

The Role of Accommodation in Tourism

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Abstract: Accommodation is a dwelling; which tourists can use for temporary lodging. It is a place (such as a room or a suite in a hotel) wherein a tourist can stay and receive other services (dry-cleaning, room service etc.).

Keywords: Hotels, Hostels, Motels, Reception, Housekeeping.

Introduction. Tourism and travel go hand in hand. You might travel for miles to get to your intended destination as a tourist. While countries are now almost entirely interconnected by the airline industry, some are very far from each other. The accommodation provides an option for when you have to rest after taking a long flight. An illustration of this is the many hotels that are strategically built around airports. Serviced accommodation means that members of staff are available on the premises to provide services such as cleaning, meals and room service. Tourists will be charged for these services even if it hasn't been put into use. Non-serviced accommodations only furnish beds and provided on a rental basis, normally for a unit comprising several beds such as a cottage, apartment or caravan.

Due to the enormous increase in the tourism industry, standards, especially those of smaller establishments, have improved drastically. For the sake of greater comparability and distinction, rating systems have been introduced, with the 'one to five stars classification' being most common. For instance, most people recognise 5 star hotels as excellently serviced, exceptionally clean and tidy with housekeeping staff on call for 24 hours and updated luxurious décor plus a wide range of facilities on offer. On the other hand, a 3 star hotel will have fewer facilities, slightly outdated décor and more limited services such as a limited 24 hour room service menu instead of the entire restaurant menu.

The number of amenities and the range and types of services usually indicate the cost and quality of hotels.

- Holiday village or camp is an establishment providing limited accommodation services, which has an enclosed area for tents and/or caravans, parking sites for motor vehicles and/or dwelling houses (bungalows).
- Visitor's apartment is an accommodation establishment with food-preparing facilities which is rented out.
- Bed and breakfast means accommodation services at a private farm, house or apartment which includes breakfast.
- En-suite bathrooms
- Telephone
- Alarm clock
- Television
- Widely scoped Internet connectivity
- Food and drink supplied by a mini-bar/ mini-refridgerator

- Appliances for making tea/coffee

Accommodation is an essential part of the tourism industry. It provides travelers with a place to stay during their trip, and it can be a major factor in determining whether or not they enjoy their experience. Accommodations range from luxury hotels to budget hostels, so there are options for all types of travelers. Good accommodation can make visitors feel comfortable and welcome, while bad accommodation can ruin an otherwise great vacation. Accommodation also helps create jobs in the hospitality sector which is important for local economies around the world that rely on tourism income.

Accommodation performs an important function within both the context of rural and urban tourism. It provides the opportunity for visitors to stay for a length of time to enjoy the locality and its attractions, while their spending contributes to the local economy. Accommodation forms a base for the tourist's exploration of the urban and non-urban environments. The tendency for establishments to locate in urban areas preclude peripheral opportunities from expansion thus intensifying their need to find a relevant modus operandi rather than relying on what happens in the metropolitan areas and within established urban tourism initiatives.

Generally, accommodation do not attract tourist on its own right, rather they provide support services that are the core element of tourism industry. It can thus be argued that accommodation does not generate the tourist's motivation for travelling. The motivation to travel is usually led by the desire to experience a wider tourism product at a particular resort or locality with accommodation as one of the crucial tourism product. Accommodation as a tourism product has to reflect the vital components of any business product. For sustainability, a product has to be well positioned or located. The location needs to be accessible in terms of transport, information technology, and infrastructure. Location often determines the appeal and accessibility of properties. Typically the distance decay principle applies to decision making when considering accommodation locations. However, accommodation is an integral part of the over all tourism infrastructure as without it tourists will not visit the location. There are situations where its provision has dominated development plans. Moreover, it also assists in attracting wider investment in the tourism product at the locality. Some scholars agree that accommodation could feature as an element in wider economic development strategies but it needs to play a primary and varied role as a successful tourism product too. It is difficult to generali'e about the proportion of total tourist expenditure that is allocated to accommodation because this varies greatly, accommodation type and nature of product purchased. A generally accepted estimate is that a third of the total trip expenditure is allocated to this sector. This figure decreases in the case of fully inclusive packages. In addition, accommodation acts as a catalyst for a range of additional sales opportunities within the complex tourism and hospitality business. Casino hotels have discounted accommodation in anticipation of generating considerable profit from customers at the gaming tables, while golfing hotels may seem to generate good profits from green fees rather than room revenues. Indeed, accommodation pricing in general is a complex and sometimes controversial area in tourism industry.

Accommodation is the largest and arguably the most important sub-sector of the tourism industry. It is large and highly diverse. Together with the transport industry, accommodation industry caters for international tourists, regional tourists and national tourists as well as locally based tourists. In a way, it meets the needs of virtually all tourism market groups. The rapid change within this sector of tourism does not only bring fierce competition, but it also brings about new products and new servicesstandards. It is the new product, with new service standards that becomes the focal point of this article. Challenges posed by technological development within the accommodation sector of the industry will still be addressed from different perspective.

Literature review: Accommodation is actually one of the vital sectors of the global tourism industry that contributes a reasonable percentage to overall tourism income. Traditionally, graded hotel accommodation was viewed as a tourist-attracting business but nowadays things have changed

drastically. Hotels are nothing more than accommodation facilities at a destination and are graded according to the nature and quality of accommodation. According to Abram, et al. (1997) tourists seek from the tourism site both authenticity and some elements of fun and relaxation. This is exactly what most hotels strive to provide. It can therefore be assumed that hotels receive a bigger share of tourism generated economic output than smaller institutions. The core findings in the work of Beaver (2002) reveal that the growth of small tourism accommodations is often constrained by the power and dominance that is enjoyed by the so-called large enterprises. Nevertheless, hotel accommodation remains the dominant sector within all tourism enterprises. As tourism grew, tourists could be found in almost every accessible corner of the world. Their presence everywhere gradually led to different types of tourism accommodation facilities emerging (e.g. guesthouses, resorts, caravan parks, B&B establishments and lodges) to offer experiences of a different nature in response to a growing clientele that was beginning to look for something different for a variety of reasons. The large accommodation enterprise is not found in every tourist's field of interest. Small, family-owned operations are nowadays common in most countries of the world. Unfortunately, researchers have largely concentrated on graded hotels while ignoring the small-scale tourism accommodation providers that are fast becoming the preferred accommodation choice of many tourists. Studies undertaken by scholars like Abram, et al. (1997) and Singh, Timothy and Dowling (2003), show that only establishments with 30- bedrooms or more represent a typical hotel establishment. This view is in 3 contradiction with contemporary practice. Most recently, in many parts of the world, including South Africa, the accommodation sector has diversified in type, size and function. Accommodation with 10 to 15 bedrooms is sometimes classified as a hotel rather than as a guesthouse. However, there are many misconceptions around classifying tourism accommodation.

According to George (2001), some of the big hotels are even tailoring their products and services to meet their threshold market. For example, although part of South Africa's Gambling Act 33 of 1996 restricts the number of casinos, there is a suspicion that there are some big hotels operating under the guise of a different name (Rogerson: 2005). Branded multiple operators can offer a range of products from budget to luxury, medium to small size tourist accommodation exacerbating competition that has developed between large, medium and small scale tourism accommodation enterprises. On the other hand, an important survival-strategy for small, independent hotels is to be a member of a marketing consortium representing similar operations at a national or international level. At local level, the best strategy for survival could involve adopting a strategic plan that identifies a specific niche market at the best possible locality.

Conclusion. The above discussion shows that accommodation is the largest and arguably the most important sub-sector of the tourism industry. It is large and highly diverse. Together with the transport industry, the accommodation industry caters for international tourists, regional tourists, and national tourists as well as locally based tourists. In a way, it meets the needs of virtually all tourism market groups. The different categories of tourism accommodation were identified and confirmed by different scholars. Looking at all the different categories that are given in the above review only two broad categories can still identify the formal multinational category and informal localized category.

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