

Saimaa University of Applied Sciences  
Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality, Imatra  
Degree Programme in Tourism and Hospitality Management

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# **Special Group Client Satisfaction in a Private Hotel**

Thesis 2018

## **Abstract**

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Special Group Client Satisfaction in a Private Hotel, 32 pages, 2 appendices

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The work was commissioned by a small private hotel in South Karelia. The purpose of the research was to study the special interest tourists staying at the hotel and to examine their opinions about the customer service. The thesis consisted of the aims for the theoretical and the empirical parts. The theoretical aims included finding and interpreting information about the subject. The empirical aims comprised the detailed study about the hotel's facilities, service, meals, and general satisfaction.

This study was carried out on the premises of the hotel. The theoretical information for the thesis was gathered from the Internet and literature. The material about hotels, special interest tourism, qualitative research and customer satisfaction was analyzed. The empirical data was collected via personal observation and handing out questionnaires to the survey participants at the hotel.

The results of the research show the levels of the respondents' satisfaction with the customer service they received at the hotel. Based on the findings, it was learned what the tourists were satisfied and dissatisfied with. Moreover, the results demonstrate the participants' feedback and ideas for service development. The conclusions can be taken into account by the hotel management for the development of future customer service strategies.

Keywords: special interest tourism, sports tourism, group clients, customer satisfaction, private hotel.

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# 1 Introduction

The topic of this thesis is, “Special group client satisfaction for a private hotel”. This is a project thesis done in cooperation with a hotel located in South Karelia. The objective of the thesis is to conduct a survey to collect information about group customer satisfaction, expectations and wishes regarding customer service at the company. The findings could be later implemented by the hotel for further improvements of the quality of service and facilities.

The thesis consists of theoretical and empirical parts. The first one covers information related to hotels, Special Interest Tourism, i.e. SIT, qualitative research and customer satisfaction. Since the focus of the project was on sports teams staying at the hotel, sport tourism is particularly highlighted in the theoretical part. The second part describes how the project was implemented and how the data was collected. The data collection methods included a survey with questionnaires as well as personal observations. A total of 24 responses was gathered in the empirical part.

The partner company is a hotel located in South Karelia. It is a small-scale enterprise serving customers mostly from Finland and Russia as well as some other countries. The service is provided in Finnish, Russian and English. The hotel is surrounded by Finnish nature, which can be considered a unique selling point. There are twin rooms of two types: Standard and Superior. The hotel provides various services for its customers, including restaurant and bar, sauna, conference and meeting facilities, free parking and Wi-Fi. Group customers have the opportunity to design their own unique menu according to their wishes and requests. The hotel has easy access to sports venues. Also, there is a possibility to reserve the restaurant, sauna or the whole hotel for celebrations. Room reservations can be made directly through the website, the reservation forms are available in Finnish, Russian and English. (The company website.)

## 2 Tourism and hospitality industry

### 2.1 Hotel

Hospitality industry consists of two services: providing accommodation and catering for people traveling outside their home. Hotels typically offer both options. (Wilson-Mah n.d.). Hotels can be classified to several types. For instance, the company size, location, target markets, service levels, facilities, number of rooms, types of ownership are the categories hotels can be divided into. (Setup My Hotel n.d.) Figure 1 demonstrates the most commonly mentioned hotel types.

<b>By size or number of rooms</b>
1. Under 200 rooms
2. 200 to 399 rooms
3. 400 to 700 rooms
4. More than 700 rooms
<b>Target markets</b>
1. Business hotels
2. Airport hotels
3. Suite hotels
4. Extended stay hotels
5. Serviced apartments
6. Resort hotels
7. Bed and breakfast / Homestays
8. Timeshare / Vacation rentals
9. Casino hotels
10. Conference and convention centers
<b>Levels of service</b>
1. World class service
2. Mid-range service
3. Budget / Limited service
<b>Ownership and Affiliations</b>
1. Independent hotels
2. Chain hotels

Figure 1. Types of Hotels / Classification of Hotels (Setup My Hotel n.d.)

#### 2.1.1 Chain hotels

Chain hotels are handled and operated by the same owner. Consequently, a hotel chain is a management organization that controls several hotels that have the

same brand name but different locations. Every hotel from a chain is allowed to make its own decisions regarding administration, marketing and promotion issues. When it comes to management, chain hotels sign a franchise agreement as well as an agency contract. Thus, the hotels belonging to one chain are operated by the same brand. (Xotels n.d. a.)

Chain hotels can offer certain advantages both to customers and owners. Clients can expect high quality and consistent service along with special loyalty program benefits. Managers, in their turn, acquire ownership-related advantages. Firstly, bulk purchasing done in a chain decreases costs and facilitates negotiations. Chain hotels can access an excessive customer database. Secondly, chains largely apply yield management which enables owners to improve revenues through calculating supply and demand. Thirdly, hotel chains typically have their PR and marketing handled in an organized manner. Consequently, hotels in a chain receive more recognition than individual ones. Besides, established chains have the ability to make favourable contracts with travel agencies. (Xotels n.d. a.)

Nonetheless, chain hotels lack autonomy and the freedom of independent decision-making. Hoteliers are forced to abide by pre-set standards and rules, which limits flexibility. What is more, waiting for decisions to be approved is time consuming. Last but not least, hotels belonging to a chain are deprived of property, interior and exterior uniqueness. (Xotels n.d. a.)

Chain hotels can be further categorized into leased hotels, managed hotels, and franchises (Best Hospitality Degrees n.d.). Figure 2 illustrates the details concerning each of the 3 types.

Leased hotels	The private owner of a hotel leases it to a chain. The lessee is responsible for all the finances. The owner can be paid a fixed rent. It is also possible to ask for a share of the revenue.
Managed hotels	A management company can be hired if the owners lack experience in the hospitality industry. The owners handle everyday operations, i.e. salaries and maintenance. The management company is responsible for making actual managerial decisions.
Franchises	Hotel owners pay a fee to a hotel chain to use their logo, name and management protocols. This type of arrangement gives the advantage of attracting tourists by the brand name and expected quality. However, if the brand image suffers, the hotel will suffer as well.

Figure 2. Leased hotels, managed hotels, and franchises (Best Hospitality Degrees n.d.)

### 2.1.2 Independent hotels

Independent hotels, also called privately owned hotels, allow their owners to be autonomous when it comes to administrative decisions. Those hotels can be customized according to their managers' personal preferences. Several shareholders can invest into independent hotels. Investors have the right to share their views and suggest some small-scale solutions. Nevertheless, the owners are the ultimate decision-makers. (Best Hospitality Degrees n.d.)

Unlike chain hotels, independent ones can offer guests tailored service and personalized approach. Internal operations are not restricted by brand protocols and regulations. Moreover, independent hotels can be flexible, meaning that it is relatively easy for them to adjust to constantly changing market needs. Since the managers do not need to consult a brand, the decision-making process accelerates. What is more, privately owned hotels are financially independent and are not subject to pressure from remote brand headquarters. In addition, this hotel type provides entrepreneurs with the opportunity to find their niche and cater for a specific clientele. Besides, independent hotels can afford to effectively communicate with customers via social media and immediately process feedback. (Xotels n.d. b.)

Nonetheless, operating an independent hotel can be complicated in some aspects. There are drawbacks such as paying all advertising and marketing costs. Furthermore, independent hotels are not eligible for wholesale purchases discounts. Aside from that, privately owned hotels are often seen as less respectable and trustworthy than chain hotels. (Best Hospitality Degrees n.d.) Another considerable disadvantage for independent hotels is their weak negotiation power against travel agents (Xotels n.d. b.).

## **2.2 Special interest tourism**

Special interest tourism, also abbreviated as SIT, caters for tourists whose hobbies and activities are motivation for traveling. The purpose can be recreational, educational, or a combination of both. Special interest tourism demonstrates how fragmented the hospitality market is. SIT offers more personalized trips than mass tourism and takes the clients' preferences and inclinations into account. Potential customers are identified and specifically targeted. There are specialized travel agents and tour operators that focus on handling special interest travellers. (Lominé & Edmunds 2007.)

As stated by World Tourism Organization (1985), attendance of outdoor activities, understanding of ecological problems, desire for extra knowledge and society transformation have become prominent. As a result, the new values contributed to the development of special interest tourism. Pearce (1988) reports in Weiler & Hall (1992) that holidaymakers have the tendency of learning and experiencing a destination rather than simply visiting it. Consequently, SIT can be regarded as ethical travel, social tourism, secondary tourism, eco-tourism, educational travel as well as alternative, appropriate, environmental, nature-based and sustainable tourism. (Weiler & Hall 1992.)

Figure 3 demonstrates the most widespread types of SIT. Travelers choosing special interest tourism in urban settings generally seek for authenticity, education, uniqueness, emotions, social contact, novelty, escape, discoveries, diversity and beauty. Customers opting for exploring rural settings are eager to find improved physical well-being, social contact and contact with nature. The motivation



factors for those choosing SIT in natural settings include scientific curiosity and risk-seeking. (Weiler & Hall 1992.)

<b>Setting</b>	<b>Special Interest Activities</b>
<b>Urban</b>	Museums
	Art galleries
	Heritage
	Arts and community festivals
	Performing arts
	Cultural (ethnic) travel
	Sports tourism
<b>Rural</b>	Cultural (ethnic) travel
	Arts and community festivals
	Heritage
	Adventure travel
	Health tourism
	Sports tourism
	Farm and ranch tourism
<b>Natural</b>	Nature-based tourism
	Adventure travel

Figure 3. The motivations associated with special interest activities (Weiler & Hall, 1992)

According to Chew (1987), Lickorish (1987), Martin & Mason (1987) and Shackelford (1987) in Weiler & Hall (1992), the appearing of special interest tourism is related to the changing environment of the international travel market. The factors attributing to the changes include increased spending per capita, the desire to have quality leisure time and more sophisticated audience. Moreover, alternations of the socio-demographic situation also affect the tourism market. For instance, the increasing life proximity, new family patterns and childless adults have generated new travel requirements. Whereas the price-related concerns are still relevant, modern customers are searching for unique experience in the first place. Therefore, value for money is growing in importance. As said by Krippendorf, the researcher who analysed the changing needs of tourism customers (1987), in Weiler & Hall (1992), environmental and social considerations are the key factors of today's tourism industry. (Weiler & Hall 1992.)

Weiler & Hall (1992) studied the scientific works written by Helber (1988) and Read (1980). With satisfaction being the leading factor when making vacation arrangements, the hospitality market has shifted to “active” holidays. Helber (1988) reported a growing demand for special interest tourism related to action, adventure, imagination and reminiscence. According to Read (1980), special interest tourism is the hub which ultimately shapes the travel experience. SIT suits those holidaymakers whose trips correspond with their interests. (Weiler & Hall 1992.)

As stated by Tabate (1989) in Weiler & Hall (1992), *the special interest traveller wants to experience something new, whether it is history, food, sports, customs or the outdoors. Many wish to appreciate the new sights, sounds, smells and tastes to understand the place and its people.* As reported in Weiler & Hall (1992), Read (1980) characterized special interest tourism as REAL traveling. The acronym means rewarding, enriching, adventuresome, and learning experience. (Weiler & Hall 1992.)

The contributions of SIT to the overall travel market can be presented as three levels of complexity. At the first level, special interest tourism is targeted at a very specific audience. Hence, advertising and product offerings can be carried out in accordance with the potential customers in mind. At the second level, the motivations for special interest tourists include the pursuit of uniqueness, authenticity and experience as well as educational and cultural interest. At the third level, holidaymakers engaged in SIT tend to create separate social worlds with their own communication channels. Although not all special interest tourists can be identified as belonging to a social world, they still demonstrate traits and preferences typical for a leisure social world. In other words, SIT can be referred to as a sort of serious leisure. (Weiler & Hall 1992.)

### **2.3 Sports tourism**

Sport tourism is a type of non-commercial travel. Sport tourism aids customers in viewing or engaging in sporting activities away from home. Researchers highlight two categories of sport tourism: for participation and for observation reasons. (Weiler & Hall 1992.)

Travel for participation purposes bears resemblance with adventure tourism and health tourism. Sport itself was defined by Edwards (1973) in Weiler & Hall (1992) as *involving activities having formally recorded histories and traditions, stressing physical exertion through competition within limits set in explicit and formal rules governing role and position relationships*. Sport involves competition, regulated standards of activity and improved physical qualities. Hence, travel for engaging in sports has its own niche in the special interest tourism market. (Weiler & Hall 1992.)

Tourists aiming to participate in sporting events fall into two categories. The first group is activity participants, who do sports for leisure, enhanced skills and personal achievements. The second group is players, or amateurs who view sports as a part-time hobby. (Weiler & Hall 1992.)

While travel for participating in sports is considered meaningful and significant, travel for spectating sporting events is, in contrast, seen as casual and informal. Regardless of that, attracting tourists for sports observations is highly profitable from the economical point of view. Sports events positively influence local economies and also promote the destination in general. (Weiler & Hall 1992.)

Sports tourism has its distinctive target market among special interest tourists. Both spectators and participants improve the economic situation of a destination and the destination as a whole. The ongoing growth of sporting events is becoming more and more valuable for urban development. (Weiler & Hall 1992.)

Prominent sporting events lead to increased funding of specialized infrastructure, such as arenas and stadiums. Furthermore, local communities benefit from organizing sport activities. (Weiler & Hall 1992.) Figure 4 illustrates what kind of positive changes sport tourism brings about.

Positive impact of hosting sporting events
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prestige and "big-town" image</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May lead to generation of new industry through relocation and establishment, and may add to the marketing power of locations</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The possible generation of additional employment, consumer sales, and tax collection which result from sporting events</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional recreational opportunities for community residents, especially if attendance at sporting events replaces other activities which are socially disruptive</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beneficial effects on the morale of the citizens resulting from the presence of a successful sports team in the city</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouragement of interest in sports among youth</li> </ul>

Figure 4. Positive impact of hosting sporting events (Weiler & Hall 1992)

Sports tourists constitute a considerable share of hotel visitors in a given destination. According to Hansen (2013), properly done marketing to sports groups can raise a hotel's revenue. Since sports group customers are becoming more sophisticated in their demands to amenities, facilities and services, hotels need to review their operations.

Members of sports team spend a lot of money during their stay at a hotel. They are searching for the best deal and require special offers. Besides, those travelers expect their trip to include not only a room, but a memorable experience. Consequently, amenities and services should be tailored to meet the needs of sports group customers. (Hansen 2013.)

First of all, those consumers require the hotel to be located close to the sports venue. Providing clear directions to the venue and accurate travel times could be especially appreciated. The hotel should be well informed about the forthcoming sports events and assist the consumers in terms of schedule and transportation. The next vitally important aspect is F&B spending. Offering low-cost breakfast could be an option to raise revenues because sports team members will be willing to buy meals at a low price. In addition, it is possible to cooperate with local restaurants to organize delivery of food for the customers. Moreover, sports teams usually request some personal space within a hotel. Normally, they book a meeting room for team meetings, receptions, discussions and private dinners. Apart from that, areas for training and keeping equipment are desired. Finally, customer

loyalty can be reached by offering brand memberships and discounts for further stays, as such gestures are appreciated by sports teams. (Hansen 2013.)

Hotels catering sports groups should be flexible and adapting to various circumstances. For instance, teams' special requests can be related to superstitions and professional beliefs. For instance, sports customers might use particular elevators or stay in rooms with specific numbers. Furthermore, teams arrive with their own nutrition plans and professional meal requirements. Hotel chefs must stick to the dietary instructions. Over and above that, there should be additional security staff to ensure sports teams' safety and privacy. Security staff's job is to make entry preparations, check rooms and restrain fans from attacking the team. (Grieves 2013.)

### **3 Customer segmentation and satisfaction**

Customer segmentation is the process of dividing customers into groups based on distinctive characteristics in order to do more effective marketing. In business-to-consumer marketing, customers are typically segmented based on demographic characteristics, including age, gender, marital status, location, e.g. urban, suburban, rural. (Business encyclopedia n.d.)

Segmentation creates opportunities for tailored marketing. In particular, segmentation is helpful for:

- Creating marketing messages targeted at specific customer groups.
- Choosing the most appropriate communication channel for each segment, e.g. email, social media, radio and TV advertisements, etc.
- Enhancing or creating new products and services.
- Improving customer relationships and customer service.
- Setting prices wisely.
- Picking the customers who create the most profit. (Business encyclopedia n.d.)

When segmenting customers, companies need to collect and analyze customer data. Information can be gathered through interviews, surveys, general research

using already existing available information about market categories and studying focus groups. (Business encyclopedia n.d.)

Customer segmentation is crucial when reaching a target market. Segmenting customers helps plan budget effectively and stick to the most perspective visitors. Moreover, there is a possibility to produce tailored messages for niche groups of people. Customer segmentation is useful to both small companies and large corporations. The most common ways to divide customers into segments are geographic segmentation, demographic segmentation, psychographic segmentation, and behavioral segmentation. (Bell 2016.)

- Geographic segmentation: continents, nations, regions, states, countries, cities, densities, climate, terrain.
- Demographic segmentation: age, sex, family size, income, occupation, education, ethnicity, nationality, religion.
- Psychographic segmentation: social class, personality, lifestyle.
- Behavioral segmentation: usage rate, type of usage, brand loyalty, benefits sought, readiness stage. (Nicholls & Roslow 1989.)

Customer segmentation is an essential part of creating marketing strategies. There are some particular steps to be followed when planning the segmentation:

1. Identifying stakeholders, creation of a work plan and objectives.
2. Making a list of characteristics of a “good” customer.
3. Selecting methods for defining customer quality.
4. Creating a list of customers to be analyzed.
5. Collecting information needed to test the determined characteristics.
6. Updating the database of customers and prospects.
7. Analyzing the information collected for confirming the characteristics.
8. Evaluating the characteristics and forming customer segments.
9. Reviewing the customer segments.
10. Producing marketing, sales and product guidelines to target the segments.

(Minogue 2018.)

### 3.1 Customer segmentation in the hotel industry

Customer segmentation gives information about hotel guests and the reasons for their stay. The most typical segmentation of hotel customers divides them into business travelers, groups of travelers, leisure travelers, and guests using hotel packages. (Hill n.d.)

Business people travel for meetings, presentations and official events. Business travelers care about price, location and easy access to conference amenities. Hotels serving this type of travelers are occupied during the weekdays. (Hill n.d.)

Groups of travelers include both leisure and business travelers. This segment requires a package of accommodation, meeting facilities and meals. The price includes all the services and discounts are possible. Group leisure travelers can book a hotel for weddings, school meetings and family reunions. (Hill n.d.)

Leisure travelers seek safety when choosing a hotel. Families can require special offers and services, such as supervision for kids. Leisure travelers can visit their relatives, visit an event or see local attractions. (Hill n.d.)

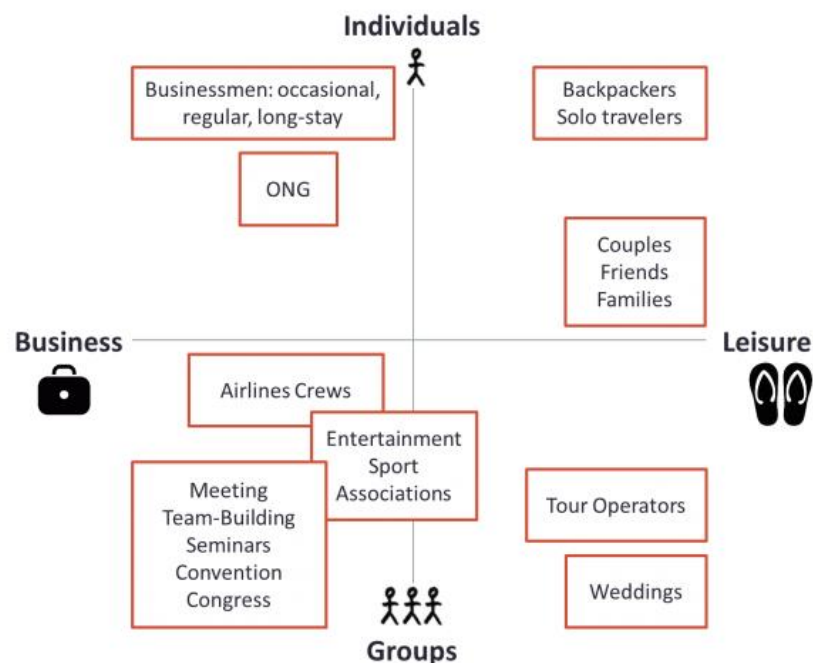


Figure 5. Motivational Segmentation (Thielin 2014)

As seen in figure 5, hotel customers can be divided into business and leisure travellers. What is more, both segments are further divided into individuals and groups. Individual business customers are occasional, regular, or long-stay businessmen as well as members of non-governmental organizations. Business groups are airline crews and people attending meetings, team-building events, seminars, conventions and congresses. Individual leisure travellers include backpackers, solo travellers, couples, friends, and families. Tour groups and guests of events, such as weddings, are leisure groups. Customers belonging to particular associations and traveling for entertainment and sports can belong both with business and leisure groups.

Guests can be offered extra packages and specials to create customer loyalty. For example, business clients could get a romantic weekend, special interest guests may find it useful to participate in educational activities. There is also a possibility to offer tickets to entertainment events, such as concert and sports games. (Hill n.d.)

Nevertheless, according to Meier (2017), today's hotel business environment makes it harder to divide visitors into business and leisure travelers. More and more bookings are done online and without stating the purpose of the trip. Thus, it is difficult to know what kind of client is going to arrive at the hotel. What is more, there are customers doing *bleisure* travelling, which means combining a business trip with recreational activities. Therefore, it is essential to know the distribution side and to define market segments.

As seen in figure 6, hotel customers can be divided into transient, or individual travelers, and groups. Individual travelers are segmented based on the rate of their booking. BAR – best available rate – is available to all the customers. Discount price is the best available rate with a discount. Corporate or negotiated price is the rate which has been agreed between a company or a partner and the hotel for a certain period of time. This rate is suitable only for the guests who qualify for it. FIT means the rate for fully independent travelers. It includes negotiated Wholesaler and Tour operator rates. Group customers are segmented in the traditional way into business and leisure groups. Business groups typically



make bookings for more than 10 room nights and face stricter cancellation policies. The rates for business groups are either fixed or discounted. Leisure groups usually have 10 or more rooms booked by Tour Operator or Wholesaler at agreed rates. (Meier 2017.)

CITY HOTEL	DESCRIPTION	RESORT HOTEL
<b>Transient (Individual Travellers)</b>		
BAR	Includes non-restricted rates that are available to all customers	BAR
DISCOUNT	Includes restricted rates (advance purchase, length of stay, cancellation, guarantee or age restrictions e.g.) that come with a discount from the BAR level you were selling	DISCOUNT
CORPORATE/NEGOTIATED	This is referred to as "qualified" business, as those rates are agreed between the hotel and the company or the partner for a certain <u>period of time</u> and can only be booked by guests who qualify for that rate	
FIT	Includes agreed and contracted Wholesaler and Tour Operator rates	FIT
<b>Groups</b>		
BUSINESS GROUPS	Usually includes bookings for more than 10 room nights and normally have a longer lead time as well as stricter cancellation policies than most other rates in the hotel, pricing-wise it's either a fixed rate or a discount of BAR	
	For groups of 10 or more rooms, booked by Tour Operator or Wholesaler at a negotiated rate or ad-hoc quoted rate	LEISURE GROUPS

Figure 6. Market Segments (Meier 2017)

Correctly done customer segmentation improves occupation, income and profit for hotels. Hotel guests from separate segments have distinct requirements and

expectations. Therefore, it is crucial to meet the needs and wants of each segment. The primary service hotels offered to visitors was meeting the biological need for sleeping. Eating and entertainment facilities helped expand the market. Nowadays, hotels satisfy more refined demands of customers, such as search for prestige and aesthetics. (Nicholls & Roslow 1989.)

Sleeping remains a segmentation variable. Depending on the segment, guests require different sleeping facilities. Hotels offer single, twin, double and king-sized beds. Families with kids can be provided with children's cots. Besides sleeping, visitors need eating facilities. Options include table service, self-service, snack bars, quick service, ethnic menus, etc. Business travelers can ask for morning coffee or a convenient dining room for meeting clients while having a meal. Moreover, hotel guests expect meeting amenities, regardless of whether it is going to be a personal or a business meeting. Hotels provide customers with conference facilities and banquet rooms for celebrations. Lastly, hotel visitors expect to have entertainment opportunities. Hotels meet this need with offering swimming pools, fitness and sports facilities, discos, spas, etc. (Nicholls & Roslow 1989.)

Price is another important element of customer segmentation for hotels. Hotels range from luxury to economy ones, each appealing to a particular customer segment. Expensive hotels offer a wide variety of amenities, including spacious rooms with sophisticated furniture, personalized service and multiple additional facilities. On the contrary, budget hotels concentrate on sleeping facilities and provide customers with basic services. Luxury and economy hotels are intended for well-off and thrifty travellers respectively, i.e. for the extremes of the travel market. Targeting the middle-class segments of hotel visitors is more challenging. When handling family groups, it is possible, for example, to allow children to stay in parents' room without any extra charge or to make a discount for kids' menu. Another opportunity is to emphasize geographical attractiveness of the hotel and its proximity to local sights. Both local residents and long-distance travelers would appreciate special rates for weekends. (Nicholls & Roslow 1989.)

### **3.2 Customer satisfaction**

Customer satisfaction is the feeling customers have when their expectations regarding a product or a service are met and exceeded. Achieving customer satisfaction is an essential part of creating customer loyalty. Clients can be satisfied with the product's or service's quality, business relationships, price/quality relation, overall experience with the company, etc. Handling customer satisfaction gives companies opportunities for development. Keeping customer satisfaction levels high is effort-demanding and time-consuming. It is 5-8 times more expensive to attract new customers rather than keeping existing ones. Measuring customer satisfaction has become crucial in the world of global economy and growing competition. (Measuring and Managing Customer Satisfaction n.d.)

Customer satisfaction is the tool that makes people buy and income grow. The most successful enterprises design and implement programs for satisfaction measuring. For instance, marketing and sales employees design customer satisfaction surveys, questionnaires and select target groups. The results evaluations concern both the company's own and its competitors' performances. The survey results are introduced to all employees working for the enterprise. When the required enhancements are made, clients are notified about the changes. Any customer satisfaction program must have a set of objectives. The objectives can include understanding clients' expectations and evaluating how well those are met, establishing service or product standards and priorities. (Measuring and Managing Customer Satisfaction n.d.)

Customer feedback collected via satisfaction surveys enables the company to design strategies for keeping loyal customers. After determining how the data relates to loyalty and repetitive purchases, it is important to examine the mentality of customers at the moment of pre-purchase decisions. Generally, there are three types of pre-purchase decisions: rejection, acceptance and preference. Rejection means avoiding the purchase; acceptance is being satisfied with the product or service, but not coming back; preference stands for being delighted and repeating the purchase. Understanding these decisions creates customer loyalty. What is more, people make their decisions mostly either based on their own experiences,

also known as *moments of truth*, or experiences of other customers, also called *word-of-mouth*. (Measuring and Managing Customer Satisfaction n.d.)

Researching, evaluating and enhancing customer satisfaction determines what clients think about the company and how to improve the experience. Satisfaction should be constantly monitored because customers' habits, preferences and expectations change over time. Collected feedback should be compared to previous results, not to industry benchmarks. (Kierczak n.d.)

The first action is to set a goal and define metrics. The metrics should be quantitative. After that, it is necessary to choose a research method and create a survey. Survey questions should be understandable and simple in order to increase response rates. The following step is collection of answers. The sample size should be large enough to get reliable results. Then, the acquired results should be carefully analysed. After conclusions are made, they need to be transformed into changes. The feedback is supposed to influence decisions aimed at improving customer satisfaction. Without implementing changes, the customer satisfaction survey is a useless activity. After the changes are made, a new survey is highly recommended. That would help figure out if the customers are content with the improvements and if they still demand further development. (Kierczak n.d.)

Customer satisfaction surveys help measure customer satisfaction and take measures to deal with unhappy customers. Customer satisfaction ratings are of utter importance for companies. First of all, they show employees the importance of meeting and exceeding customer expectations. Moreover, low customer satisfaction helps identify potential problems and ways to solve them. Around 96% of unhappy customers never leave feedback, but the majority of those who do complain never come back. This is why evaluating and improving customer satisfaction is essential for any company. (Beard 2013.)

According to Beard (2013), an effective customer satisfaction survey normally includes 5-10 questions about service delivery, customer experience and satisfaction in general. The purpose of such surveys is to evaluate how satisfied and content your customers are. Happy customers are extremely valuable for the company as they make repetitive purchases, spread the word and are unlikely to

switch to competitors. On the other hand, unhappy customers can cause a lot of trouble. They can stop using the product or service and tell others about their negative experience. A study showed that 9-15 people share their positive experience whereas 20 people tell others about their negative one.

Customer satisfaction survey is valuable when dealing with both happy and unhappy customers. It gives the company the opportunity to follow up with satisfied customers and turn them into brand advocates. When it comes to handling unhappy clients, survey results help fix the existing problem and improve the experience. It is also beneficial to track the change of satisfaction over time to figure out if the improvements and initiatives have had the desired effect. In order to increase response rate, surveys should be made available on digital devices. (Beard 2013.)

The purpose of customer satisfaction surveys can be perceived differently. From a company's point of view, the surveys indicate clients' opinions and wishes. The customers themselves, however, take part in surveys to inspire change and action. Therefore, customers and companies have different perceptions of the matter. Sometimes, companies seek validation and approving of their policies when preparing a survey. Consequently, the questions are somewhat biased and do not reflect strategic intentions. This happens when companies want to get particular responses and fear to learn the real situation. Such companies can find results challenging and threatening. When they witness dissatisfaction and disappointment of clients, there are attempts to find excuses for poor feedback: incorrectly picked sample size, misleading questions or wrong timing. (Customer surveys – What's the purpose? 2006.)

When conducting a customer service survey, the company should be ready for the results. There are companies which initiate surveys without any pre-planned solutions for improvements and further actions. Thus, the responses remain without attention. This kind of approach is very dangerous for the company. First of all, customers who failed to inspire action will not participate in surveys anymore and will not leave feedback. As a result, it will become impossible to measure customer satisfaction and quality of service. What is more, employees will be

embarrassed to see their management not take enough care of clients' experience. In short, customer satisfaction surveys should be backed up by willingness to act and develop. Otherwise, feedback collection becomes meaningless. (Customer surveys – What's the purpose? 2006.)

Organizing a customer satisfaction survey is the first step in evaluating people's reaction to a product or service. Future growth and success depend on how well the needed improvements are implemented. A survey can be featured on the company's website, a survey company can be hired, or questionnaires can be handed out to customers. Customers can be offered a reward for completing the survey, such as a coupon for a free product. (Deeb n.d.)

Customer satisfaction surveys can include questions related to customer service, employee knowledge and helpfulness as well as the company's policies. Besides, questioning customers about suitability of the prices enables the company to compare its pricing strategy with competitors'. It is also possible to ask customers about how they have learnt about the company in order to evaluate the existing marketing strategies. In order to find out customers' expectations, it is recommended to create a list of proposed items to choose in a survey. Alternatively, there can be direct questions about what kind of ideas respondents have in mind. (Deeb n.d.)

Particular steps should be followed when working on a customer satisfaction survey. The first thing to be done is to work with the research team or clients to set clear objectives. Research objectives comprise what kind of information is required, from which target groups and what comparisons can be made in the future. First of all, it is important to specify what will be measured through the survey. Market data should be quantified in order to avoid or at least minimise risk. After that, objectives need to be divided into separate categories, e.g. brand awareness, consumer behaviour, consumer experience, etc. Then, target groups should be selected. In case the survey is aimed at various target groups, the questions should match all those groups. Finally, the results ought to be compared to already existing data or previous surveys. (DeFranzo 2012b.)

To sum up, there are the following goals of implementing customer satisfaction surveys:

- Benchmarking new information against last year's data.
- Benchmarking the collected information against to the competitors.
- Recognizing improvement opportunities.
- Taking actions to deal with dissatisfied customers.
- Providing better customer support.
- Reviewing the effects of a particular service transaction on relationships with clients.
- Getting insights for new products and services. (DeFranzo 2012a.)

#### **4 Research methods**

Research is a way to acquire new knowledge. There are two types of research: basic and applied. Basic research cannot be used in practice immediately whereas applied research can. Any high-quality research has the following characteristics:

- Being based on previous works: it is important to study already carried out researches before starting a new one.
- Replicability: the methods and procedures should be available for reproduction by other groups of researchers.
- Extendibility to different environment: the results should be generalizable in different but similar settings.
- Being logic-based and connected to theory: large areas of a research should be divided into smaller segments which have a common topic. Research should provide answers to questions.
- Implementability: the research should be realistic and feasible.
- Formation of new questions and cyclicity: the answers to the questions should be base for new questions for researchers conducting studies in the future.
- Increment: researchers should contribute to each other's works. All the studies about a particular topic should form a unified body of knowledge.

- Being apolitical and beneficial for the society: research findings should not reflect personal opinions and attitudes of a researcher. The results must be impersonal. (Salkind 2006.)

There are two research methods used in various studies: quantitative research and qualitative research. Whereas quantitative research can be roughly described as dealing with numbers and statistical facts, qualitative research handles human behaviour. (McLeod 2017). Quantitative research is more structured than qualitative and is easier to analyse. Quantitative data constitutes the overall view of the collected information while qualitative data provides details and people's personal opinions. (SurveyMonkey n.d.)

The hypothesis is typically formulated using qualitative research by exploring respondents' problems and concerns. The found concepts can be further developed using quantitative methods as well. In case the hypothesis validation requires factual numerical data, quantitative research is to be applied. Taking into consideration the relative simplicity of conducting quantitative research, this type allows for more respondents than qualitative research. When writing a conclusion for the study, qualitative data can be applied. Responses to open-ended questions put the acquired data into the personal perspective. (SurveyMonkey n.d.)

#### **4.1 Qualitative research methods**

The research type that should be used for the thesis is qualitative research. Qualitative research is supposed to handle a particular problem from the point of view of a given population. The main purpose of qualitative research is to figure out the values, attitudes, behaviours of that population. It describes the way people react to a sensitive personal matter. Qualitative research shows the *human* side of the issue, the emotions and relationships of the individuals. Furthermore, qualitative research enables to define intangible factors, e.g. norms of society, socio-economic status, gender roles, religion, and ethnicity. Besides, this research type has its distinctive features:

- It searches for answers to questions.
- Answering the questions is implemented by using a predetermined set of steps.



- It gathers evidence.
- It seeks for information that has not been collected in advance.
- It finds the data that can be used further after the research is done. (Qualitative Research Methods Overview n.d.)

Qualitative research methods enable participants to give free-form answers with valuable personal information. The responses achieved through qualitative research can be expressive and reflect the respondent's personality. What is more, researchers can obtain rich extra data they have not anticipated.

Figure 7 describes qualitative research in terms of its general framework, analytic objectives, question format, data format, and flexibility in study design. Qualitative research is aimed at studying phenomena with the help of flexible instruments and semi-structured methods. It represents personal experiences, relationships, variation, and group norms. Qualitative research contains textual data with open-ended questions. Designing tools for this research type is flexible. Interaction between the researcher and respondents can be rather informal. (Qualitative Research Methods Overview n.d.)

<b>General framework</b>	Seek to explore phenomena  Instruments use more flexible, iterative style of eliciting and categorising responses to questions  Use semi-structured methods such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, and participant observation
<b>Analytic objectives</b>	To describe variation  To describe and explain relationships  To describe individual experiences  To describe group norms
<b>Question format</b>	Open-ended
<b>Data format</b>	Textual (obtained from audiotapes, videotapes, and field notes)
<b>Flexibility in study design</b>	Some aspects of the study are flexible (for example, the addition, exclusion, or wording of particular interview questions)  Participant responses affect how and which questions researchers ask next  Study design is iterative, that is, data collection and research questions are adjusted according to what is learned

Figure 7. Qualitative research approaches (Qualitative Research Methods Overview n.d.)

### **4.1.1 Survey research**

Surveys involve collecting information from large groups of people typically through questionnaires. However, other methods, such as interviews in person or by phone can be used (Research methods, 2009.) Survey research involves applying sampling in theory and practice. Survey research, also known as sample surveys, studies the relationships between physiological and sociological variables and investigates into attitudes, beliefs, prejudices, preferences, and opinions. When conducting a survey, it is crucial to select a suitable sample and pay extra attention to coding and scoring. Survey research begins with establishing a flow plan which encompasses all the steps:

1. Setting objectives.
2. Selecting a sample.
3. Defining a survey method.
4. Coding and scoring. (Salkind 2006.)

### **4.1.2 Questionnaires**

Questionnaires enable people to take time for writing answers at any convenient time. Participants can share their thoughts, feelings and ideas anonymously without seeing the researcher's reaction. Participants should be encouraged to answer honestly and truthfully. Questionnaires can consist of multiple-choice questions, attitude scales, closed questions and open-ended questions. Questionnaires can be distributed by post or email, delivered personally, uploaded to websites and left at venues where target audience can be found, e.g. hotels, restaurants, shops, etc. The disadvantage of this method is that participants may be unwilling to participate, thus causing low response rate. (Research methods 2009.)

Using questionnaires as a research method can be advantageous on many levels. First of all, administering questionnaires through ordinary mail or email can help access participants from a broad geographical area. Besides, composing and distributing questionnaires is cheaper than e.g. face-to-face interviews. Moreover, anonymity of questionnaires encourages respondents to be more honest in their responses. (Salkind 2006.)

Figure 8 represents issues to consider when designing a questionnaire. Questionnaires are helpful for the research, but they require time and exertion to complete. A questionnaire should be convenient for the respondent in terms of time, expense, and effort. Questions cannot be offensive or too personal. The questions should be aimed at achieving the goal of the research, not collect data about similar yet irrelevant topics. The respondents need to be familiar with the area of knowledge. What is more, refreshing and thought-provoking questions encourage participants to give interesting answers. The questions should be understandable, outright and socially acceptable. Furthermore, the questionnaire should be easy to read and have all questions numbered. There should be clear instructions for the respondent of the questionnaire. Questions must be objective and unbiased. It is important to rank questions from the easiest to the most complicated ones. In addition, participants should be warned when the topic of the questions changes. (Salkind 2006.)

<b>The Basic Assumptions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The questionnaire does not make unreasonable demands upon the respondent.</li> <li>• The questionnaire does not have a hidden purpose.</li> <li>• The questionnaire requests information that respondents presumably have.</li> </ul>
<b>The Questions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The questionnaire contains questions that can be answered.</li> <li>• The questionnaire contains questions that are straightforward.</li> </ul>
<b>The Format</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The items and the questionnaire are presented in an attractive, professional, and easy-to-understand format.</li> <li>• All questions and pages are clearly numbered.</li> <li>• The questionnaire contains clear and explicit directions as how it should be completed and how it should be returned.</li> <li>• The questions are objective.</li> <li>• The questions are ordered from easy to difficult and from easy to specific.</li> <li>• Transitions are used from one topic to the next.</li> <li>• Examples are given when necessary.</li> </ul>

Figure 8. Some important things to remember about the design and use of questionnaires (Salkind 2006)

Any questionnaire must be preceded by a cover letter. The cover letter sends a message to the respondents and shows the contents of the questionnaire in a nutshell. Cover letters are of particular importance when questionnaires are mailed or emailed. There are several specific rules that apply to any cover letter:

- It is written on official letterhead in order to create a favourable impression on respondents.
- It has current date and a tailored greeting.
- It describes the purpose of the questionnaire and the importance of the research.
- It states a timeframe for completing and returning the questionnaire.
- It promises confidentiality.
- It assures the participants that the final results of the research will be available for familiarization.
- It separately thanks the participants and is signed by the researcher. (Salkind 2006.)

#### **4.1.3 Observations**

Observations can be participant and non-participant, or direct. In participant observation, the researcher must become part of the group in question. The process involves gaining trust of other team members while remaining concentrated on observation. It is possible to observe what people do, how they explain their actions, how they share roles and what kind of relationships they have. The researcher should be frank about the study and let fellow group members a chance to get acquainted with the final results. In non-participant observations, researchers do not enter the group studied. It is decided beforehand what kind of behaviour and situations are to be observed. The observation should be done realistically and ethically. (Research methods 2009.)

#### **4.2 Quantitative research methods**

Quantitative research aims at obtaining and handling numerical data. Quantitative research methods are used for statistical, mathematical or numerical data analysis. Information for research can be collected through questionnaires and

surveys as well as already existing statistics. Being related to numerical data, quantitative research requires numbers and logic. (USC Libraries n.d.)

The goal of quantitative research is to learn how an independent variable affects a dependent, or outcome, variable within a given sample. Quantitative research methods can be either descriptive or experimental. In a descriptive study, subjects are measured once and associations between variables are found. In an experimental study, subjects undergo a treatment and are measured before and after in order to identify causality. (USC Libraries n.d.)

As a matter of fact, quantitative research is associated with several specific characteristics. First of all, the data is obtained in an organized systematic manner. Secondly, larger samples are used for conducting analysis and making conclusions. Moreover, a reliable study can be replicated. Hence, all the research-related issues are investigated before the study is initiated. Besides, a clear research question should be outlined. The collected data can be presented in the form of figures, tables and charts. Furthermore, the study may facilitate speculations about future results, clarify the concepts and study causality. (USC Libraries n.d.)

Several steps should be taken when planning quantitative research. To start with, the research problem should be recognized. After that, the research questions related to the research problem need to be formulated. The next action is to revise the preceding literature in order to avoid copying already existing ideas. Then, it is necessary to determine the target group, size of sample and methods of data collection. Finally, the data should be analysed and conclusions made. (Bhatia 2018.)

Quantitative research methods can be convenient when conducting a study. They help researchers find precise answers to the predetermined questions. Also, using the standard methods ensures reliable results. What is more, the results can be applied to larger populations provided the sample sizes have been chosen carefully. However, quantitative research, unlike qualitative, cannot evaluate respondents' emotions and perceptions. In addition, this research type cannot define the reasons why a particular phenomenon exists. (Bhatia 2018.)

## **5 Special group clients' satisfaction in a private hotel**

The empirical part was carried out in the form of questionnaires and personal observations. The research method used for the study was qualitative. The reason for choosing qualitative research was the need to collect data about emotions and personal perceptions rather than numbers or statistics. The total number of responses is 24. Researched were two sports teams staying at the hotel in August 2018. The respondents were Russian; hence the questionnaires were in Russian as well. The original questionnaire questions and their corresponding English translations can be found in Appendices.

Both sportsmen and their managers were surveyed. However, taking into consideration the limited number of participants, it was decided not to analyse their answers separately. That is, there is a possibility to neglect the differences between opinions of the ordinary team members and the leaders.

Personal observations were concerned with studying the participants' general impression of the hotel visit. Questionnaires, on the contrary, concentrated on precise stay-related issues. The following aspects can be derived from the responses: facilities, service, meals, and other comments.

### **5.1 Facilities**

Questionnaire inquiries regarding the company's facilities included questions about the participant's room and the hotel lobby. The respondents were supposed to evaluate each facility on the scale from 1 to 5, where 1 was "very bad" and 5 was "excellent". Upon the end of the survey, mainly excellent assessments were received. Some participants, however, were not completely satisfied with their rooms, thus evaluating those as "good".

With reference to personal observations, similar results were acquired. The participants monitored showed no disappointment with the hotel lobby. Hotel rooms, on the other hand, did not generate unanimous satisfaction. While the majority of the persons observed were still content with their rooms, a few respondents expressed slight displeasure. It was mentioned that the rooms were not spacious

and comfortable enough. Nevertheless, the observations confirmed the participants' general satisfaction with the facilities.

## **5.2 Service**

The questionnaires covered three service-related topics. Firstly, the respondents were offered to estimate their contentment with the personnel. Secondly, they were asked about whether they were satisfied with the check-in procedure and how strongly if so. Finally, the check-out process was to be assessed. All the questions concerning service had the same structure as those about facilities. The respondents had to evaluate the given subject on the scale from 1 to 5, where 1 was "very bad" and 5 was "excellent".

The personnel work was primarily identified as "excellent", although a couple of participants were not fully satisfied and gave "good" reviews. The check-in seemed not to have caused any complications as it was assessed as "excellent". The check-out satisfied the respondents as well, encouraging them to evaluate the procedure as "excellent". Judging from the questionnaire data received, the survey indicated that the participants were very satisfied with the service at the hotel.

Referring to the personal observations part, no contradicting conclusions were made. No complaints or criticism pertaining to the service were detected. Furthermore, it is worthwhile to mention that several participants gave positive oral feedback and expressed gratitude to the personnel.

## **5.3 Meals**

Upon the hotel's request, the questionnaires' inquiries regarding the meals contained the two days' menus. The respondents were supposed to pick the dishes they preferred the most. That information was meant for the hotel management and is not relevant for the thesis. However, the replies allow to estimate the level of the participants' satisfaction with the meals they were provided with. The presence of an answer itself demonstrates that a person was willing to dine at the hotel. If the answer is missing, the respondent was disinterested in the meal and decided to have food elsewhere.

The majority of the participants shared their opinions about the dishes. Nonetheless, others decided to skip the meals-related section in the questionnaire. Therefore, the meals did not stimulate their enthusiasm about eating at the hotel restaurant. For this reason, the respondents' satisfaction with the meals can be evaluated as moderate.

The moderate level of satisfaction with the hotel food was proved with the personal observations. Albeit most of the persons dined at the company's premises, some participants did not demonstrate their contentment with the meals. In particular, complaints about the taste and quality of the dishes offered were occasionally received. Besides, there were diners who did not finish their meals and left the restaurant disappointed.

#### **5.4 General satisfaction**

The questionnaire section requiring further comments included five versatile questions of different types. The first two asked the respondents to evaluate free extra services and paid extra services. The free services included the sauna, bike rental and Wi-Fi while the paid ones contained drinks and snacks. Those questions were in the form of a 1-5 scale, where 1 was "very bad" and 5 was "excellent". Further, the participants were suggested writing their wishes for the hotel in an open-ended question. Finally, in the last two questions, the participants were asked if they would like to visit the place again on a vacation and if they would recommend the hotel to their family and friends. Here, it was possible to choose from two options: yes or no, and to clarify if the answer was negative.

Free extra services received mixed reviews, from "satisfactory" to excellent. Showing even worse results were paid extra services, with evaluations ranking from "bad" to excellent. Consequently, the feedback acquired indicated heterogeneous, diversified contentment levels with respect to the extra services, both free and paid.

The responses concerning wishes for the hotel were more diverse. The majority of respondents thanked the personnel and expressed their general satisfaction with their stay. The second most popular type of feedback contained requests for better Wi-Fi and complaints about its low quality. Moreover, the lesser part of



respondents commented that they would like to have refrigerators and bathrobes in every room as well as a wider selection of drinks and snacks. Some persons refused to give any comments, though.

The survey indicated that most respondents would like to visit the hotel again. The few negative answers contained reasons not related to the company, for instance, not preferring Finland as a travel destination. Speaking about recommending the hotel to family and friends, 100% positive feedback was received. Those answers demonstrate the willingness of the participants to come back and to share the word about the hotel.

The data acquired through personal observation is also diverse. Free extra services were both appraised and complained about. Whereas the sauna and bike rental happened to satisfy the respondents, it was often told that Wi-Fi was too slow and inconvenient to use. Paid extra services – drinks and snacks – did not satisfy everyone as well. What made the participants somewhat disappointed were quite high prices and little choice. Talking about other issues, the respondents mostly recommended to provide better Wi-Fi connection and put refrigerators in every room. Nonetheless, plenty of participants spoke highly of the hotel and thanked the staff for their service.

## **6 Conclusions**

The objective of the thesis was to conduct a survey to collect information about group customer satisfaction, expectations and wishes regarding customer service at the given hotel. The present thesis has investigated the opinions of special interest tourist groups staying at the hotel about the company. The theory about hotels, SIT and customer satisfaction were the basis for the undertaken research.

A total of 24 participants was surveyed through two qualitative research methods: questionnaires and personal observation. The aim was to figure out the respondents' attitude towards the hotel's facilities, customer service and the offered meals. Besides, the tourists were encouraged to share their wishes for the company and make complaints, if any. The empirical part indicated the participants' general satisfaction with their stay and the treatment they received. Nonetheless,

the levels of contentment varied depending on the issues questioned and observed.

### **6.1 Facilities**

The questionnaire responses and personal observation results indicated overall contentment with the company's facilities. However, the participants were not as much satisfied with their rooms as they were with the hotel lobby. The particular complaints highlighted the guests' disappointment with the size and comfort of their rooms.

The received opinions could be useful for the hotel in upgrading its facilities. As the lobby seemed to have satisfied the respondents, it would not need immediate improvements. The hotel rooms, on the other hand, could be enhanced. Whereas the room sizes cannot be altered, the comfort may be intensified.

### **6.2 Service**

The questionnaire questions and personal observations were supposed to estimate the participants' satisfaction with the personnel as well as the check-in and check-out procedures. Both research methods revealed positive feedback signifying the guests' contentment with the service provided. Moreover, a number of respondents thanked and praised the staff for their efforts.

The results demonstrated the company's excellent ability to meet the special group clients' in terms of service. Consequently, the management does not need to take urgent actions to modify the service. Nonetheless, it would be beneficial to maintain the existing standards and monitor the customer satisfaction to figure out if any changes are demanded in the future.

### **6.3 Meals**

First of all, the research part concerning the hotel meals represented the questionnaire enquiries about the two days' menus. The questions included the names of the dishes served and those dishes had to be evaluated. For anonymity reasons, the thesis cannot cover the issue in detail. Nevertheless, the company man-

agers reported to have been working on the received results. Hence, it is worthwhile to suggest that the survey results are going to influence the work of the Food and Beverage department of the hotel.

Second of all, the participants' satisfaction with the meals can be estimated based on how many responses were collected. If a respondent opted to skip a question, it indicates that they were not motivated to dine at the hotel. Based on this assumption, the overall contentment with the meals can be identified as moderate. While the majority of the guests did submit their answers, a considerable number of respondents refused to do so.

The personal observation proved the moderate satisfaction as well. Some participants who had a meal in the company premises shared their disappointment with the taste and quality of the dishes. What is more, there were persons who did not finish their meals.

The abovementioned results provide valuable information for the hotel management. Based on the answers and complaints, the menu can be modified by either improving the existing dishes or adding new ones. The difficulty here is the requirements the company had received prior to the clients' arrival. Since the observed participants belonged to sports teams, their menu had to be in accordance with specific nutritional recommendations. Thus, the future menus should be altered carefully, considering both the guests' comments and the nutritional requirements of sports persons.

#### **6.4 General satisfaction**

The survey section aimed at deriving the data about the general satisfaction covered a number of versatile issues. The first subtopic was the opinions about the free and paid extra services provided at the hotel. After that, the special clients' wishes and recommendations for the company were collected. Finally, the task was to learn if the respondents would like to visit the hotel again and recommend the place to others.

Both questionnaire responses and personal observations identified cases of dissatisfaction with free and paid extra services. The criticism included disappointment with the Wi-Fi quality as well as the prices and variety of drinks and snacks. The respondents also complained about not having refrigerators in every room. The requests to improve those services were also the main issue in the wishes and recommendations subtopic.

The collected feedback about the extra services can act as a stimulus for the management to take immediate actions. Firstly, it could be possible to upgrade the snack menu and lower the prices. Secondly, the hotel may want to have the Wi-Fi connection tackled. Concerning the refrigerators, it is technically impossible to provide each hotel room with one. However, a solution could be to equip some rooms with mini bars and install more refrigerators in the hotel lobby.

Despite having the above listed complaints, the majority of the respondents proved to have been satisfied with their stay in general. They mostly expressed their willingness to come back to the hotel in the future. Besides, all the participants said they would recommend the place to their family and friends.

## **6.5 Summary**

Whereas the facilities and service mainly satisfied the holidaymakers, the meals were sometimes criticized for their quality and taste. Among the free extra services, Wi-Fi caused the most disappointment and was described as too slow and inconvenient. The paid extra services, i.e. drinks and snacks, were said to be somewhat expensive and not diverse enough.

The majority of the respondents showed the interest to visit the hotel again during their vacation and to recommend the place to others. The holidaymakers expressed their gratefulness to the personnel and spoke highly of the stay. On the subject of further comments, the participants wanted every room to be equipped with refrigerators and bathrobes. The persons also criticized the Wi-Fi connection at the hotel and advised to fix it for future customers.

To conclude, the thesis thoroughly examined the given subject. The results of the survey and personal observations were reported to the company and discussed

with the management. The findings could be later implemented by the hotel for further improvements of the facilities and customer service.

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### Appendix 1: Questionnaire questions in Russian

1. *Ваш возраст:* \_\_\_\_\_

2. *Оцените по шкале от 1 до 5, где*

*1 – очень плохо, 2 – плохо, 3 – удовлетворительно, 4 – хорошо, 5 – очень хорошо:*

- Ваше пребывание в отеле в целом

1    2            3            4            5

- Ваш номер

1    2            3            4            5

- Лобби отеля

1    2            3            4            5

- Обслуживание персонала

1    2            3            4            5

- Процедура заезда в отель

1    2            3            4            5

- Процедура выезда из отеля

1    2            3            4            5

- Оцените дополнительные бесплатные услуги отеля (сауна и беспроводной интернет, прокат велосипедов)

1    2            3            4            5

- Оцените платные услуги отеля (напитки и закуски)

1    2            3            4            5

3. Изучите, пожалуйста, меню ресторана за последние 2 дня. Какое блюдо понравилось Вам больше всего? Подчеркните эти варианты. Можно выбрать несколько вариантов.

Сегодня

обед: суп - салат - горячее – гарнир

Вчера

обед: куриный суп - салат – запечённая курица – спагетти

ужин (если ужинали в отеле!!):

салат – курица в соусе - рыба –рис – гарнир спагетти

4. Напишите, пожалуйста, как мы могли бы улучшить условия проживания в отеле.

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5. Хотели бы Вы в будущем посетить наш отель с семьёй или друзьями?

а) да

б) нет (уточните, почему) \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Посоветовали бы Вы наш отель друзьям и знакомым?

а) да

б) нет (уточните, почему) \_\_\_\_\_

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## Appendix 2: Translation of the questionnaire questions

1 (2)

1. *Your age:* \_\_\_\_\_

2. *Evaluate the following issues on the scale from 1 to 5, where*

*1 – very bad, 2 – bad, 3 – satisfactory, 4 – good, 5 – excellent:*

- Your stay in general

1    2            3            4            5

- Your room

1    2            3            4            5

- The hotel lobby

1    2            3            4            5

- The work of the personnel

1    2            3            4            5

- The check-in procedure

1    2            3            4            5

- The check-out procedure

1    2            3            4            5

- Evaluate the following free services of the hotel (sauna, Wi-Fi, bike rental)

1    2            3            4            5

- Evaluate the following paid services of the hotel (drinks and snacks)

1    2            3            4            5

3. *Please study the restaurant menu for the last two days. Which dish did you like the most? Underline these options. You can choose several options.*

Today

lunch: soup - salad – main course – side dish

Yesterday

lunch: chicken soup - salad – baked chicken – spaghetti

dinner (if you had it at the hotel!!):

salad – chicken with sauce - fish – rice – spaghetti with a side dish

4. *Please write how we could improve the guests' stay at the hotel.*

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5. *Would you like to visit our hotel with your family and friends in the future?*

a) yes

b) no (clarify why) \_\_\_\_\_

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6. *Would you recommend the hotel to your friends?*

a) yes

b) no (clarify why) \_\_\_\_\_

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