



## QUALITY OF ACCOMMODATION SERVICES IN SPA HOTELS. CASE STUDY: DIANA HOTEL, BĂILE HERCULANE

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**Abstract:** The paper is a synthesis of a larger study that was intended to be not just a simple presentation of data, but a complex analytical and applied approach. The aim of the study was to evaluate the quality of services of a spa hotel and the Herculane tourist destination by using two complementary instruments – SERVQUAL (oriented on customer perception) and QUALITEST (oriented on the holistic evaluation of the destination and management). Specifically, the following aspects were pursued: identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the hotel (especially the role of the staff vs. infrastructure and organizational issues); analyzing the difference between tourists' expectations and perceptions, to highlight where services do not reach the desired level; evaluating quality at the destination level, not just the hotel unit (infrastructure, image, public services, activities); comparing the two methods to obtain a complete and nuanced picture; formulating strategic directions for improvement, useful for management (modernization, diversification, increasing the quality of services and customer loyalty). As a final step, we aimed to provide a scientifically based diagnosis on the quality of tourist services and thus contribute to the optimization of hotel and spa destination management.

### • Introduction

The hotel and tourism industry plays a major economic role globally, being one of the most dynamic business sectors in recent decades. The increase in the number of international tourists has significantly contributed to the development of many destinations, generating significant income and jobs in the hospitality industry.

The resort of Băile Herculane represents a special and relevant case for research. Located in southwestern Romania, on the Cerna River valley, Băile Herculane is a spa resort of national and international interest, with a long and prestigious history as a spa tourism destination. It is known as the oldest spa resort in Romania, with uninterrupted activity since 153 AD, founded on the wealth of thermal springs with curative properties.

The Diana Hotel – the subject of the research case study – is of particular importance. This three-star hotel is located just a few minutes from the historic center of the Băile Herculane resort and offers a picturesque panorama of the Cerna Valley. After a period of decline, the Diana Hotel benefited from major investments: it was completely renovated and modernized, becoming part of the Romanian chain Bacolux Hotels since 2011.

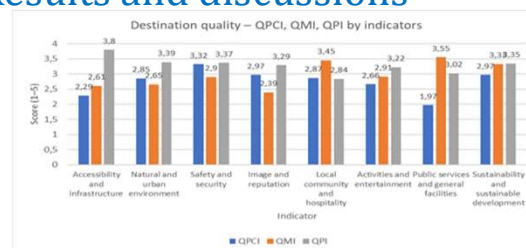
### • Material and method

The research was conducted based on the application of the SERVQUAL and QUALITEST questionnaires to a sample of 100 guests of the Diana Hotel. The selection of respondents aimed to represent the main categories of customers: tourists coming for spa treatment and relaxation, leisure tourists, business travelers and people visiting family.

The SERVQUAL method aimed to evaluate five dimensions of service quality: tangibility, reliability, promptness, safety and empathy. For each dimension, customer expectations were compared with their perceptions after consuming the service. The difference between perceptions and expectations allowed the identification of quality gaps.

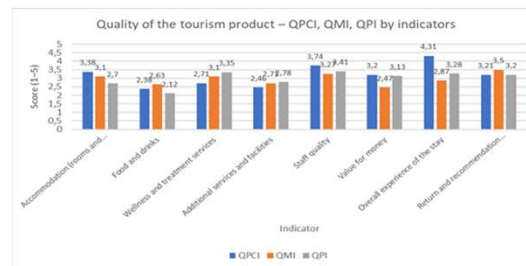
The QUALITEST method was used for a broader analysis, organized into two main components: destination quality and tourism product quality. The QPCI, QMI and QPI indicators were analyzed, which reflect tourists' perception, the level of quality management and the objective performance of each evaluated category

### • Results and discussions



Source: data obtained after applying and processing the questionnaire questions

#### Destination quality – QPCI, QMI, QPI by indicators



Source: data obtained after applying and processing the questionnaire questions

#### Destination quality – QPCI, QMI, QPI by indicators

### • Conclusions

The application of the SERVQUAL and QUALITEST methods allowed for a comprehensive assessment of the quality of services offered by Hotel Diana and the Băile Herculane destination. The results show that the hotel benefits from important strengths, especially the staff, perceived safety, general atmosphere and orientation towards spa tourism. These elements contribute significantly to tourist satisfaction and to the formation of a positive overall impression.

Hotel Diana has the capacity to become a landmark of spa tourism if it capitalizes on its strengths and acts strategically on the identified deficiencies. Combining the SERVQUAL and QUALITEST results provides a solid basis for developing a continuous improvement plan, aimed at increasing satisfaction, customer loyalty and strengthening long-term competitiveness.