental difference, no conclusions have been made.

The last question of the survey was about the possible peer travellers. The respondents were asked to answer with who they are travelling with. The results are shown in the figures 22 and 23.

### Flamingo Oasis

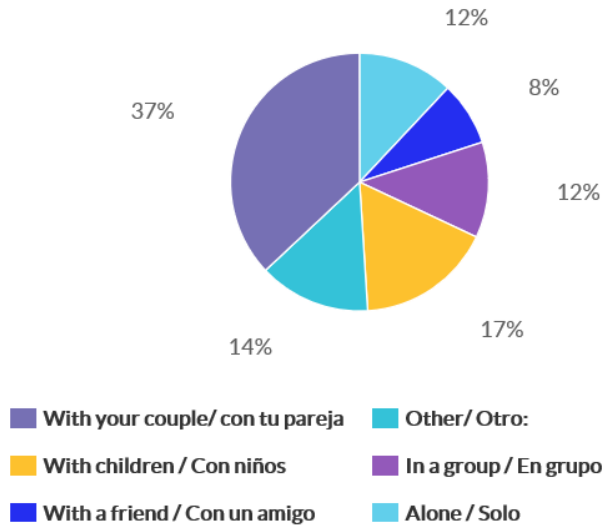


Figure 17. Possible peer travellers Hotel Flamingo Oasis.

In Flamingo Oasis, 37% of the respondents were travelling with their partner. 17% travelled with their children and 14 in other company, without specification. 12% of the respondents travelled alone and other 12% in a group. Only 8% said they were travelling with a friend.

### Rio Park

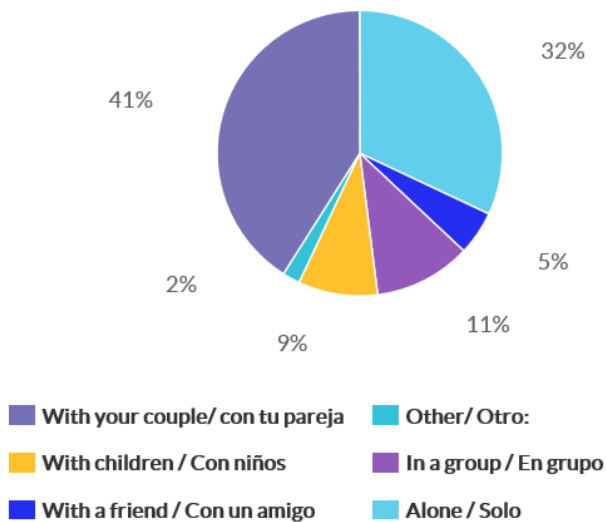


Figure 18. Possible peer travellers Hotel Rio Park

In Hotel Rio Park, 41% of the respondents were travelling with their partner and 32% were travelling alone. 11 % of the guests who responded were travelling in a group and 9% with children. 5% said they were travelling with a friend and only 2% with other company.

Both travel company and the age of the respondents can affect the earlier choices in the activity program, and why the children’s activities were voted as least interesting part of the program.

#### 4.2 Comparison of the surveys

The results of the questionnaire made in Hotel Flamingo Oasis and Hotel Rio Park were partly similar, although some differences can be found. The theories mentioned in both framework and methodology can be applied to the results of the questionnaire. In table 6 below, the theories are used to emphasize some of the elements of the entertainment programs, that can be used in the future.

Table 6. Comparison of the suggested theory implementations

Theory	Flamingo Oasis	Rio Park	Reference
Customer segmentation	Main segment: couple from UK, visited the hotel several times, looking for fun and spending time with others.	Main segment: couple from UK, visited the hotel several times, looking for entertainment and good shows to watch.	(Torkildsen, 2005)
Four realms of an experience	educational, escapist	entertainment	(Pine & Gilmore, 2011)
Participation factors	active	passive	(Torkildsen, 2005)
Customer experience	Expectations met the needs	Expectations met the needs	(Richardson, 2010)

In Flamingo Oasis, the respondents were hoping for more participation, theme parties and sport activities. This shows that they like to be part of the experience and join in, where the escapist realm comes along. In Rio Park, the respondents were enjoying more passive entertainment, like watching the night time shows, that they would like to have even more.

### **4.3 Results of the interviews**

The interviews were conducted with three staff members of the hotels. The respondents were selected by their work description and time working in the company. One of the respondents work on a higher managerial level, one as a second manager and the last one as a seasonal worker. The target of this interview was to see the opinions of the staff members and find if there is a connection between the quantitative responses from the customers and the interviews of the employees. Structured interview was used to get valid responses that are easy to measure and compare. Full transcript of the interviews can be seen in the appendices.

There were 8 questions prepared for the interview. The goal of the interview was to find connections and differences between the responses of the guests and the staff members. First two questions were about the respondent's job description and time in the company. This was asked to be able to find out, if there were any job-related differences in the answers. The next three questions were about the entertainment program. These questions were related to the questionnaire the guests were asked to answer (figures 12, 13 and 15). This way the comparison will be valid and easy to analyse.

Questions 6 and 7 were about the future of the program. These questions were asked in order to see what kind of improvements the staff members had in mind considering the program. This way the results can be compared with the questionnaire responses. The last question was about the opinion of the staff members about the reasons why the guests keep coming back. The answers to the questions are shown in table 7 below.



Table 7. Interview result summary

Question	A	B	C
Job	Entertainer (Rio Park)	Coordinator of the area	2 <sup>nd</sup> manager (Flamingo)
Time in the company	3 summer seasons	Since 2001, coordinator since 2006.	4 years, 2 <sup>nd</sup> manager since 2016
Program changes	Less participation	The quality, especially night time shows. More organised than before.	Better day time activities
Strengths	The timing of the activities	Night time (more audience than during the day)	Connection with the guests
Weaknesses	Not participative	Facilities of the hotels (not enough space for activities)	Winter activity participation
Changes / near future	More responsibilities at night time.	2 show teams instead of 1.	More passive activities for the winter.
Changes / far future	Variety between external and internal entertainment -> less trouble with last minute cancellations	Dinner shows, day time shows and musicians, day time cooperation with other companies (e.g. escape room)	Co-operation with other experience companies (e.g. laser tag)
Reason guests return	The variety	They feel welcome and the team is taking care of them, remembering names, treating like a friend.	The team/good relationships

The theory framework together with the research, showed some similarities. The program changes were stated to be less participation, more organisation and better quality in both activities and shows. The strengths were said to be the timetable, night time shows and connection with the guests. The weaknesses, were stated to be the lack of participation and facilities.

The changes suggested in the near future were more responsibilities to the entertainers at night in hotel Rio Park, two show teams instead of one and adding more passive entertainment to hotel Flamingo Oasis in the winter. This question divided the responses the most. The seasonal worker was hoping to be able to participate more in the night time entertainment, whereas the manager was planning to add the professional shows by having two show teams instead of one. The second manager was hoping to add some passive entertainment in the winter time program in order to increase the participation of the guests.

The respondents were asked what kind of changes they wish to see in the far future. The seasonal employee was hoping to add more variety between the entertainment team's night time shows and the external shows. Both second manager and the coordinator were hoping to collaborate with other companies to take the guests out from the hotel to join the day time entertainment with companies like room escape and laser tag.

The interviewees were asked to think what is the reason why people come back to hotel Flamingo Oasis and hotel Rio Park. The seasonal employee thought the variety to be the reason why guests return to the hotel. The second manager stated the good relationships between guests and the team and the coordinator mentioned the feeling of being welcome and treated like a friend by remembering names, caring and helping the guests.

#### **4.4 Interview comparison**

The results of the survey and the interviews had some similarities. The biggest difference was between the seasonal worker and the survey results. As the seasonal worker had been working in Rio Park for few months the opinions were slightly different to the customer opinions. The guests of Rio Park were satisfied with rather passive entertainment, whereas the employee was hoping for more participation. The second manager's opinions were mainly in correlation with the results of the survey.

## 5 Conclusions and implications

In this last chapter, the current entertainment program is introduced and followed by a suggestion based on the results. Additionally, other suggestions for the future are made and a discussion about the research and own learning considered.

### 5.1 Current entertainment program example

The day time entertainment program example is from Hotel Flamingo Oasis. Day time activities are divided into different time and age groups. As the example is from the winter season, the teenager and children's activities are only available in the afternoon as there are very few under aged people in the hotel during the winter season.

Table 8. Day time entertainment program example (Hotel Flamingo Oasis 2017).

11:30-12:15	Stretching	Aquagym	rifle	Yoga	Aquagym	Stretching	rifle
11:30-12:15	rifle	archery	rifle	archery	rifle	archery	rifle
12:30 - 13:00	flami games	flami games	flami games	flami games	flami games	flami games	flami games
13:30-15:00	ensayos	ensayos	ensayos	ensayos	ensayos	ensayos	ensayos
15:00-16:45	miniclub	miniclub	miniclub	miniclub	miniclub	miniclub	miniclub
15:00	Quiz	Quiz	Quiz	Quiz	Quiz	Quiz	Quiz
15:00 teen	Pool	football	pool competit.	Football	pool competit.	football	tennis
16:00	Line Dancing	Jenga	darts competi	Sangria	sjoelen	Jenga	Pool competitio
16:00	darts competitio	Pool Competition	darts competi	Pool Competition	Line Dancing	French Bowls	Pool competitio
16:00 teen	French Bowles	darts competition	jenga	waterbasket	Shuffleboard	waterpolo	darts

The morning activities start at 11.30. There are two different activities at the same time, except on Wednesday and Sunday when half of the team has a day off. The morning activities are normally either relaxing (yoga, stretching) or educational entertainment (rifle shooting, archery). After the first activity, the so called "Flami game" starts. It's a simple

game suitable for everybody and done with all the entertainers cheering for the guests. The winner of the game gets a prize.

At 13.30-15 *ensayos*, rehearsals are held for the night time shows. The activities continue in the afternoon from 15.00 to 17.00. Every day for those two hours, a children’s mini club is open. The teen activities are usually quite physical. The adults’ afternoon program starts with a quiz at 15.00. At 16.00 the activities vary from dance classes to pool and sangria demonstration. All the winners of the games get certificates that are announced at the night time.

Table 9. Night time entertainment program example (Hotel Flamingo Oasis 2017)

1st WEEK FIESTA F. 20,00	MINIDISCO	MINIDISCO	MINIDISCO	MINIDISCO	MINIDISCO	MINIDISCO	MINIDISCO
1st WEEK FIESTA FLA- MINGO 20.45	Video Quiz	Play Your Cards Right	Video Quiz	Play Your Cards Right	Video Quiz	Play Your Cards Right	Video Quiz
1st WEEK FIESTA FLA- MINGO 21.30	MICHAEL JACKSON	BEATLES	THE DRIFTERS		DIRTY DANCING		ROY ORBISON
1st WEEK FIESTA FLA- MINGO 22.30	MICKEY LEWIS	WHO WANTS TO BE A MIL- LIONAIRE	COCO CHANEL	GO FETCH	HABANA	Captains Quiz	ALEX ESCRIBANO
PIANO BAR 21:00	Pepe	Pepe	Pepe	Pepe	Pepe	Pepe	
PIANO BAR 23:00		KAY C		BEN ASHLEY		EMMA	

The night time entertainment program example from Flamingo Oasis 2017 shows that the entertainment starts at 20.00 in the Fiesta Flamingo bar. The first activity in the program is for the kids. Mini disco includes dances and games with the children. At 20.45 in the same bar an adult participation game starts. This game can be a quiz or some trivia, where the guests either participate actively or passively. At 21.30 the first show of the night starts. Depending on the day it can be a show done by the show and entertainment team (Michael Jackson, Dirty Dancing) or an external act (Beatles, Drifters, Roy Orbson). The first show is followed with another one at 22.30, when either a singer or a game show starts. The singers normally perform after the show teams’ performances, and the game shows by the entertainment team are done after the external shows.

In the adults-only Piano Bar, a musician Pepe plays piano six nights a week at 21.00 until 23.00 or 00.00. On three nights a week, a singer comes to perform to piano bar at 23.00. At midnight, either Karaoke or Disco night is on until 01.00. In Hotel Rio Park the winter program is similar, except the musical shows are always done by the show team, not the entertainers. As the program is only an example, some of the parts are missing.

## **5.2 Future suggestions**

All in all, the results of the research were good. The Net Promote Score measured the satisfaction of the guests to be 9 out of 10 in Rio Park and 9.4 out of 10 in Flamingo Oasis. Even though the results were good, some suggestions can be made based on the results of both survey and interviews.

Further research in customer segments and customer experiences could be done also during the summer season, when the clientele is very different. This way the results could be compared between time periods and segments, and the entertainment program could be even more customer centred, than before.

To attract new customers, online marketing should be boosted. Currently, the entertainment teams have their own Facebook pages, but they could add information about the teams in the company's website, too. Additionally, a separate page or a blog could be created for all the teams, where the people could get to know the teams and the activities. This way both show and entertainment teams would be introduced and the relationships with the guests could get stronger.

As the research problem was to increase the customer satisfaction through the entertainment program, the ways of doing it must be discussed. Based on the research, guests of Rio Park preferred traditional, passive entertainment where the guest himself doesn't have to do much. In Flamingo Oasis, the escapist experiences are not so common yet, and this could give a big step forwards in both sales and satisfaction.

As both quantitative and qualitative research shows, the respondents found the night time entertainment more interesting than the day time program. Therefore, the entertainment realm (Pine & Gilmore, 2011) is more effective than the other realms. The people are enjoying their holidays and want to relax, have fun and maybe participate. No bigger interest for educational, escapist or esthetic realms are shown, although they could work with the summer customer segments. Most the customers focused on having fun while they participated, which also supports the entertainment realm. Also, spending time with others and

competition were mentioned. These could be used when creating new activities, for example more team activities, where the guests don't play as individuals but as groups.

As the research was done only in February during the low season, further research would be needed in order to get more data and to be able to compare the results between winter and summer customer segments and staff. The day time participation was lower than the night time, and the main reason was that the guests were not in the hotel during the day. The program could include some activities outside of the hotel in collaboration with other companies, such as laser tag and room escape. In addition, the beach is a 10-minute walk away from both hotels, which could allow some of the activities, such as morning yoga to be held on the beach. This could also help to promote the entertainment outside the hotel.

It would be good to add importance in the least interesting parts of the program during the winter season. If Karaoke is necessary, there could be some modifications to make it more participative in Flamingo Oasis and more performing in Rio Park, for example by one singer from the team leading the night, as they enjoyed more passive activities.

As both staff and guests considered the night time entertainment as the strong part of the program, some suggestions can be made considering the day time program. These suggestions are based on the survey and interview results. As the customer groups in both hotels were very similar, one example program was made. As the respondents were all adults, the kids and teenager activities remain the same. The customer groups could be researched in the future.

Table 10. A suggestion for the day time program

11:30-12:15	Stretching	Aquagym	rifle	Yoga	Aquagym	Stretching	rifle
11:30-12:15	rifle	archery	rifle	archery	rifle	archery	rifle
12:30 - 13:00	flami games	flami games	flami games	flami games	flami games	flami games	flami games
13:30-15:00	Music in the bar	Day time show	Pianist	Music in the bar	Day time show	Music in the bar	Pianist
15:00-16:45	miniclub	miniclub	miniclub	miniclub	miniclub	miniclub	miniclub
15:00	Quiz	Quiz	Quiz	Quiz	Quiz	Quiz	Quiz
15:00 teen	Pool	football	pool competit.	Football	pool competit.	football	tennis
16:00	Line Dancing	Jenga	Spanish lesson	Guests vs entertainers	Laser Tag	Jenga	Pool competitio
16:00	darts	Room escape	darts	Guests vs entertainers	Salsa class	French Bowls	Pool competitio
16:00 teen	French Bowles	darts competition	jenga	waterbasket	Shuffleboard	waterpolo	darts

Both guests and management wanted to add more shows in the program, the 13.30-15, when there was a break for rehearsals the teams could do a day time show for example two times a week. These shows could be short and promoting the night time entertainment. The guests were wishing to get some music during the day time, and therefore a pianist could play also during the day. During the days when there are no day time shows or pianist, the bar could have some lounge music for the guests to enjoy.

Cooperation activities, laser tag and room escape, would be added in the afternoon. At the same time, another activity would be offered in the hotel premises. Also, the Spanish culture could be seen in the program via Spanish lessons and different dance classes. The participation element would be added in the guest vs. entertainers afternoon, where the guests compete as a team against the entertainers.

### **5.3 Discussion**

It must be stated that the number of respondents was less than expected. Additionally, the time-period of the research was rather short for making substantial changes or conclusions. The customer segments of the hotels vary a lot depending on the time of the year. To create a more customer centred entertainment program, the research should be wider and longer. Then again, the results of the research can be used in finetuning the program and testing it.

Some of the theories supported the research results. The author thinks that this study will offer tools for Med Playa to conduct a larger scale research, during winter and summer season. The experience realms by Pine and Gilmore together with a customer journey path help to create a new program. Also, the segmentation resulted to be useful, as the winter season customer profile was possible to define and the data was divided according to the segments. The results of the questionnaire together with the interview results offered a rather clear picture of the current situation and future ideas. Net promoter score gave an average of the satisfaction and the open questions helped the respondents to express their opinions and customer experiences.

The author's learning process began from the offered research subject to the research creation and implementation. The challenge was to find accurate information and theory about the exact subject, so different elements had to be studied. The creation of the thesis was a challenge, but the actual results will help the commissioner in the future planning.



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## Appendix 1. Quantitative survey

### *Entertainment Survey*

By answering this questionnaire you will help us to improve our entertainment services. The results will also help with a final thesis about the customer satisfaction of Medplaya Hotels in the university of Haaga-Helia (Helsinki). The survey will take 3-5 minutes to answer. Thank you for your time! / Este cuestionario es un trabajo de fin de grado para la universidad de Haaga-Helia (Helsinki) y al igual nos ayudará a mejorar nuestro servicio. La duración del cuestionario es 3 a 5 minutos. ¡Muchas gracias por su ayuda!

#### **1. Are you staying in / Estas visitando: \***

- Hotel Flamingo  
Oasis
- Hotel Rio Park

#### **2. How many times have you stayed in this hotel? / ¿Cuántas veces has estado en este hotel?**

- It's my first time here / Es mi primera vez aquí
- It's my second time here / Es mi segunda vez aquí
- 3 to 5 times / 3 a 5 veces
- More than 5 times / Más que 5 veces

#### **3. If more than once, what was your main reason to come back? Si más que una vez, ¿cual fue su principal razón para volver?**

#### **4. Do you participate in the day time entertainment? Participas en la animación diurna?**

- Yes/ Sí
- No. Si no, ¿Por qué? / No, if not, why?

**5. Do you participate / watch the night time entertainment? / Participas / disfrutas entretenimiento nocturno?**

Yes / Sí

No. Si no, ¿Por qué? / No, if not, why?

**6. What interests you the most in the entertainment program? ¿Qué es lo que más te gusta del programa de animación? (Choose max.3/ Elige máximo 3 )**

Daytime activities for adults / Actividades diarias de adultos

Daytime activities for kids / Actividades diarias de niños

Mini disco

Gameshows for the adults / Juegos participativos nocturnos

Shows of the entertainment team / Shows del equipo de animación

External Shows / Shows externos

Karaoke

Disco

Otro / Other

**7. What interests you the least in the entertainment program? ¿Qué es lo que menos te gusta del programa de animación? (Choose max.3/ Elige máximo 3 )**

Daytime activities for adults / Actividades diarias de adultos

Daytime activities for kids / Actividades diarias de niños

Mini disco

Gameshows for the adults / Juegos participativos nocturnos

Shows of the entertainment team / Shows del equipo de animación

- External Shows / Shows externos
- Karaoke
- Disco
- Otro / Other

**8. On what did you focus while taking part in activities organized in the hotel? / Cuales son tus intereses cuando participas en la animacion? (Choose max. 3 / Elige máximo 3)**

- Fun / Diversión
- Competition / Competiciones
- Spending time with others / Compartir tiempo con otras personas
- Sports / Deportes
- Challenge myself / Un reto personal
- Other / Otro

**9. What would you change in the entertainment program? (Eg. Daytime activities, shows, games etc.)¿Qué cambiarías del programa de animación? (Actividades, shows, juegos etc.)**

- More sport activities / Más actividades deportivas
- More dance classes / Más clases de baile
- More musical shows / Más shows musicales
- More Karaoke / Más Karaoke
- More participative game shows at night / Más Juegos participativos nocturnos
- More theme parties, for example? / Más fiestas temáticas, por ejemplo?
- More culture related activitites, for example? / Más actividades relacionadas con la cultura, por ejemplo?

Other / Otro

**10. What is your favourite activity from the program? / Cuál es tu actividad favorita del programa?**

**11. If you could add any activity in the program, what would it be? / Si podrias poner una actividad en el programa, cual sería?**

**12. How likely would you recommend this hotel to a friend? / ¿Recomendarías este hotel a un amigo?**

Choose one / Elige uno

1 Not at all likely / No lo recomendaría    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10 Very likely / Lo recomendaría

**13. Comments / Comentarios:**

**14. Country of origin / País de origen: \***

**15. Age/ Edad: \***

**16. Gender / Género: \***

Female / Mujer

Male / Hombre

**17. Do you travel / Estas viajando : \***

Thank you for your answer! ¡Gracias por su tiempo y ayuda!



## Appendix 2. Qualitative interviews

### Qualitative research: interview

#### Job description / responsibilities

A: an entertainer of Rio Park hotel, responsibilities: daytime activities, night time games e.g. karaoke and disco.

B: the entertainment coordinator of Benidorm area. Responsibilities: coordinating all the entertainment teams of Benidorm area and the shows.

C: Second manager of entertainment team in hotel Flamingo Oasis. Responsibilities: organizing and delegating the activities to the team, preparing theme days, planning together with the entertainment manager.

#### How long have you worked with Med Playa?

A: Approximately 11 months. Summer 2015 and 2016 in another hotel of Med Playa, in hotel Rio Park from November till March 2017.

B: Since 2001, in the beginning as an entertainer then I moved up to being a manager in 2003. As coordinator, I started in 2006 and later in 2014 I became the coordinator of all Med Playa hotels in the Benidorm area.

C: 4 years. Started as an intern then came back as an entertainer and in 2016 got promoted to the second manager's position.

#### How has the entertainment program changed during the years?

A: As I have worked in different hotels I compare them to each other. In hotel Rio Park the day time activities are suitable for the pensioners and calmer than the ones in the other hotels during the summer. In the other hotel, we did more sport activities. In Rio Park the night time entertainment is focused on external shows, so it's more passive entertainment. In the other hotel, the night time was focused on animation, game shows, participation and only few external shows per week. The team was doing almost everything.

B: In the beginning the entertainment was more into the day time. Night time has improved a lot and it's becoming more and more professional. More quality, more shows and more professional, show teams came in 2014. More and better dancers and singers. More organized, no gaps in the night time entertainment. During the day more promotion, more activities, more complete with different age groups.

C: It has changed with some things, in a good way with some new activities.

#### What are the strengths of the programs now?

A: A good winter program, suitable for the customers visiting during the low season.

D: Night time. In the day time you get 10-30 people /1% of the guests) night time you can get 500-600 people watching the show. So the mix with the shows and external shows .

C: Spending night and day time with the guests, this way people get to know you and participate. All together form a great combination. You create a connection with the guests and they with the team. Even the staff turnover is high, the team always manages to 'win over' the guests. Good public relations, jokes during the day and spending time with the guests is the best part.

What are there/is there any weaknesses at the moment?

A: The entertainers are doing more technical tasks like lights and music for the external shows and not so much animation, especially at night time.

B: We start to go get good shows (professional), trying to get the right people for the teams. Day time is a struggle with the facilities of the hotel (e.g. small space, no sport facilities). Trying to go outside is difficult (legal issues), hard to change)

C: Winter time some activities are difficult to do. It's hard to get the people to participate for example in rifle shooting and archery, as they are pensioners and prefer to relax than to be active.

Are there any improvements you would like to see in the near future?

A: Have the entertainers participating more in the program and this way make it more dynamic and interactive with the guests. This way, even considering the customer group (elderly people) of the winter season the guests could participate and get more variety to the program.

B: Instead on 1 show team 2 coming. This way entertainment can improve. Stages to fix, especially inside (winter season). Every year growing.

C: For next winter would be nice to take the activities out that people don't join in and add more passive entertainment. The winter season people don't want to be too active, so something you can do sitting or not moving too much would be great. s

Are there any improvements you would like to see in the far future?

A: Add more variety to the program between external and internal entertainment. This way there wouldn't be problems e.g. with shows that cancel last minute and the entertainers would have a bigger role in the program.

B: With better facilities and professional people, add a stage in the restaurant, add dinner shows, activities in the afternoon (lunch time), inside in the veranda bar afternoon shows (pianist, afternoon), day time 11-17 non-stop, outside the hotel, bowling, escape rooms, laser tag.

C: If we could have connections or deals with the bowling place, laser tag company or escape room it would be great.

What do you think is the reason the guests come back?

A: Memorable entertainment.

B: People get used to the places they go and they like to see familiar faces, service and entertainment level. we specialised with difference is the people. It makes them to feel like they go to see friends. They try new things realizing that nobody knows them. Connection with people.

C: The entertainment and the team. The connection with the people for their whole holiday is something very special. People start to see the team as friends or even family. You can see this even in the social media comments, they miss the entertainers.