

Accommodation Service and its Importance in the Hospitality Sector

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Abstract

The accommodation service is a basic tourist service that is the essence of the hospitality sector and without which the notion of tourist would not be possible, because the tourist status involves at least one night accommodation which reflects the importance of accommodation in the hospitality sector.

This paper aims to highlight the importance of the accommodation service in the hospitality sector. Therefore, the notions regarding accommodation are addressed and in order to demonstrate the importance of this service in the Romanian economy, an analysis is performed using statistical data on accommodation capacity and the number of tourists staying in accommodation units, under the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

Key words: accommodation service, tourism, hospitality

J.E.L. classification: L80, L83

1. Introduction

The accommodation service is a basic service for the hospitality sector, respectively for the tourism industry. This service is closely dependent on the tourist infrastructure and human resources specialized in providing services related to the hospitality sector. Therefore, the quality of accommodation services is determined both by the quality of human resources and the quality of the technical-material base specific to tourism. Accommodation involves accommodation in a hotel-type unit.

2. Theoretical background

An important role for the accommodation service is played by the front office and the housekeeping service. The front office provides a place for guest registration and room sales, guest mail service, telephone calls and messages, reservations and referrals, and requests and complaints. A bright, clean room is the best way to supplement a cordial welcome (Pood & Lesure, 1964, p. 236 and p. 249). The front office and housekeeping services represent the accommodation department, and in the situation where it integrates other services - laundry, swimming pool, and hairdresser - it is a hotel services department (Lupu, 2010, p. 58).

Accommodation as a service and the hotel as equipment, are part of a much more extensive tourist product, in which accommodation is the main element of concern for the client, once a precise destination has been chosen (Nita and Butnaru, 2008, p. 21). Accommodation involves establishing contractual relations between the hotelier, the travel agency and the tourist. These relations generate the reservation, which is materialized in the accommodation contract. It can be verbal and written, the written form being preferred to avoid various disputes (Nita, 2004, p. 49).

3. Research methodology

In order to highlight the role that accommodation services play in the hospitality sector, systemic analysis of the notions related to accommodation services is used as research methods, but also the use of indirect methods based on statistical data to provide relevant information on trends

in the hospitality sector from Romania, from the point of view of accommodation capacity and consequently highlighting the importance of accommodation services.

4. Accommodation service - an essential component of the hospitality sector in Romania

In Romania, the accommodation service has a decisive role in the hospitality sector, being a decisive factor, which influences the tourist demand both nationally and internationally.

The accommodation service is influenced by two essential elements, namely: the technical-material base specific to tourism (accommodation units) and the labor force specialized in the provision of tourist services, including the provision of accommodation services. These two elements have evolved differently determining the volume and quality of accommodation services in the hospitality sector, as an essential element of tourism in Romania.

Thus, if the accommodation capacity in Romania has continuously increased, which is a positive factor for the hospitality sector, the tourism workforce is deficient, currently there is a shortage in the hospitality sector, which has a negative effect on accommodation and consequently on the entire hospitality sector.

In order to observe the evolution of the accommodation capacity in operation in Romania before and after the COVID-19 pandemic, we consider the data from Table no.1

Table no. 1 Accommodation capacity in use in Romania during 2018-2020

Types of accommodation units	2018		2019		2020	
	Number of beds - days	%	Number of beds - days	%	Number of beds - days	%
Hotels	51345975	57,64	51352048	57,83	37906152	59,2
Motels	2720100	3,05	2679202	3,01	1837507	2,87
Tourist inns	36173	0,04	28580	0,03	22237	0,03
Hostels	3465482	3,89	3365230	3,8	2243057	3,50
Tourist villas	3738166	4,2	3753539	4,23	2780569	4,34
Bungalows	424529	0,48	401346	0,45	334319	0,52
Tourist chalets	1508188	1,69	1494759	1,68	995642	1,55
Holiday villages	109663	0,12	114390	0,13	66680	0,10
Camping sites	753037	0,84	903792	1,02	697035	1,08
School and pre-school camps	1167990	1,31	1020800	1,15	209945	0,33
Tourist halting places	360368	0,40	315469	0,35	187105	0,29
Tourist boarding houses	10644927	11,96	10454735	11,8	7290415	11,4
Agro-tourist boarding houses	12498050	14,03	12615982	14,20	9195563	14,36
Houselet-type units	230040	0,27	230114	0,26	225344	0,35
Ship accommodation places	73203	0,08	59670	0,06	49025	0,08
TOTAL	89075891	100	88789656	100	64040595	100

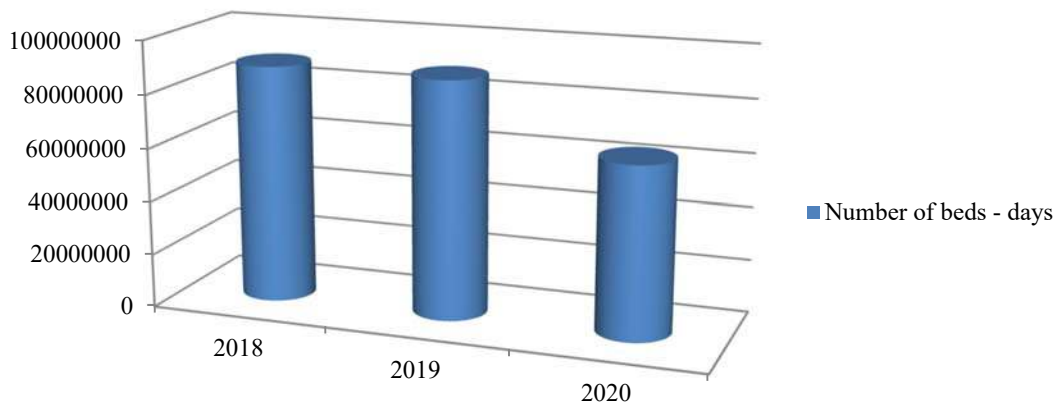
Sources: National Institute of Statistics, www.insse.ro - Romanian Tourism Statistical Abstract, 2021, p.36

From the analysis of the data in the table Table no. 1, the following trends emerge:

- The existing accommodation capacity in Romania is superior to the accommodation capacity in operation, which indicates a partial use of the accommodation capacity, determined by certain factors, among which the sanitary factor is essential for the analyzed period.
- There is a decrease in the use of accommodation capacity from 89075891 in 2018 to 64040595 in 2020, which is a decrease of 28.1% in 2020 compared to 2018 (see also Figure number 1). The main cause of this decrease is not the reduction of the existing accommodation capacity or the number of hospital units but this decrease is due to the decrease of the tourist demand materialized in the decrease of the number of tourists, due to the crisis caused by COVID-19.

- Decrease in accommodation capacity in days expressed in number of beds - days registered for all types of accommodation units
- The reduction of the accommodation capacity in use expressed in number of beds - days was registered for all types of accommodation units, during the analyzed period
- In the case of hotels there was a reduction in accommodation capacity used by 26.2%
- In the case of Holiday Villages, there was a decrease of 39.2%, being the largest decrease in 2020 compared to 2018, compared to other hospital units. This decrease is based on the reduction of freedom of movement due to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic
- Tourist boarding houses registered a decrease in accommodation capacity in use by 31.5%, and in the case of agritourism pensions a decrease by 26.4% in 2020 compared to 2018
- If we consider the share by accommodation units in the total accommodation capacity in use, it is found that in the analyzed interval the hotels have the highest share (between 57.64% and 59.2%). Thus, there is an increase of this share by 1.56 percent in 2020 compared to 2018, which means an increase in total accommodation capacity, due to anti-COVID-19 safety measures taken in hotel units as main units of accommodation.
- High weights in the total accommodation capacity in use are also found in the case of agro-tourist boarding houses (14%) but also in the case of Tourist boarding houses (11-12%). The other types of accommodation units have small shares in the total accommodation capacity in operation (see Table no. 1)

Figure no. 1. Accommodation capacity in use in Romania during 2018-2020



Source: Table no.1, National Institute of Statistics, www.insse.ro

Consequently, the decrease in the use of accommodation capacity in operation in 2020 compared to 2018, due to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis generated significant financial losses for the owners of accommodation units in the hospitality sector in Romania.

Table no. 2 Tourists accommodated in the establishments of tourists' reception with functions of tourists' accommodation in Romania, during 2018-2020

Tourists	2018	2019	2020
Romanians	10108509	10691195	5944775
Foreigners	2796622	2683748	453867
TOTAL	12905131	13374943	6398642

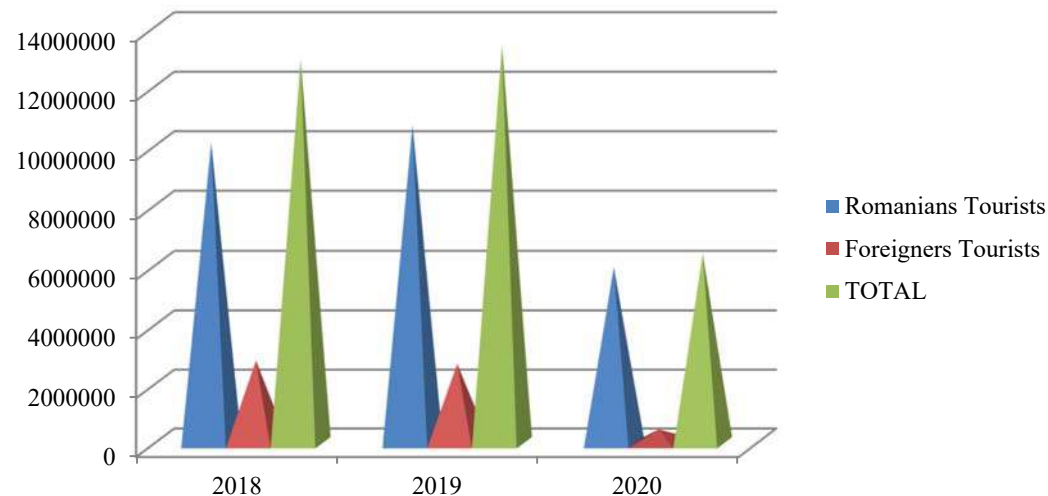
Source: National Institute of Statistics, www.insse.ro - Romanian Tourism Statistical Abstract, 2021, p.36

A relevant image for the role of accommodation in the hospitality sector in Romania is the capitalization of accommodation capacity, through the number of tourists accommodated in hospital units.

Thus, according to the data in Table number 2, the following elements can be deduced:

- In the case of accommodated Romanian tourists, there is an increase of 5.8% in 2019 compared to 2018 and a decrease of 41.2 percent in 2020 compared to 2019.
- In the case of foreign tourists staying in Romanian hospital units, there is a decrease of 4% in 2019 compared to 2018 and a decrease of 84% in 2020 compared to 2018
- If we consider the total number of tourists who used accommodation services in Romania, there is an increase of 3.6% in 2019 compared to 2018 (due to the increase in the number of Romanian tourists and not the increase in the number of foreign tourists); in 2020 compared to 2019 there was a decrease by 50% of the number of tourists accommodated in hospital units in Romania (see Figure no.2)

Figure no. 2. Tourists accommodated in the establishments of tourists' reception with functions of tourists' accommodation in Romania, during 2018-2020



Source: Table no.2, National Institute of Statistics, www.insse.ro

5. Conclusions

The analysis highlights the drastic decrease in the number of Romanian and foreign tourists staying in accommodation units in Romania during the analyzed period. The largest decrease (84%) was registered among foreign tourists, which indicates the proportions in which the hospitality sector was affected internationally, respectively the hospitality sector in Romania.

The main cause is the health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has profoundly affected tourism services, including accommodation services as a basic component of the hospitality sector.

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