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THE IMPACT OF SERVICE QUALITY ON CUSTOMER
SATISFACTION IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY: CASE COMPANY –
A&E GMBH

Thesis
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Title The Impact of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction in the Hotel Industry: Case Company – A&E GmbH Commisioned by: A&E GmbH		
Abstract <p>Nowadays customer satisfaction often becomes a subject of interest for researchers and company management. The importance of customers in business processes makes it vital for every company to constantly monitor its customers' satisfaction. As a hospitality industry is based on offering accommodation, it makes this industry one of the most important branches of tourism. The higher the level of customer satisfaction of the guests, the more successful the hospitality business is.</p> <p>This particular research focuses on identifying the level of customer satisfaction with services of the young and ambitious company A&E GmbH, which offers accommodation in luxurious holiday apartments in the German ski resort of Garmisch-Partenkirchen. With the help of the literature review theoretical knowledge about service quality, customer satisfaction and the hotel industry in Garmisch-Partenkirchen was summarized. The research method was quantitative. Quantitative data were gathered by means of a survey. Guests of the holiday apartments were asked to express their opinion about the work of personnel and aspects concerning apartments.</p> <p>According to the research results, 89% were satisfied with the accommodation and services, which indicates a high level of customer satisfaction. Detailed results, feedback and the comments of the guests were analyzed and delivered to the company.</p>		
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1 INTRODUCTION

It is clear that in every business and especially in the hospitality industry customers are very important stakeholders. For this reason customer satisfaction often becomes a subject of interest for researchers and company management. The importance of customers in business processes makes it vital for every company to constantly monitor its customers' satisfaction. As a hospitality industry is based on offering accommodation, it makes this industry one of the most important branches of tourism.

Many hospitality businesses are moving to a customer oriented strategy in order to maintain a high level of service quality (Dev et al. 2009). This particular research focuses on identifying the level of customer satisfaction with services of the young and ambitious company A&E GmbH, which offers accommodation in holiday apartments in the German ski resort of Garmisch-Partenkirchen. As the company plans to expand, it is essential to know customers' opinions about existing services in order to develop a future strategy and make improvements to stay competitive.

1.1. A&E GmbH

A&E GmbH is a three year-old family company created in 2013 in the town of Garmisch-Partenkirchen. Despite the small size of the company A&E GmbH is a rapidly developing business. The company consists of two owners, a husband and wife, two apartment managers, an office assistant and changing interns. Additional personnel resources include a cleaning company, a tax consultant and accountants. For temporary work A&E GmbH often uses outsourcing, mainly for apartment maintenance. Nowadays A&E GmbH has 17 holiday apartments and a holiday house, three flats for employees and an office building in the city center. The company has long-term rental contracts for these properties.

A&E GmbH is registered as a real estate broker and a holiday rental limited liability company. A branch of the company “Golden GaPa Holiday Apartments” offers luxurious apartments for a short or a long stay with kitchens and bathrooms for rent. All apartments are located in Garmisch-Partenkirchen but in the different areas of the town.

A&E GmbH offers apartments not only for a holiday stay, but also accommodation for those who came to Germany because of medical issues. Garmisch-Partenkirchen has a Medical Center with 17 specialized departments, which also runs a second center for Internal Medicine in the 25 km distant town of Murnau, at the Hospital of the Associations for Accident Prevention and Insurance (Klinikum Garmisch-Partenkirchen 2016). Moreover, Rheumatism Clinic for Children is also located in Garmisch-Partenkirchen (Deutsches Zentrum für Kinder- und Jugendrheumatologie 2017).

During conversations with the Arab guests of “Golden GaPa Holiday Apartments” it was found that many patients from the Gulf States become referrals to these hospitals from their governments, in such countries as Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Oman and Qatar. Usually, patients from the Arab World travel with their family members. According to author’s observations, many patients who come to Murnau hospital are from Kuwait. Unfortunately, hospitals cannot accommodate all the family members of the Arab patients. As a result, the embassies of these countries provide families with an allowance.

Murnau is a small town surrounded by nature, but the real estate market cannot meet the demands of customers for accommodation. Garmisch-Partenkirchen is bigger than Murnau and is a more popular destination of Bavaria. In Garmisch-Partenkirchen there are more shopping facilities, many cafes and also restaurants with Arabic food. Mountains and lakes create a fascinating landscape. Murnau can be easily reached by car from Garmisch-Partenkirchen in approximately 30 minutes. To sum up, there are many reasons why Arab families prefer Garmisch-Partenkirchen to Murnau for a longer stay. Again from the author’s observations, Arab customers prefer apartments close to the city center, but at the same time in a quiet location. Arab families prefer fully equipped apartments with luxurious decorations. It is also important to mention that all family members want to live together.

A&E GmbH aims to get customers from all over the world, but during the period of May until October it focuses on customers from the Arab world. These customers are more profitable for the company, because they usually rent big apartments for a longer period of time. During other months of the year, A&E GmbH strives to attract all kinds of customers from different countries and mostly works in a partnership with the online booking platform of Booking.com.

Another branch of the company is “A&E GmbH Real Estate”. The company works as a real estate agent and helps customers to find houses and apartments for rent or, on the other hand, to sell their houses and apartments. A&E GmbH also works with the Russian market. The company helps people to buy apartments in Garmisch-Partenkirchen as a capital investment, but at the same time makes rental contracts with them and uses these apartments to accommodate tourists. The company also offers assistance with documents to Russian immigrants in Germany.

1.2 Aim of the study

This thesis was conducted to measure the level of customer satisfaction with “Golden GaPa Holiday Apartments” as it is considered a major activity of the company and brings most of the company’s profit. The study was conducted to find out whether the current company’s services meet the demands and expectations of the customers. The aim of the study was to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the main shortcomings in the service quality of A&E GmbH?
- 2) What is the current level of customer satisfaction?
- 3) How does the current level of customer satisfaction in Booking.com differ from the survey results?

According to the survey results, recommendations and suggestions for improvements were summarized and delivered to the company A&E GmbH. Moreover, a comparison of online feedback in Booking.com and survey results was made to receive the full image of overall customer satisfaction.

As the survey was conducted during the cold season and Christmas holidays, there was no opportunity to interview Arab customers. For this reason the research focused mainly on Booking.com guests and reflects current customers' opinions about the chain of apartments.

1.3 Outline of the study

The thesis report is divided into seven chapters. Firstly, the author presents a theoretical framework of the study in the form of a literature review on the topic of service quality and customer satisfaction. Then, the differences between hotels and holiday apartments are discussed. The following chapters present a description of Garmisch-Partenkirchen and its hotel industry. Afterwards, the author gives an overview of "Golden GaPa Holiday Apartments" and its services including a customer journey of the potential guests.

The next chapters lead to the survey organization and provide the reader with a brief description of the used research methods. Finally, a detailed analysis of the customer survey is made, and a comparison of Booking.com reviews and questionnaire results are discussed.

All findings of the research are summarized. Based on the results, suggestions for A&E GmbH and recommendations for further studies are gathered in the last chapters of the thesis.

2 SERVICE QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Measuring customer satisfaction sometimes can be very challenging, because it is an attempt to measure human feelings. The simplest way to know customers feelings and desires is to ask them. Asking every customer is beneficial, because a company will know everyone's feelings, but it has its own drawbacks at the same time, because the

company has to collect this information from each customer. (Levy 2009, 6; NBRI 2009.)

Obviously, customer satisfaction is affected by the quality of a product or service. In general, quality can be defined as the totality of features and characteristics of a product or services that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs (Kotler et al. 2002, 831). It is quite difficult to define quality in services because of intangibility of a service offering. Service quality is also more difficult to evaluate than goods quality, because customers do not only evaluate the service outcome, but they also pay attention to a service delivery. (Berry, Parasuraman & Zeithaml 1990.)

According to WebFinance Inc. (2016), customer satisfaction is the degree of satisfaction provided by the goods or services of a company as measured by the number of repeat customers. The most extensive definition of satisfaction has been suggested by Kotler and Keller (2006), who define satisfaction as, “person’s feeling of pleasure or disappointment which resulted from comparing a product’s perceived performance or outcome against his/ her expectations” (Kotler & Keller 2006, 868).

Where does the connection between service quality and customer satisfaction occur? Buying decisions are made by customers upon judgments, which are formed by them about the value of marketing offers. In other words, a product’s performance relative to the expectations of a buyer directly influences customer satisfaction with a purchase. It can be concluded, that a customer can experience different degrees of satisfaction. Firstly, if the performance of a product corresponds to expectations, then a customer is satisfied. In case of not matching a product’s performance and expectations, a customer will be dissatisfied. Finally, if a performance exceeds one’s expectations, then the degree of satisfaction is high and the customer is delighted. That is why most successful companies monitor their customers’ expectations, company performance and customer satisfaction. Tracking competitors also helps to improve one’s own performance. (Kotler 2005, 465.)

2.1 Impact of service quality on customer satisfaction

To illustrate the service quality role in customer satisfaction a GAP model can be used. The GAP model of service quality was proposed by Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml (1990). It can serve as a framework for research in service marketing, including hospitality marketing. The model identifies four specific gaps leading to a fifth overall gap between customers' expectations and perceived service. (Figure 1).

Gap 1 occurs between the management perception of customer expectations and customer expected service. It means that management does not understand what customers actually expect. Gap 2 occurs between the management perception of customer expectations and service quality specifications. In other words, management is not willing or is not able to put the systems or finance in place to match or exceed customer expectations. Gap 3 shows a discrepancy between service quality specification and service delivery. Such a gap may arise through service personnel being insufficiently trained, being incapable or even unwilling to meet the set service standard. The main reasons for this gap can lie in ineffective recruitment, role conflict and improper evaluation or compensation system in a company, lack of proper customer education and training. (Berry et al. 1990)

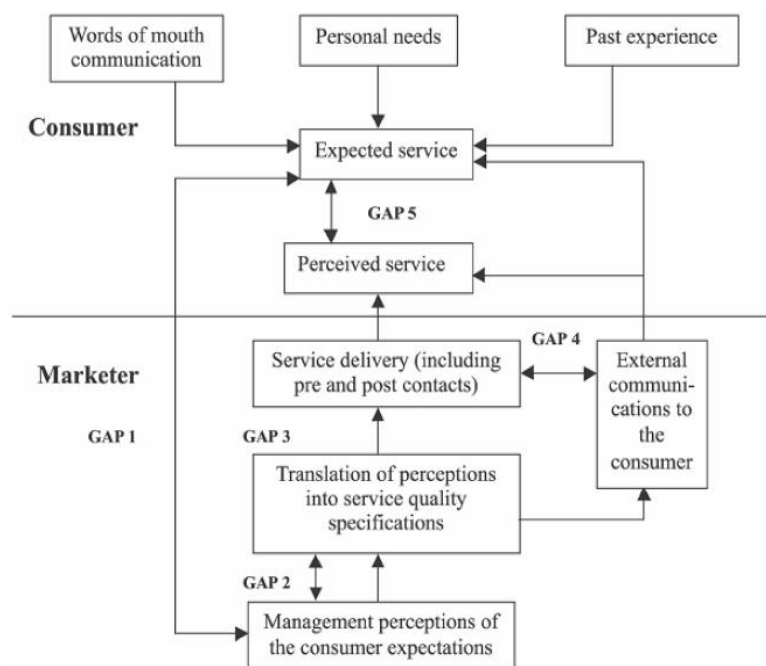


Figure 1. Service quality gap model by Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry (1990).

Consumer expectations are highly influenced by statements made by company representatives and advertisements. Gap 4, between service delivery and external communication, arises when these assumed expectations are not fulfilled at the time of delivery of the service. For example, a hotel or holiday apartment chain advertises brochures with clean and modern furnished rooms, but in reality they may be poorly maintained and in this case the guests' expectations are not met. So, a discrepancy between the actual service and the promised one may occur, for instance, due to over-promising in external communication campaigns. Finally, gap 5 may arise between expected service and experienced service. It means the consumer misinterprets the service quality. (Berry et al. 1990)

2.2 Difference between a hotel and a holiday apartment

It is meaningful to discuss the difference between a hotel and a holiday apartment, because many people often think that they will get the same services in both of the mentioned types of accommodation. The author was often faced with such situations at work, when foreign customers expected to arrive at a hotel, but they had booked an apartment. Questions about reception, trolleys, swimming pool and breakfast can be surprising for an apartment manager.

The check-in procedure and the whole experience of a staying in an apartment are distinct from a hotel. Actually, the word "hotel" sounds more common to people, but a term of a serviced holiday apartment is still not popular. It is uncommon especially for people who do not travel frequently or those who have not had a chance to get accommodation there (Karratha Apartments 2015). For this reason it is very important that a customer will understand this difference in advance, because it can affect his satisfaction with apartment services if expectations do not match the reality. In other words, a gap 4 between service delivery and external communication may arise.

According to WebFinance Inc. (2016), a hotel is a commercial establishment, which provides accommodation, meals and other guest services. To be called a hotel, such an

establishment should have at least six letting bedrooms, three of which must have attached private bathroom facilities. Usually hotels are classified into 'Star' categories (1-Star to 5-Star). It means that small and lower-priced hotels can offer just basic guest services and facilities, while bigger and higher-priced hotels may provide additional recreational and work facilities such as restaurants, swimming pools, spas and business centre and conference halls. (WebFinance Inc. 2016.)

A holiday apartment, often called a serviced apartment, is a place designed for a short stay as well as for a longer stay. Like in a hotel there are fixed daily prices, but also rates for weeks and months. For a longer stay a customer can negotiate a price in the apartment. There are different categories of accommodation in a serviced apartment, for instance, a single room or a studio apartment with a small kitchen, a one-bedroom apartment, a two-bedroom apartment or an apartment with more bedrooms. Each apartment has an attached bathroom or sometimes two, depending on the occupancy. Such apartments are usually provided with fully equipped kitchens, television sets, Wi-Fi internet access, room service, laundry, housekeeping among other facilities. (Guesthousesindia.wordpress.com 2012.)

The set of furniture and apartment facilities depend on the owning company and country where the apartment is located; there are no special requirements and prescriptions or standards for an apartment. People tend to search for apartments rather than for hotel rooms if they want to feel themselves at home. Hotels are good for a short stay, when some aspects of daily routine like cooking are not relevant, but just a bed and some service is needed. Apartments are good for a short stay and they are much more beneficial for sure for a long stay. Holiday apartments have more space because of kitchen and multiple rooms, giving guests more space to relax. There is more privacy compared to hotels. Moreover, people live separately from other guests and have their own entrance.

Concerning price level, there is no big difference between a hotel room and an apartment. However, a kitchen in an apartment is a huge advantage. Buying food in a supermarket and cooking on one's own is cheaper than eating out in a café or a restaurant. The major difference in prices depends on the length of stay. If a guest stays within a temporary location for a few months or nights, it will be clear to see how the

price of a hotel stay may add up. Serviced apartments, on the other hand, come with flexible price ranges, and they depend on the length of guests stay as a hotel, but are negotiable to fit budgets. Booking an apartment can be even better if people are booking as a group, because they can share costs.

A comparison of a room price in the 3-star hotel “Atlas” and a holiday apartment of A&E GmbH, both located in the center of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, reveals that a deluxe double hotel room with 23 sq. meters costs approximately the same as 61 sq. meter, two room apartment, which can fit up to six people (Appendix 1). While a hotel offers one room with a bath and toilet, including only hairdryer, wake-up service, cable TV and daily cleaning, the holiday apartment offers a kitchen, a bathroom with a toilet, laundry and just more space and furniture. All in all, the preference of a hotel room or a holiday apartments depends on the needs of particular customers.

3 HOTEL INDUSTRY IN GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN

Garmisch-Partenkirchen is a German ski resort in Bavaria. It is formed from two towns, Garmisch and Partenkirchen, which were united. It is a tourist destination for winter sports as well as for alpine hiking. This town lies near the mountain Zugspitze, Germany's highest peak, with its 2,962m height accessed by cogwheel train or cable car. Garmisch is considered the more fashionable section, while Partenkirchen is a traditional small town of Bavaria. (Holidaze Ski Tours 2015.) The whole town consists of old Bavarian houses with illustrations. The population of Garmisch is about 29,000 people (Markt Garmisch-Partenkirchen 2016). The area is surrounded by the Alps and different hills. This destination is popular among Germans all year round as well as among tourists from the Gulf States during a summer period. Nevertheless, there are many other international visitors. Garmisch –Partenkirchen is located not far from Austria, Switzerland and Italy and has also many tourists, who visit this town as a stop during their European road trip.

3.1. Apartments and Hotels in Garmisch-Partenkirchen

Approximately one million tourists visit Garmisch-Partenkirchen annually. Mainly the wonderful nature and traditional charm of the region make Garmisch-Partenkirchen a favorite destination for tourists. There are 800 choices of accommodation with 10,000 beds from cozy vacation rentals to luxury hotels. In 2015 the overall number of overnight stays reached 1.4 million. (Markt Garmisch-Partenkirchen 2016.)

The average length of guests' stays has been constant for the last three years, at 3.3 days. It is interesting that a particular feature of the year 2015 was the rise of arrivals from the Arab Gulf States, which replaced the previously strongest foreign market, the USA, with an increase of 43.9%. All in all, most foreign tourists come to Garmisch-Partenkirchen from the Arab Gulf States, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Russia and the Netherlands. The biggest number of tourists comes from Germany. (Nagel & Ries 2016.)

The town offers accommodation in hotels, *hotels garnis*, guesthouses, youth hostels, holiday homes and apartments or accommodation by private landlords. In Garmisch-Partenkirchen holiday apartments are the second most popular option after hotels. In 2015, from a total of 440,675 arrivals, the hotels had 229,199 and holiday apartments 62,099, respectively. It is important to mention, that in terms of quality, the demands of the guests are still on the rise. (Nagel & Ries 2016.)

According to Elsner (2015), holiday houses or apartments are seen as cheaper alternatives to hotels among Germans. Visitors of holiday houses choose places where they feel themselves like at home, especially when a family is travelling. The most important advantages of holiday houses according to German travelers are independence and more flexibility than in a hotel, more rooms and space, and the possibility for self-catering.

Most of the guests from holiday houses (97%) mentioned the location of the accommodation as the most important criterion for choosing a place where to stay. Approximately 53% of respondents also choose accommodation with a living space of 60-80m². (Elsner 2015, 10.)

3.2 Chain of Holiday Apartments Golden GaPa

The company A&E GmbH has a chain of “Golden GaPa Holiday Apartments” consisting of 17 serviced apartments and a holiday house. “Golden GaPa Holiday Apartments” offers private housing accommodation with a private bathroom and a kitchen. There is always free parking available near the property. Every apartment is equipped with Wi-Fi, satellite TV, floor heating or normal heating. There is a laundry facility in every house and ironing facilities included in the price. The kitchen has all necessary cutlery and dishes for cooking as well as a dishwasher, a microwave, a fridge, a cooker, a toaster, a coffee machine and a kettle. In the bathroom there are basic toiletries such as shower gel and shampoo in one package, soap, toilet paper, towels and a hairdryer. A set of bed sheets is always included in the price. Free of charge available on request are a baby cot with children bed sheets and a high chair. There is no daily cleaning service and change of towels or bed sheets; however these services are available on request with extra charges. Additional services can be provided for the guests of apartments such as airport shuttle or transfer to other cities or regional sights at extra costs.

To the services of apartments can also be included Garmisch – Partenkirchen Cards, even though this service is compulsory for all the hosts in Garmisch-Partenkirchen. All landlords in the town are obliged to charge the guests a spa tax for every overnight. The municipal authorities of spa and health resorts in Germany, such as Garmisch-Partenkirchen, usually charge a visitors’ tax. It is a fixed contribution, which is applied to provide facilities for spa purposes: recreational and sports facilities, hiking trails, ski runs and others. The city charges 2 EUR tax from every person for every night. Children up to 5 years of age are exempt from the tax. Children from 6 up to 15 years of age pay 1 EUR per day. The visitor’s card (a kind of voucher) is given to tourists upon arrival. It is only valid for the duration of the registered stay. This GaPa Card enables guests of the city to utilize municipal bus service free of charge, offers one free entrance to a swimming pool and casino as well as a discount to the Partnach Gorge, which is a deep gorge that has been incised by a mountain stream. (Markt Garmisch-Partenkirchen 2016.)

GaPa cards are beneficial especially for those who do not have a car. A one way ticket for a city bus costs 1.90 EUR, so with the round trip one can already save money. Entrance to the swimming pool costs 6-8 EUR, so here one can also get a good benefit with a card. However, sometimes paying this tax affects the price of apartment very much, which is actually not beneficial for A&E GmbH and other hosts in the town. For example, if an Arab family with 7 people (3 adults, 4 teenagers) books an apartment for 2 months, it has to pay tax in total amount of 600 EUR. This additional cost affects the price of apartment significantly. Sometimes it is very difficult to explain to guests from other countries, that a rental company does not receive this money, because it goes to the city.

3.2.1 Customer journey

The customer journey refers to the stages of customers travel in their relationship with a specific brand. With the help of analysis one customer experiences at each stage of the customer journey it is possible to find out where improvements to efficiency or customer service can be made. This is useful for making decisions about the extent and nature of further investment, for increasing the service level and to prepare a plan for company development through providing a 'perfect' customer journey. (DJS Research Ltd 2012.)

If to think of a customer journey of a guest who visits a holiday apartment or hotel, we can define the following main touch points: travel idea, research, booking, stay and sharing of experience. Figure 2 shows stages of a customer journey. (HOTELGENIUS 2015.)



Figure 2. Hotel customer journey (HOTELGENIUS 2015).

Travel idea

The customer journey in the hotel industry starts from the moment when a person realizes that he wants or needs to travel somewhere. The idea of travelling can emerge from professional (business trip or holiday) or personal need, from advertisements or from stories of friends.

In the case of Golden GaPa Holiday Apartments a potential customer wants to visit Garmisch-Partenkirchen mainly for a holiday stay. This town can be a main destination or, for example, a stop during a trip to Switzerland, Austria or Germany. A potential customer can get information about Garmisch-Partenkirchen online or from other people who already visited this place. There can be different ways to suddenly come up with idea of visiting Garmisch-Partenkirchen. A potential customer can search for a room even late at night while travelling near this town and decide to stay overnight, without having any knowledge about the area.

Some of the guests have a business trip, and their travel costs are in the most cases covered by the company. From the author's experience, these guests tend to book online in order to have immediate confirmation of their reservation. Some customers of the

company need accommodation in Garmisch-Partenkirchen because of the health issues. As discussed earlier, being a patient in the hospital of Garmisch-Partenkirchen or in the hospital of the nearby town Murnau does not mean receiving accommodation for family members. That is why such people always search for apartments in order to be able to live in apartment for a long period of time. A kitchen is a must in this case and hotels cannot offer this service. That is why need of such customers can be covered only by apartments. This is where “Golden GaPa Holiday Apartments” come into play.

Research

The next stage in the customer journey will be research or planning. A potential customer will check different channels in order to find out information about a chosen destination and potential accommodations. The traveler will probably seek advice online, will review websites and forums and will ask for advice his friends, family members and colleagues.

“Golden GaPa Holiday Apartments” can be found mainly in the Internet on the websites of Booking.com, TripAdvisor, goldengapa.de. Also, a potential guest can find information about apartments in touristic magazines, in travel agencies all over the world and from previous customers. A potential guest can read the description of apartments, look at the photos and also read opinions of other people.

Booking

There are several ways to book “Golden GaPa Holiday Apartments”. A customer can find an apartment in Booking.com or TripAdvisor, and receive the necessary information from these websites. Another way is to write an email to goldengapa@gmail.com or to call for a direct booking. It is also possible to make a request for reservation through the website of the company – goldengapa.de. Some people can book an apartment through a middle person, for instance, a travel agency. It is also possible to make a reservation in the office of the company or through mobile application “WhatsApp”. Full prepayment is always required. If the booking is made in the day of arrival, a customer can pay while checking in. In some cases no prepayment

is required, for instance, if the customer asks for a payment during the check in procedure in advance.

Stay

After making a reservation the guest arrives at the property of A&E GmbH. As holiday apartments are located in different areas of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, there is an office in the center of the city for the convenience of the guests. When booking online, guests receive information about key delivery to their email and the booking confirmation. The office of A&E GmbH is open from 9.00 until 6 p.m. Check-in starts at 2 p.m., and guests can receive the key in the office.

At the same time, all the guests are asked to inform the company about the approximate time of their arrival and are provided with the phone number to call for the key delivery. In most cases, apartment managers have the opportunity to meet the guests directly in apartments to fasten the check-in procedure. For this reason the company has to know the time of guest's arrival or to receive a call 30 minutes in advance. So, some people come to the office for check-in, some people call in advance and are met directly in apartments, and some do not read the description and rules of the property at all and come to the apartment without notifying the administration in advance, thinking that there is a 24h reception. For such situations there are key boxes near apartments, and managers can tell the password through the phone call in order to shorten the waiting time of the guest. All the guests arriving after 6 p.m. are met in apartments. The guests are also notified that extra charges for late check-in fee may apply.

During check-in a guest is asked to provide the names and birthdays of all travelers for the payment of the city tax, an amount of 2 EUR per person per night. This money is paid only in cash upon arrival. For this obligatory fee a guest receives a special card from Garmisch-Partenkirchen. The guest also receives a bill with receipt for his booking, some information about places to visit in Garmisch-Partenkirchen and its surroundings, explanation about accommodation, rules of Germany and property, and also a 10% discount card for the next booking.

Check-out is usually at 10.30- 11.00, and people just have to leave the key in the box. After every check-out the apartment is investigated for damages and cleaned before new arrivals. During the stay a guest is provided once with bed linen and towels. The change of those can be performed on request for an extra charge. Extra cleaning can also be ordered.

Sharing experience

After staying in a hotel or a holiday apartment people tend to share their experience and also influence other potential customers with their thoughts and judgments. The guests of “Golden GaPa Holiday Apartments” also have the opportunity to spread the word about their stay. After check-out the guests usually receive a notification to their email address with a kind request to review their stay, if they made a reservation through Booking.com.

The apartment managers of A&E GmbH always tell the guests about the possibility of leaving a review. Those guests who book directly through a company website or with the help of other means can leave their review in other public online forums or social media, but there is no special system in the company for this kind of feedback. All the guests have the opportunity to share details of their stay with family and friends. However, the company does not know to which extent a guest was satisfied if he did not book through Booking.com. For this reason, a questionnaire in apartments can fill this gap and can help to have a better picture of the overall satisfaction of the customers.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Survey organization

The survey was conducted between November 24th and December 31st in 2016. Questionnaires were handed out to all the customers of “Golden GaPa Holiday Apartments” and 65 filled questionnaires were received. Due to the low season before

Christmas holidays there were not so many people travelling to Garmisch-Partenkirchen.

The survey contained 15 questions about customers' backgrounds and the reasons for choosing exactly this apartment as well as other estimation questions. The questionnaires were handed out in two languages: English and German. German language was chosen because apartments are located in Germany, and there are many German customers. English language, as a common one for international communication, was chosen as the second one for the survey. The questionnaire in both languages can be found in Appendices 3 and 4.

The questionnaire consisted of close-ended and open-ended questions. Close-ended questions helped to gather demographical and geographical characteristics of the respondents and to find out the preferred booking type as well as main reasons for choosing this apartment chain. While filling in the list of questions concerning accommodation, its facilities and personnel, respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the provided statements by scaling 1- strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-agree and 4-strongly agree. The respondents had the chance to choose "do not know" option as well, meaning that the customer might not have experienced this feature yet or does not have a specific opinion about it. The scale used in the quantitative research form was based on the Likert scale, which has five levels. (Changing Minds org. 2010.) Two open-ended questions in the survey were presented by feedback in comments and request for suggestions, if there is something in need of change in the apartment or service.

The comparison of the survey results and Booking.com feedback was based on the same period of time. The feedback was collected from Booking.com web-pages, but not exactly from the same customers who participated in the survey. It is important to mention that the author had to deal with a delay in the Booking.com feedback.

4.2. Validity and reliability of the method

If a research is conducted in order to be helpful, it should avoid misleading of those who will use it. In other words, the research data should be valid and reliable to avoid errors. In order to be valid, research data should accurately represent the concept which it aims to measure. Moreover, research tools should provide the same information in all cases, even if they are used by different people or at different times. (Roberts et al. 2006.)

It is obvious that research should receive results which are close to the original situation. This report presents the study results, where a questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire was well designed and approved of by the owners of the company. The layout of the questionnaire was made in an easy way for the respondents to answer and to give their opinions. The research is reliable, because all the questions of the survey were answered and additional comments were left. As the research shows a current level of the guests' satisfaction, it is valid.

5 RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1. Sample

During a period of 38 days 65 filled questionnaires were gathered. Questionnaires were handed out during check-in procedures at every apartment and gathered during check-out. Questions about age, gender and nationality of travelers in this survey give the possibility to build up the demographic and geographic profiles of customers. (See Figures 3 and 4.) Thirty-two of all the respondents were females, and 33 were males, which equals to 49% of female and 51% of male respondents. This shows that men and women were almost equally willing to participate in the customer satisfaction survey and to share their opinions.

Most of the respondents were middle-aged: 26-35 and 36-45 years old (Figure 3). These segments of travelers represent people who already work, which means they are economically stable and have some savings to spend for travelling. As the prices of

“Golden GaPa Holiday Apartments” are quite high, it is logically that the majority of the customers is middle-aged. Moreover, people of these groups are active and ready to spend their holiday in a ski resort.

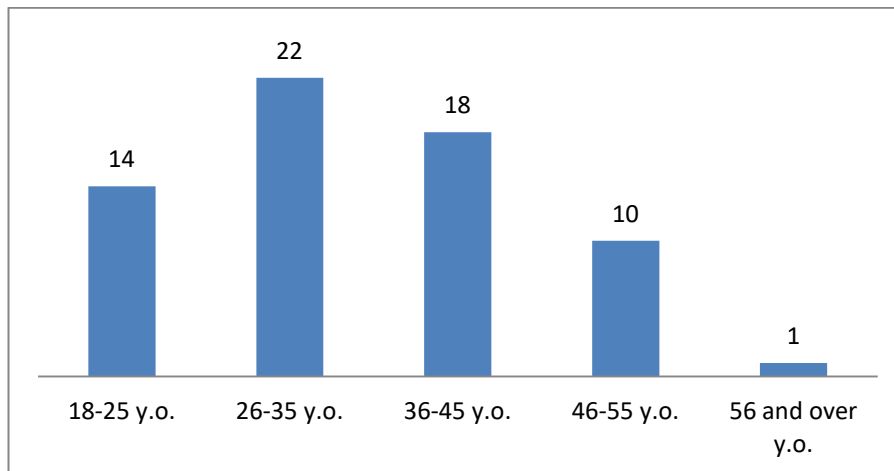


Figure 3. Age of respondents.

Half of the respondents were from Germany. Garmisch-Partenkirchen is easily accessible for German inhabitants and very attractive, because Germans do love hiking and travelling inland. According to Statista (2017), 34% of Germans will choose Bavaria as their travel destination within Germany. Foreign respondents represented countries such as Russia (9%), UK (8%) and USA (6%). Twenty-six (26) percent of respondents were travelers from other foreign countries.

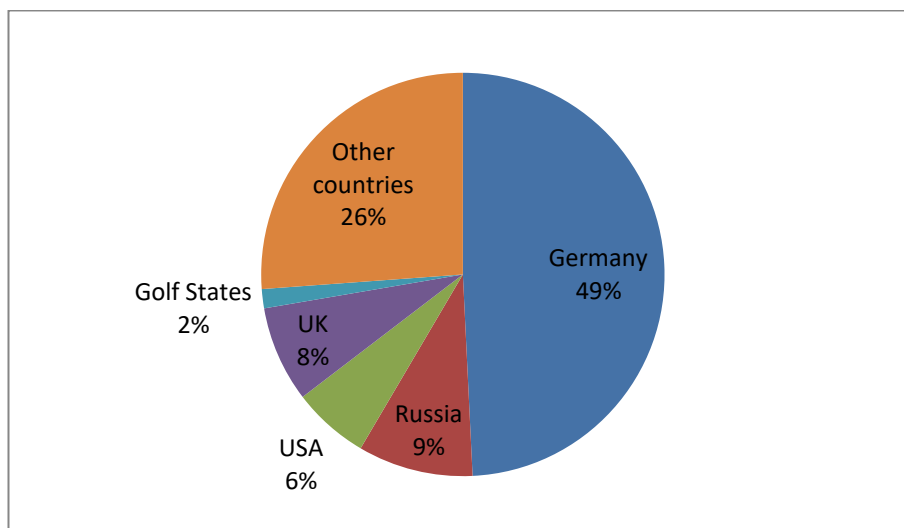


Figure 4. Nationality of respondents.

Most of respondents (86%) arrived to Garmisch-Partenkirchen for leisure purpose, which was expected. On business trip were 8%, and the other 6% had other reasons. Obviously, the most important segment for A&E GmbH is leisure tourists.

The majority of travelers (58%) spent 2-4 nights in apartments, which fits the average length of guests` stay in Garmisch –Partenkirchen. Twenty-six percent of the guests spent only one night in the apartments, and 15% spent more than 5 nights in apartments.

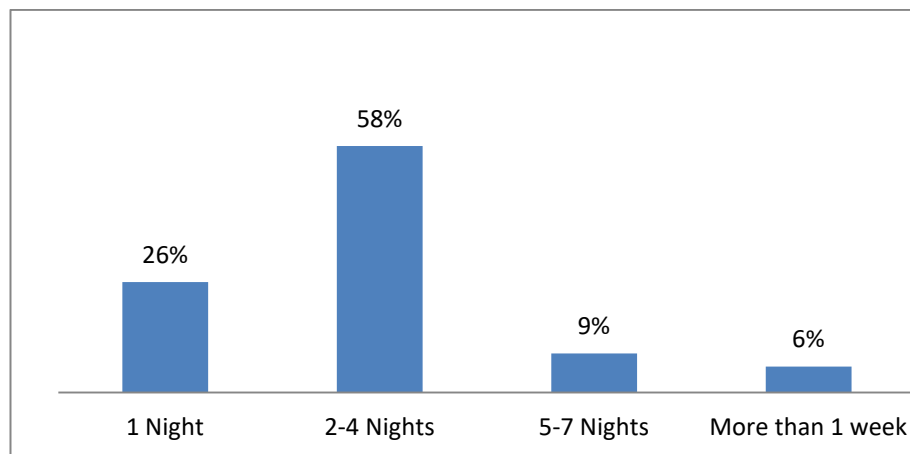


Figure 5. Duration of stay.

5.2 Choice of A&E GmbH

In this question the respondents could choose several options. The majority of the guests marked good location and additional services as their priority in the choice. By the way, the majority of the guests (90%) who left a review in Booking.com also highly rated the locations of the “Golden GaPa Holiday Apartments”. It indicates that a company has chosen the right areas in the city for a comfortable holiday stay. The fact that people have chosen Golden GaPa because of such additional services as kitchen, laundry etc. gives a competitive advantage over hotels in Garmisch-Partenkirchen.

Only seven respondents based their choice on the recommendations. However, it does not mean that recommendations did not influence the choice of the customers at all. It could be not the deciding factor, but it can affect a customer’s choice, for example, in terms of location choice. Two respondents out of sixty-five told that they already had experience of staying in this apartment chain. This fact is a positive indicator, because it

means that customers came back to A&E GmbH. This is a long-term goal of the company.

Twenty-three respondents also considered the price of apartment while making a choice. Being affordable does not belong to the policy of the company. However, A&E GmbH has to compete in price with other similar types of accommodations. As prices of “Golden GaPa Holiday Apartments” are quite high, this reason for guests’ choice does not enjoy the greatest popularity.

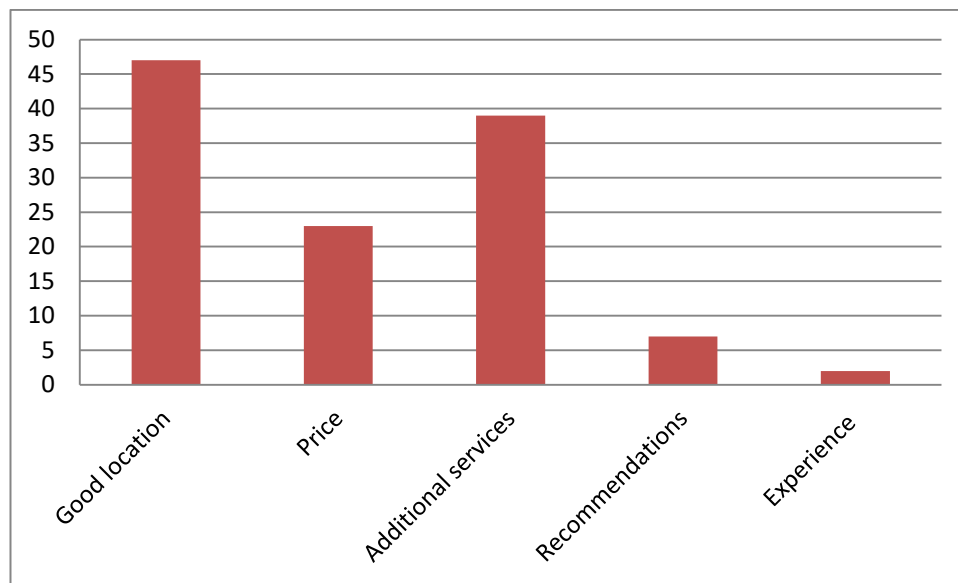


Figure 6. Reasons for choosing “Golden GaPa Holiday Apartments”.

The vast majority of customers (60) prefer Booking.com for making a reservation. Nowadays, Booking.com is the most diverse and popular accommodation platform in the world with 1,133,584 properties worldwide, and consequently the popularity of this method was expected (Booking.com, 2017). Two reservations were received from travel agencies, two by email, and one guest booked apartment by calling the office (Figure 7). “Golden GaPa Holiday Apartments” have the strongest advertisement in the web page of Booking.com. In order to receive even more reservations, the company has to strengthen its presence on other booking platforms such as website of the company and TripAdvisor.

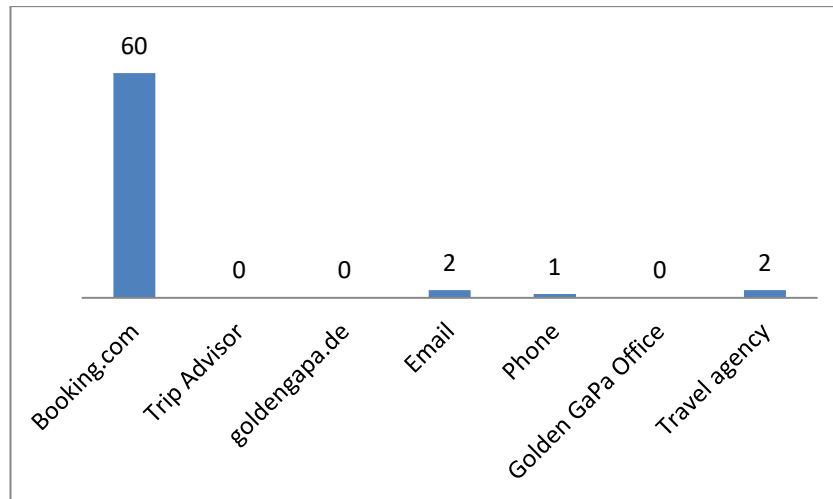


Figure 7. Booking method of respondents.

5.3 Satisfaction level of customers of Golden GAPA holiday Apartments

The satisfaction of a customer depends on the expectations and experiences. According to the responses, 89% of the guests felt that their expectations were met. It is a good result, showing that a majority of customers was satisfied with the received accommodation.

However, 11% of customers were unsatisfied, which means that there is room for improvement. Of course, it is very difficult and almost impossible to reach 100% positive feedback, because many factors affect customers' opinions, and sometimes these factors even do not depend on the company. It is important to find out the reasons why customers were unsatisfied. The questions about the quality of services were designed for this purpose.

5.4. Service quality in A&E GmbH

The questionnaire offered to evaluate services and facilities of "Golden GaPa Holiday Apartments" with help of a Likert scale. As customer satisfaction usually depends on the general impression about service and its supplier, it is important to evaluate the supplier's behavior. In other words, it is essential to assess the work of personnel and how service, in this particular case, is delivered. The better trained employees are, the

more productive they work and deliver service appropriately. The work of the staff, apartments and their facilities were estimated with the scale from 1 to 5, where 1= totally disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = totally agree, 5 = do not know.

5.4.1 Staff

The respondents were asked to evaluate the staff's behavior and competences with the help of offered statements. The vast majority of the respondents were satisfied with the work of the personnel (Table 1). Staff friendliness and responsiveness, staff language skills, ease of the key delivery process were mostly assessed with the score 4. Key delivery is important because all the apartments of A&E GmbH are located in different places and there is no general reception desk. The company wondered whether there still was a need for simplifying the check-in procedure. The survey showed that the key delivery process functions well, because 92% of the guests agreed or totally agreed with the provided statement. Only 5 guests out of 65 disagreed with this. These guests arrived late in the evening and did not notify staff in advance. That is why their check-in procedure did not go so smoothly.

Table 1. Personnel estimation.

	1-totally disagree	2-disagree	3-agree	4-totally agree	Do not know
Key delivery is easy and fast	0	5	15	45	0
Staff is responsive and friendly	2	3	12	48	0
Staff language skills are good	1	1	10	53	0

A question about language skills was raised because none of the company employees has English or German language as their mother tongue. Only the managers of the company are currently trained to improve their knowledge of German. As the survey showed, approximately 97% of the guests agreed that staff language skills are already at a good level. Only 2 respondents out of 65 disagreed with this. It means that customers

are satisfied with current staff language skills, and the company does not have to provide extra language courses for staff.

Service performance depends not only on the quality, but also on ability of the company to develop, deliver and maintain this service effectively. If some problems with maintenance occur, it can irritate customers. However, these problems can be solved by working with complaints effectively. About 74% of the respondents assessed the personnel as friendly and responsive. Finally, 8% of the respondents were dissatisfied with the personnel. This was caused by the inability of the staff members to solve problems which occurred during guests' stays. These problems were connected mainly to utilities and facilities in the apartments. For instance, the heating stopped functioning late at night in one of the apartments, or the Wi-Fi connection was disabled. It is impossible to avoid such technical problems. However, the company can minimize a negative effect on the guests with help of efficient complaint management. For example, the company can establish some rules which one can follow in certain situations, such as offering a refund of money or offering some extra services to the guests free of charge.

All in all, the majority of customers assessed the work of the staff as excellent and good, and this indicates that customers are satisfied and the quality of the staff service is quite high.

5.4.2. Apartments

The respondents were asked to evaluate apartments and its facilities. As previously discussed, service performance, obviously, depends on quality. The guests of "Golden GaPa Holiday Apartments" had the opportunity to assess the interior design, room equipment, cleanliness, the utilities and facilities of apartments, the location as well as to evaluate a price-quality ratio.

Almost 85% of the respondents totally agreed that the interior design of apartments is modern, and 15% did not like the interior. Actually, decorations and furniture are difficult to assess objectively. All people have different tastes and by evaluating this,

they gave their subjective opinions. Most of the guests liked the style of the apartments. Concerning the rooms' equipment, the result is less positive, which indicates that some improvements are needed. Only around 54% of the respondents totally agreed that the rooms are well-equipped. The other 34% doubted and remarked that they more so agree than disagree with the statement. It means that they were happy with what they got; however, they would add something else to the apartment. The remaining 12% found the rooms' equipment insufficient.

Around 77% of the customers considered the cleanliness of the rooms as excellent, which is a good result. Only 3% of the respondents found the rooms dirty. Most of the respondents were satisfied with the cleanliness, but there still are some unhappy customers. This information should be delivered to the cleaning company.

The assessment of heating, electricity and saunas revealed that in total 83% of the guests were satisfied. However, it is important to notice that the remaining 17% experienced some problems during their stay. As the period of the survey was not long, it is a good indicator. Luckily, all the unsatisfied guests left comments on what should be improved. In most cases the problems occurred with heating and hot water, which can be related to the cold season.

Concerning the location of the apartments, approximately 91% of the respondents totally or to some extent agreed that locations of the apartments are convenient. The remaining 9% did not evaluate the location as good. This indicator cannot be improved currently, because the company has long-term rental contracts for all the properties.

The perception of a price-quality ratio is an important measure. As people pay for the accommodation in advance, dissatisfaction may arise when they come to the property and their expectations are not met. The study showed that 40% of the respondents totally agreed on price paid for the apartment. Around 45% also accepted the price, but their expectations about accommodation were probably a bit higher. Fifteen percent of the respondents considered the price to be too expensive. Some of these guests were unsatisfied with the quality of the furniture and commented that it was outdated. Others did not notice the service charge costs and did not understand why they had to pay extra.

All the respondents came to Garmisch-Partenkirchen by car. Free parking is available near all the apartments; however, some are private and some are public. In apartments with public parking places guests were a bit unsatisfied, because of the impossibility to reserve a parking spot. Consequently, around 5% of the guests did not like this, but the rest of the guests were satisfied.

Regarding the internet connection, the majority of the answers were positive estimations. However, the appearance of “disagree” or “totally disagree” as options for an answer indicates certain dissatisfaction with this service. Technical problems are sometimes difficult for apartment managers to solve by themselves, and an Internet provider cannot be easily reached by phone. From the author’s observations, the problems with the internet connection arose quite often in the apartments, and they are connected to the slow speed arising when customers connect too many devices. As this particular problem cannot be solved technically, it is important to give the guests a good explanation of the situation. Again complaint management tools should be applied.

Table 2. Estimation of apartments and facilities.

	1-totally disagree	2-disagree	3-agree	4-totally agree	Do not know
Interior design is modern	1	9	9	46	0
Rooms are well-equipped	4	4	22	35	0
Cleanliness is satisfactory	0	2	13	50	0
Utilities work properly	5	6	13	41	0
Location is convenient	0	6	19	40	0
Price-quality ratio is excellent	4	6	29	26	0
There are all required accessories	1	4	13	47	0
Free parking is available	0	3	11	51	0
Wi-Fi works properly	3	4	10	47	1

Respondents were asked if they would like not only a kitchen, but also breakfast or dinner. The study showed that none of the guests would like to have additional breakfast or dinner service.

5.5 Open-ended questions

The questionnaire included two open-ended questions giving the respondents an opportunity to leave their comments about apartments and service. According to comments, there are some suggestions for improvements to be made as well as some remarks regarding the service. Even those customers who were satisfied in general, left remarks about the aspects they did not like. There were also positive comments and words of gratitude as well. The feedback received from open-ended questions is summarized in the coming paragraphs.

One of the major complaints dealt with a misleading reflection of a full price of a reservation in Booking.com. The managers of “Golden GaPa Holiday Apartments” set prices in the administration system Extranet of Booking.com. All rates are non-refundable, which means that a full amount of a reservation is due for payment right after the booking is finished, and the full amount of the reservation is charged in case of modification, cancellation or no-show. This is a very strict policy of the company, and rarely some exceptions are made with offering an option of changing the dates of the reservation.

The advertised price includes the cost of accommodation but does not include the service charge of 10 EUR per person per night and the city tax of 2 EUR per person per night. Information about excluded charges is reflected on the booking page. However, it is printed in small font and is not calculated in the total confirmed price of apartment to the guest. It means that the guest has to calculate on his own how much he/she has to pay on top of the confirmed price. This is a bit confusing for the guests, and most of the time they just do not understand the full price of their reservation. It often becomes a reason for conflict. Misunderstanding in the booking process of the guests is illustrated in Appendix 2.

The problem occurs when the debited amount from the credit card of the guest is higher than a total confirmed price displayed in Booking.com. The managers have to explain the guests the reason for the difference. This “trick” helps the company to get more reservations, as the advertised price is significantly lower than the full price of accommodation, but it gives the guest a sense of dishonesty and causes misunderstandings and dissatisfaction from the very beginning. It is good for the company to get as many reservations as possible on the one hand. However, unsatisfied customers will not come back again and will not be loyal, which destroys the success of the company in the long-term. According to the research 45 out of 65 customers saw the excluded charges only after receiving their booking confirmation. This definitely has to be changed because this is the main complaint of the customers, and even if it is beneficial in some way for a company, the satisfaction level decreases and managers have to spend much time explaining the issue.

Regarding apartments' equipment people are generally satisfied. However, they expect tea, coffee and coffee filters to be in the kitchen upon their arrival. Many people arrive late in the evening and have no possibility to visit the shops. It would be good to have these necessities. The policy of the company is that it offers only the rental of accommodation and does not provide hotel services. However, it is common in Garmisch-Partenkirchen to have some basic supply in apartments, and people are familiar with this, so they expect to see it everywhere. As many of the guests left such a request, it is suggested to the company to try this feature and to check whether it will affect the level of the customer satisfaction positively.

Some other minor remarks were made regarding utilities in particular apartments. For instance, in some apartments floor heating regulators are closed and temperature is set only by the personnel. In case of changing weather, people sometimes feel uncomfortable and staff members have to visit the apartment to change the temperature. At the same time in other apartments, regulators for heating are open for public use. For the guests' convenience and saving of workers' time, these regulators can be made accessible for the guests in all apartments. Other remarks dealt with insufficient dishes or cutlery, requests for curtains for some windows, TV settings problems, broken furniture and winter service for snow.

A&E GmbH received many positive comments about style, the furniture of apartments and locations. It means that the company has a potential for growth, and people like this accommodation type. Making improvements will help to build loyal relationships with customers and to receive good reviews, which will attract new guests.

5.6. Concluding remarks

Research results are connected to the service quality gap model. As already discussed earlier, there are five gaps that companies should manage, measure and minimize. With a high overall satisfaction level (89%) gap 5 between expected and perceived service in A&E GmbH is almost eliminated. However, the survey research showed that the company should strive to narrow this gap. In addition, there is no discrepancy between service quality and service delivery due to the well-trained employees. The staff of the company was highly rated by the respondents in terms of language skills, friendliness and responsiveness.

In contrast, the research showed that the gap between service quality and external communication is quite wide. One of the major complaints dealt with a misleading reflection of the advertised price and the full price of the apartments in Booking.com. The expectations of the customers of A&E GmbH did not correspond to the reality. The company has to reconsider its advertising campaign and pricing policy to eliminate this gap.

Concerning a gap between the management perception of customer expectations and customer expected service, the survey showed that the management of “Golden GaPa Holiday Apartments” does not always understand what customers actually expect. Comments on services and apartment equipment and requests for tea, coffee and more cutleries in the kitchen or daily cleaning service indicate the existence of gap 1. This gap is partially connected to the management perception of service quality. The management of A&E GmbH was not willing or not able to put more finances to match customer expectations in terms of apartment equipment, consequently, gap 2 raised.

All in all, the survey revealed the current shortcomings in the service quality of “Golden GaPa Holiday Apartments” and highlighted areas where the company succeeded.

6 COMPARISON OF BOOKING.COM REVIEWS AND SURVEY RESULTS

As already mentioned in the report, all customers of “Golden GaPa Holiday Apartments” who made a reservation through the online booking system of Booking.com receive a message to their email address with an offer to review their stay. Booking.com sends review invitations to guests around 48 hours after check-out, and guests have 28 days for completing their review. Booking.com confirms that reviews are genuine and checks material before adding it to the website. All the reviews are based on the subjective opinions of the guests. (Booking.com 2016.)

Booking.com offers to review the cleanliness, comfort, location, facilities, staff, value for money and free Wi-Fi of the property as poor, fair, good or excellent. The minimal score is 2.5 and the maximum is 10.0. The guest also has the possibility to describe the pluses and minuses of the property and his/her experience. The host and all other bookers see the score and comments. The host can answer to the comments of the guest while other bookers can mark the reviews as useful. Review scores affect the position of the property in the listings of accommodation types. The higher the score is the better for the property it is. Every property strives to get the best score possible. However, one cannot force the guests to leave good feedback.

It is interesting that bad customer service interactions are more likely to be shared than good ones. According to the marketing research about sharing customer service stories, 95% of respondents who have had a bad experience said they told someone about it, compared to 87% who shared a good experience (Marketingcharts.com 2013). From this information one can doubt whether results of Booking.com can be objective in the way that people leave negative reviews more often than positive.

“Golden GaPa Holiday Apartments” has overall scores for each apartment presented in Booking.com. If to take the average score of “Golden GaPa Holiday Apartments” as a chain, it will be approximately 7.5 out of 10.0. The survey showed that the current overall level of satisfaction of the customers is 89%. If to take 100% as 10.0 it means, that 89% equals 8.9. Consequently, the current level of customer satisfaction of Golden GaPa guests is higher than the overall level of satisfaction displayed in the Booking.com. The comparison of comments from Booking.com and from the survey is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Positive and negative feedback in the survey and in the Booking.com.

	Survey feedback	Booking.com feedback
Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Good locations -Nice staff -Modern decorations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Good locations, great view -Spacious rooms -Nice staff -Clean rooms -Comfortable beds -Flexible check-in
Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Hidden costs for service charge -No coffee, tea, sugar, salt, coffee filters -Heating and water functions improperly -Winter service not good -Slow Wi-Fi -Door lockers do not function properly -Insufficient dishes -Complaint about lack of curtains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Hidden costs for service charge, extra costs for sauna -Small choice of TV channels -Uncomfortable pillows -Heating functions improperly -Slow Wi-Fi -Dishwasher does not clean dishes properly -Limited supply of soap -Door lockers do not function well -Difficult to understand rooms equipment on photos -Expensive

7 CONCLUSION

The study showed that the current level of customer satisfaction (89%) of the company A&E GmbH is quite high. The respondents expressed their opinions about apartments and staff members. The research confirms that the overall image of the apartments is good even if some certain facilities in the accommodation did not satisfy the guests to the full extent. Based on the research results, A&E GmbH can adjust its growth strategy to the preferences of the customers.

7.1. Suggestions for A&E GmbH

As A&E GmbH aims for providing a better service and wants to become more competitive, it has to pay more attention to the maintenance of the apartments. Firstly, it is suggested to increase work force in the company. One more worker at least in part-time is needed for apartment maintenance in order to solve technical problems and to check constantly apartments` equipment. The company is growing and wants to get more rentals. However, with the same amount of employees it is impossible to succeed in every activity of the company. A&E GmbH is currently thinking of buying one more car for staff, and the author strongly supports this idea because it will save the time of the personnel as all the apartment are located in different parts of the city.

It is advised to reconsider the price setting in Booking.com and to provide the guests with some extra essentials for cooking. The personnel should be trained in terms of complaint management. The survey showed that sometimes the dissatisfaction of the guests was caused by the inability of the personnel to solve problems or to give a good explanation to the customers.

On the 25th of January the results of the survey and suggestions were presented to the owners of the company and to the managers. After discussion it was decided to provide the guests with basic supplies such as coffee filters, tea, coffee, sugar, salt and some welcoming sweets. It was also decided to provide the guests with a bottle of champagne to create more luxurious atmosphere in apartments. The owners of the company also

agreed on hiring an extra housekeeper for apartment maintenance. The questionnaire forms will be left in the apartment permanently; however, they will be shorter. The service charge will stay as excluded costs; however, the explanation of these extra costs will be included in the important information on the web-page in Booking.com. For some apartments it will be tested to include these excluded costs in the total confirmed price.

7.2. Recommendations for further studies

It is advised to leave questionnaires permanently in the apartments together with the brochures about the city and its surroundings. This will help to constantly monitor customer satisfaction and receive valuable feedback for the company. Other questions can be added to questionnaire depending on the needs of the company.

Further research could be conducted during the high season, when turnover of guests is higher but the work resources of the company stay the same. This is to find out whether A&E GmbH manages to maintain the same or better level of customer satisfaction. It is also suggested to investigate the level of satisfaction of the Arabic customers in order to deepen the knowledge about the preferences of these customers.

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Comparison of price between a hotel room and a holiday apartment

The screenshot shows a hotel room listing for 'Deluxe Double Room' at 'Atlas Posthotel'. The room features 23 m² of space and a large double bed. The search criteria are 2 adults for 1 night, from Sunday, December 11 to Monday, December 12. A red banner indicates that only 3 rooms are left. The price for one night is €90 under special conditions, with a crossed-out price of €155. A 'Reserve' button is visible.

Conditions	Price for 1 night
✓ Special conditions - PAY LATER	€ 90 € 155

Details and facilities

- Room size: 23 m²
- Bed: 1 large double bed
- Room facilities:

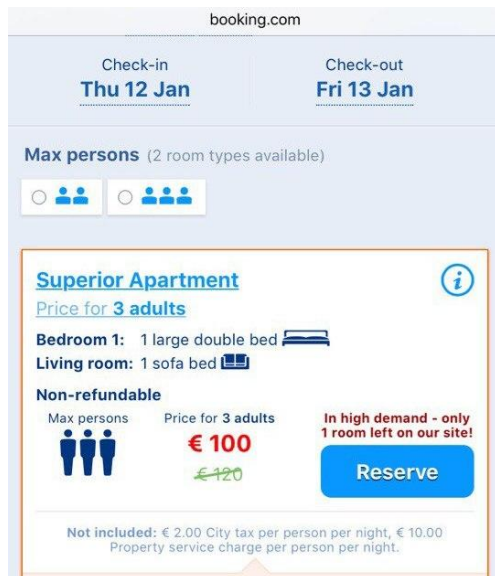
Picture 1. Price of a double room in the hotel “Atlas”

The screenshot shows a holiday apartment listing for 'Superior Apartment with Mountain View' at 'Luxus Apartments im Herzen von Garmisch 2'. The apartment is 61 m² and includes a balcony, a room with a view, and a mountain view. The search criteria are 2 adults for 1 night, from Sunday, December 11 to Monday, December 12. A red banner indicates that only 1 room is left. The price for one night is €85, with a 'Non-refundable' condition. A 'Reserve' button is visible.

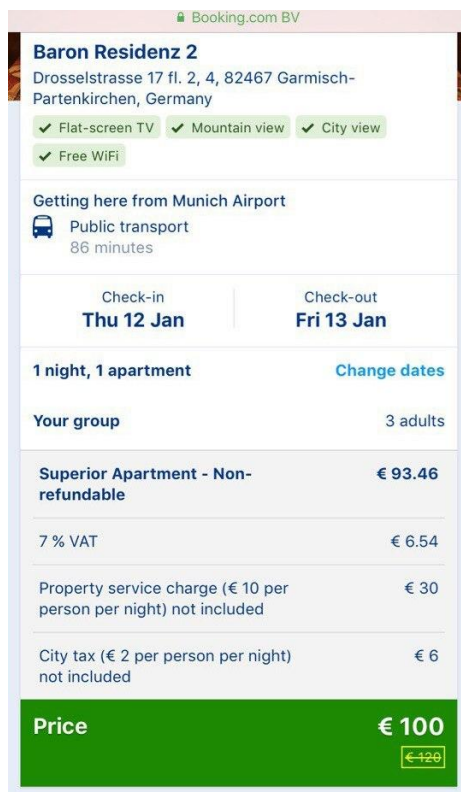
Conditions	Price for 1 night
ⓘ Non-refundable	€ 85

Picture 2. Price of the 2 rooms “Golden GaPa Holiday Apartment”.

Price reflection in Booking.com



Picture 3. Advertised price of the “Golden GaPa Holiday Apartment” in Booking.com. The view of the guest.



Picture 4. Confirmed price in the reservation of the “Golden GaPa Holiday Apartment” in Booking.com. The view of the guest.

Appendix 2 2 (2)

Booking.com BV		
Guest name	Richard Meissner	
Check-in	29-01-2017	
Check-out	04-02-2017	
Room type	Luxury Apartment with Terrace (4)	
Number of persons	2 adults, 2 children	
Arrival	Sunday, January 29, 2017	
Departure	Saturday, February 4, 2017	
Number of nights	6	
Total cost confirmed with guest	Room price	€ 934.58
	7 % VAT	€ 65.42
	Total confirmed to guest	€ 1,000
	Excluded € 2.00 City tax per person per night	€ 48
	Excluded € 10.00 service charge per person per night	€ 240
	Maximise	

Picture 5. Confirmed prices of the reservation received from the Booking.com. The view of the host.

Questionnaire in English

“Golden GaPa Holiday Apartments” Questionnaire

Dear guest, we will be very thankful to receive your feedback about your stay in our apartment. It will help us to improve our service and to make your stay even more comfortable in the future. Your opinion is very important to us!

1. Gender

☐ Male ☐ Female

2. Age

☐ 18-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-56 ☐ 55 and over

3. Home Country

☐ Germany ☐ Gulf States (Kuwait, Oman, OAE, KSA) ☐ USA ☐ Russia ☐ China

☐ Other _____

4. Purpose of your visit

☐ Tourism ☐ Business ☐ Other _____

5. Duration of your stay

☐ 1 Night ☐ 2-4 Nights ☐ 5-7 Nights ☐ More than 1 week

6. How have you found information about “Golden GaPa Holiday Apartments”?

☐ Booking.com ☐ Trip Advisor ☐ Search engines in Internet ☐ Golden GaPa website

☐ Travel Agency ☐ Friends and/or relatives ☐ Other _____

7. How many times have you visited Golden GaPa Apartments before?

☐ It is my first time ☐ 2-5 times ☐ More than 5 times

9. What were the main reasons to choose our apartment?

☐ Good location ☐ Room prices ☐ Additional services provided (laundry, kitchen etc.)

☐ Recommendations ☐ I have a good experience at this apartment

Something else, what? _____

10. How did you book this apartment?

☐ Booking.com ☐ TripAdvisor ☐ Goldengapa.de ☐ E-mail ☐ Phone ☐ Directly in the office

☐ Travel Agency

11. Did the apartment meet your expectations? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If Not, why? _____

12. Please, evaluate the following statements about the quality of hotel services

Services	1= totally disagree 4= totally agree				
	1	2	3	4	Do not know
Check-in and out, key delivery are easy and fast					
Staff is responsive and friendly					
Staff language skills are good					
Interior design is modern					
Rooms are well equipped					
Cleanliness of the rooms is satisfactory					
Utilities work properly (electricity, heating etc.)					
Location is convenient					
Price-quality ratio is excellent (value for money)					
There are all required accessories in apartment (towels, soap, etc.)					
Free parking is available					
Wi-Fi works properly					

13. Would you like to have not only kitchen, but also breakfast or dinner?

☐ Yes ☐ No

14. What would you like to improve in our service?**15. Comments**

Thank you very much for your help!

Questionnaire in German

Der “Golden GaPa Holiday Apartments” Fragebogen

Sehr geehrter Gast, bitte, sagen Sie uns anhand dieses Fragebogens, wie es Ihnen bei uns gefallen hat. Mit diesem Fragebogen möchten wir eventuelle von uns nicht erkannte Mängel aufdecken, damit wir zukünftig noch bessere Leistungen für Sie erbringen können. Ihre Meinung ist uns wichtig!

1. Geschlecht

☐ Männlich ☐ Weiblich

2. Alter

☐ 18-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ 55 und älter

3. Heimatland

☐ Deutschland ☐ die Golf Staaten (Kuwait, Oman, OAE, KSA) ☐ die USA ☐ Russland ☐ China ☐ Sonstiges _____

4. Zweck Ihres Besuchs

☐ Tourismus ☐ Business ☐ Sonstiges _____

5. Dauer Ihres Aufenthalts

☐ 1 Nacht ☐ 2-4 Nächte ☐ 5-7 Nächte ☐ Mehr als 1 Woche

6. Woher haben Sie von unseren Golden GaPa Ferienwohnungen erfahren?

☐ Booking.com ☐ Trip Advisor ☐ Suchmaschinen im Internet ☐ Golden GaPa Webseite

☐ Reisebüro ☐ Familie und Freunde, Bekannte ☐ Sonstiges _____

7. Wie viel Mal haben Sie schon GoldenGaPa Ferienwohnungen besucht?

☐ Ich bin zum ersten Mal ☐ 2-5 Mal ☐ Mehr als 5 Mal

9. Warum haben Sie unsere Ferienwohnung ausgewählt?

☐ Gute Lage ☐ Preis ☐ Extra Leistungen (Küche, Waschmaschine usw.) ☐ Bewertungen ☐ Ich habe schon eine gute Erfahrung ☐ Sonstiges _____

10. Wie haben Sie diese Ferienwohnung gebucht?

☐ Booking.com ☐ TripAdvisor ☐ Goldengapa.de ☐ E-mail ☐ Telefon ☐ Direkt im Büro ☐ Reisebüro

11. Hat die Ferienwohnung Ihre Erwartungen erfüllt? ☐ Ja ☐ Nein

Wenn nicht, warum? _____

12. Bitte, bewerten Sie die folgenden Aussagen über die Qualität der Serviceleistungen

Dienstleistungen	1= völlig anderer Meinung 4= völlig zustimmen				
	1	2	3	4	Ich weiß nicht
Schlüsselübergabe, Anreise und Abreise ist schnell und einfach					
Personal ist freundlich und hilfsbereit					
Sprachkenntnisse des Personals sind gut					
Die innere Ausstattung ist modern					
Die Zimmer sind gut ausgestattet					
Die Wohnung ist sauber					
Alle Geräte funktionieren richtig (so wie Heizung, Elektro usw)					
Die Lage ist gut					
Gutes Preis-Leistungsverhältniss					
Alles Nötige vorhanden (Badetücher, Seife, etc)					
Freie Parkplatz					
WLAN funktioniert gut					

13. Möchten Sie nicht nur die Küche haben, sondern auch Frühstück oder Abendessen inklusiv?

☐ Ja ☐ Nein

14. Was möchten Sie in unserem Service verbessern?**15. Bemerkungen**

Vielen Dank für Ihre Hilfe!