

EXPLORING THE SATISFACTION AND DISSATISFACTION FACTORS DERIVED FROM FOOD AND BEVERAGE SERVICES OF THERMAL HOTELS

Ozan KAYA^a

^aAssistant Professor, Mugla Sitki Kocman University, 48600, Mugla, Turkey, ozankaya@mu.edu.tr

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Abstract

The increase in supply and demand in thermal tourism has led to the intensification of competition. This situation causes the thermal hotels to spend more effort on issues such as understanding customer expectations and providing customer satisfaction. Food and beverage services have great importance in all areas of tourism as well as in thermal hotels. Thus, the main purpose of the study is to reveal the factors affecting the tourists' satisfaction or dissatisfaction in food and beverage services in thermal hotels. The research was conducted in thermal hotels in Denizli, Turkey. Tourists' online reviews on TripAdvisor were analysed by content analysis. The findings clearly show the main areas of satisfaction of the food and beverage services in the thermal hotels as taste of food, employees, quality of food and activities in the restaurants. However, the main areas where the online reviewers are dissatisfied are high price, variety of food, capacity for restaurants and freshness of food. Then, one-way ANOVA was performed to determine whether satisfaction levels of food and beverage service has an affect on overall hotel performance in the different categories of review. Results show the strong relationship between customers' satisfaction on food and beverage services and overall thermal hotel satisfaction.

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Keywords: thermal tourism, tourist satisfaction, food and beverage services, online review.

INTRODUCTION

The rising tendency in global tourism demand and revenues has led to developed and developing countries to take tourism into their agenda to receive more tourists and tourism income. Similarly, today's tourism professionals also focus on alternative types of tourism by creating product diversification away from sea-sun-sand-based tourism (Kaya, 2017). Thermal tourism, which has seen significant developments throughout the world in recent years, has emerged from this situation.

Thermal springs have been used for having a healthy life for thousands of years (LaMoreaux, 2005). Today, thermal spring waters are used to treat discomforts, reduce stress levels, and maintain beauty and well-being (Erfurt-Cooper & Cooper, 2009). Therefore, the alternative uses of thermal waters are important in today's tourism industry. To support this, there is a consensus among researchers that health and health-related tourism activities and

tourism movements are on the rise (Harmsworth, 2004; Gligorijevic & Petrovic, 2010; Hudson & Li, 2012).

With the increase in the tourism demand and supply of thermal tourism, the competition has been intensified (Fontanari & Kern, 2003). The thermal hotels offer both the services provided by the classical hotel companies and the health and special services required by thermal tourism. Especially, the types of services offered by thermal hotels and the contents of these services are very important for the thermal tourists (Lagrosen & Lagrosen, 2016). In this respect, the increasing demand for thermal hotels and the increasing number of thermal hotels reveal the necessity of products and services that are not possible to be imitated by their competitors (Emir & Paşaoğlu, 2013). Within this context, food and beverage (F&B) services in thermal hotels are one of the most prominent parts for the thermal tourists due to their basic and special nutritional needs for thermal tourists' health conditions and their F&B services expectation distinguishes from average hotel visitors (Emir & Paşaoğlu, 2013; Giritlioglu, Jones & Avcikurt, 2014). However, while much is known about the factors affecting tourist satisfaction in F&B services in other hotel types (Smith & Puczkó, 2009; Saar, 2010; Lagrosen & Lagrosen, 2016) little is known about factors affecting thermal hotel visitors F&B satisfaction (Giritlioglu et al., 2014). Current study aims to fill the gap in the literature by an empirical study that focused on thermal hotels F&B services. Once the thermal hotel management knows factors affecting the tourists' satisfaction or dissatisfaction in F&B services, the management will be able to compete with their competitors by having the opportunity to offer unique experiences to their guests. Therefore, the subsequent sections of the research are structured in conceptual framework, methodology, analysis, results and discussion, and conclusion.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Thermal tourism

Health and wellness tourism has become an international trend for consumers who want to increase their welfare. These tourism types cover travels to protect or enhance one's personal well-being (Stará & Peterson, 2017). However, thermal tourism includes tourism movements that are made to use thermal waters for health, wellness, entertainment, rest, beauty etc. In this context, thermal tourism referred as a sub-sector of health tourism based on the idea of using thermal waters for health and wellbeing (Azakli, 2012).

Nowadays, individuals participate in thermal tourism activities in order to treat various illnesses, reduce the existing stress levels and to protect their vitality (Giritlioğlu, 2013). Thermal baths and thermal tourism have a much closer relationship to environmental tourism and human health than mass tourism. In fact, thermal destinations allow places to develop locally. For this reason, thermal tourism activities lead to the development of local economies (Zollo, Simonetti, Salsano, & Rueda-Armengot, 2015). Similarly, Araujo, Paiva, Ribeiro, & Coutinho (2015) examine thermal tourism as a tool to contribute in the development of the regions by eliminating the inter-regional economic asymmetries. Besides the economic contribution to regions, main thermal tourism features as follows (Zengin & Eker, 2016);

- Thermal tourism serves both ill and healthy people.
- In order to have thermal tourism in a region, it is necessary to have a thermal source.
- Thermal facilities should offer all the features in terms of technical, geological, hygienic, health and aesthetic facilities.
- Thermal tourism provides fitness, leisure, and relaxation beside healing effect.
- Thermal tourism is a tourism type that can be done for all the year round.
- Thermal tourism is a type of tourism that requires expertise.
- Thermal tourism is a high-income type of tourism.
- In thermal tourism, the length of stay depends on the healing process.
- Enterprises operating within the scope of thermal tourism have higher costs.
- Thermal tourism is a type of tourism that builds a habit in tourists.

These features of thermal tourism make it more attractive than other tourism types. In addition, the level of pressure and stress created by today's business life is causing individuals to seek relaxation opportunities. Thermal tourism is the leading option for the people who want to resist the stress of their daily life or treat certain diseases (Türksoy & Türksoy, 2010; Giritlioğlu, 2013; Giritlioglu et al., 2014).

Thermal tourism in the World and Turkey

Tourism and hospitality are among the world's fastest growing industries (25 million tourists in 1950 and 1235 million tourists in 2016). All countries want to get higher shares from this growing market (UNWTO, 2017). Many countries in the world are popular tourism destinations not only because of their interesting landscapes and extraordinary natural scenery but also because of their natural and hot mineral thermal waters (Erfurt-Cooper & Cooper, 2009).

Thermal waters have been used for having a healthy life since the ancient era (Kervankıran, 2016). Today, thermal spring waters are used to treat discomforts, reduce stress levels, and maintain beauty and well-being. Contemporary life conditions make using of thermal waters more popular than in any period of the history. Therefore, the alternative uses of thermal waters are important in today's tourism industry.

There is a consensus among researchers that health and health-related tourism activities and tourism movements are on the rise. That is why demand for thermal tourism has been increasing globally for over 20 years and it is one of the fastest-growing sub-sectors of health tourism (Erfurt-Cooper & Cooper, 2009; Kovács, Bacsı, & Lőke, 2012; Giritlioglu et al., 2014; Costa, Quintela, & Mendes, 2015; Kervankıran, 2016). For example, over 15 million people visit thermal destinations in Italy for health and well-being purposes. Italy reached 4 billion Euros in 2009, with more than 30,000 wellness-related enterprises in 2009 (Zollo et al., 2015). Similarly, every year more than 10 million tourists visit Germany and Hungary for thermal purposes (Kervankıran, 2016). Mainil, Eijgelaar, Klijs, Nawijn, & Peeters (2017) noted that in 2014, 61.8 million people visited the European Union (EU) for health, spa/thermal and healthcare services as part of health tourism. Surprisingly, only four countries, namely Germany, France, Poland, Italy and Sweden share more than three-fourths of the total health tourism income (46.9 billion euros in 2014) in the EU. In addition, the global thermal and spa industry revenues reached \$ 150 billion in 2015 (Global Wellness Institute, 2017).

Developed countries have a bigger share of the thermal related touristic movement than developing countries due to their early recognition of the global trend towards thermal tourism. Turkey is a classic example of this situation. According to the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources of Turkey (2018), Turkey is rich in geothermal energy resources. It ranks fifth in the world for geothermal heat and thermal spring applications (Kilic, 2016). Similarly, Giritlioglu et al., (2014) argue that Turkey with over one thousand hot springs is poorly developed in thermal tourism. Kervankıran (2016) points out that people who live in Turkey have traditionally used thermal spring water for health purposes since the Hittite era but the increase in investments related to thermal tourism after 2007. While the numbers of thermal hotels were 78 in 2006, with a bed capacity of 17,767, this number increased to 160 and 54,962, respectively, in 2016 (see Table 1).

Table 1 Number of thermal hotels in Turkey

| | 2006 | | 2010 | | 2016 | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|
| | Hotel | Bed | Hotel | Bed | Hotel | Bed |
| Tourism Operation Licensed | 37 | 9,736 | 50 | 15,796 | 75 | 25,353 |
| Tourism Investment Licensed | 8 | 2,438 | 15 | 7,757 | 44 | 23,218 |
| Licensed by Municipality | 33 | 5,593 | 35 | 6,174 | 41 | 6,391 |
| TOTAL | 78 | 17,767 | 100 | 29,727 | 160 | 54,962 |

Source: Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey (2017). <http://yigm.kulturTurizm.gov.tr/TR,9579/turizm-tesisleri.html>

Importance of food and beverage services in thermal hotels

Thermal hotels have a primary role in the development of thermal tourism in a region (Boekstein, 2014). However, the increase in the demand for thermal tourism is reflected itself in the supply side of thermal hotels. As the number of thermal hotels increases, the competition among the hotels is also intensifying. This situation requires that the products and services of the thermal hotels be unique.

Thermal hotels are crucial for tourists who visit the region to get thermal services (Bakucz & Flink, 2012). Therefore, to ensure tourist satisfaction, not only thermal services but also non-thermal services should be qualified. Customer satisfaction has been an important part of marketing and management literature for decades, as satisfied customers can provide long-term benefits, including loyalty and profitability (Liu & Jang, 2009). Consumer satisfaction is mainly the result of cognitive comparisons of product-related expectations and comparisons of business performance (Bigné, Matilla, & Andreu, 2008). Consumer satisfaction occurs when the product's performance after use exceeds its pre-use expectations and consumer dissatisfaction if product performance is below consumer expectations (Oliver, 1980). In thermal hotels, the similar process operates in terms of tourist satisfaction (Chua, Lee, Goh, & Han 2015).

Lebe (2006) points out the F&B services as important as health-related services provided in thermal hotels. Similarly, Giritlioglu et al. (2014) state that thermal hotels should provide special F&B services to their visitors to ensure successful thermal hotel experiences. Andaleeb and Conway (2006) state that department satisfactions based on each service encounter lead to overall satisfaction with the hotels. It is also apparent, that if hotel and restaurant managers really want to gain a competitive advantage, they must endeavour to provide customer satisfaction.

F&B service is one of the critical elements in both land and sea-based tourism types (Kaya, 2017). For this reason, meeting the expectations of tourists for F&B service in thermal hotels

has an important role in terms of service quality and overall satisfaction. From another point of view, due to basic and special nutritional needs of thermal tourists' health conditions, F&B services are the essential part of thermal hotels in customer satisfaction (Saar, 2010). This reveals the complementary nature of F&B services in customer satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

Research objectives

In contemporary competitive conditions, defining the customer expectations is a critical prerequisite for thermal hotels to satisfy their customer. For customer satisfaction, F & B services have a primary role in completing health services, and meeting specific nutritional needs of customers visiting thermal hotels for health or well-being (Alén, Fraiz, & Rufin, 2006; Giritlioglu et al., 2014). Therefore, examining tourist' F&B service experiences in thermal hotels from online booking websites can be an effective way to obtaining valuable insight. The specific objectives of the research are:

- (1) to reveal the factors affecting the tourists' satisfaction or dissatisfaction in F&B services of thermal hotels; and
- (2) to identify effects of satisfaction levels from F&B services to overall hotel satisfaction.

Data collection

As well known, customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction arises from a comparison of consumers' after-consumption evaluation with consumers' product-related expectations (Liu & Jang, 2009). Today, one of the most practical ways to achieve this is to check online reviews. Therefore, online travel reviews are emerging as a powerful source of information affecting tourists' pre-purchase evaluation of a hotel organization (Browning, So & Sparks, 2013; Mauri & Minazzi, 2013). Growing importance and effect of electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM) directs the researchers to online reviews. In addition, these reviews and ratings indicate the tourists' degree of satisfaction with the hotel or related department/s (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008; Gu & Ye, 2014; Schuckert, Lu, & Law, 2015).

The data used for this research were collected from TripAdvisor. The research analysed and evaluated the travellers' reviews about the F&B services provided by the thermal hotels on TripAdvisor. The reason for choosing TripAdvisor was that it is one of the leaders in social media travel content providing reviews of the hotel, places, and restaurants (Schuckert et al., 2015). In 2017, Trip Advisor's official page posted more than 500 million reviews and

more than 390 million travellers were using the page (<https://tripadvisor.mediaroom.com/tr-about-us>, 2017).

The sample of the study include 4 or 5 star thermal hotels operating in Denizli, Turkey, According to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey, there are one 4 star and six 5 star thermal hotels operating in Denizli (<http://yigm.kulturturizm.gov.tr>, 2017). All the hotels are registered with Trip Advisor, and the reviews and ratings of all F&B services are accessible through Trip Advisor. For the research sample, 3,573 online reviews, submitted between May 2006 and September 2017, were assessed. In the translation and evaluation of reviews other than English, Turkish and German languages, assistance was obtained from professional translation agencies.

Research design

In this research, a mixed-methods design was employed to answer each research question. In a mixed-methods design, both qualitative and quantitative methods are used together (Liu, Kim, & Penning-Gray, 2015). This method includes transformative designs (quantization process) that the qualitative data are converted (quantized) into quantitative data to use in suitable statistical techniques (Driscoll, Appiah-Yeboah, Salib, & Rupert, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

For data analysis four types of variables were used for evaluation; 1. Nationality, 2. Travel types, 3. Overall evaluation score for the hotel in TripAdvisor (From 1 to 5), 4. Reviews about F&B services in the thermal hotel. In the qualitative phase of the study, following the previous studies (e.g., Stepchenkova & Zhan, 2013; Berezan, Raab, Tanford, & Kim, 2015; Wang & Hung, 2015) a content analysis was employed which is a useful technique to analyse customer reviews and consumer comments (Berezan et al., 2015). Therefore, reviews on F&B services in the thermal hotel were coded and classified under four categories to understand the relation between overall scores and F&B review categories. These categories are 1. No review about F&B services, 2. Negative review about F&B services, 3. Neutral review about F&B services and 4. Positive review on F&B services. Then, in the quantitative phase One-Way ANOVA test is used to determine whether there are any statistically significant differences between the means (overall hotel score) of categories.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As previously mentioned, this study aims to identify the factors affecting the tourists' satisfaction or dissatisfaction in F&B services of thermal hotels and, the effects of satisfaction

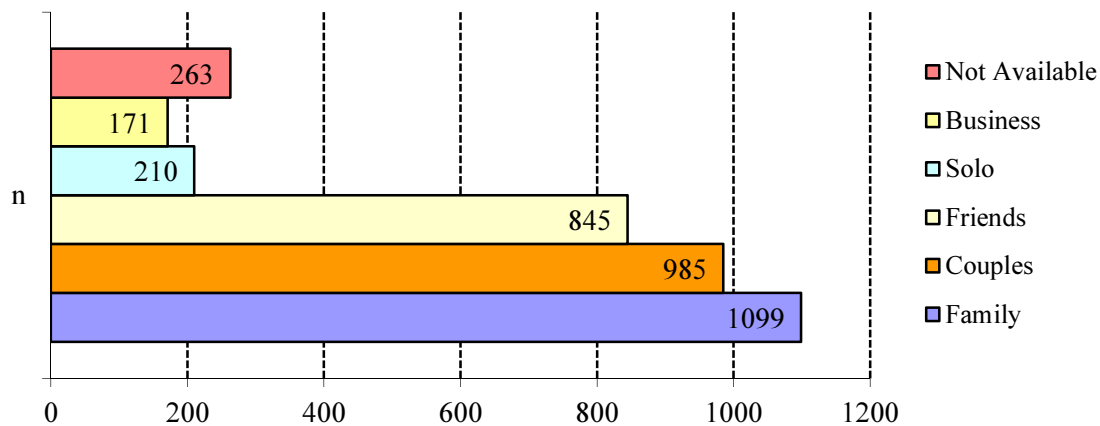
levels from F&B services to overall hotel satisfaction. For this purpose, 3,573 online reviews were analysed in the study. Table 2 shows the nationality distribution of visitors who stayed in thermal hotels in Denizli, Turkey. As seen in Table 2 the majority of the visitors of thermal hotels are domestic visitors. However, Spain (219), USA (204), England (180) and Japan (156) are the main tourist generating countries for thermal hotels in Denizli.

Table 2 Nationality of visitors

| Nationality | n | % |
|---------------|--------------|------------|
| Turkey | 1,325 | 37,1 |
| Spain | 219 | 6,1 |
| USA | 204 | 5,7 |
| England | 180 | 5,0 |
| Japan | 156 | 4,4 |
| Argentina | 144 | 4,0 |
| Italy | 132 | 3,7 |
| Australia | 125 | 3,5 |
| Russia | 85 | 2,4 |
| Germany | 78 | 2,2 |
| Not Available | 216 | 6,0 |
| Others | 709 | 19,9 |
| TOTAL | 3,573 | 100 |

Figure 1 shows the travel types of thermal hotel visitors. According to Figure 1, most of the visitors coming to thermal hotels travel with their families (30.8%), couples follow this group with 27.6% and 23.6% of the visitors travel with their friends.

Figure 1 Travel types of thermal hotel visitors (N=3,573)

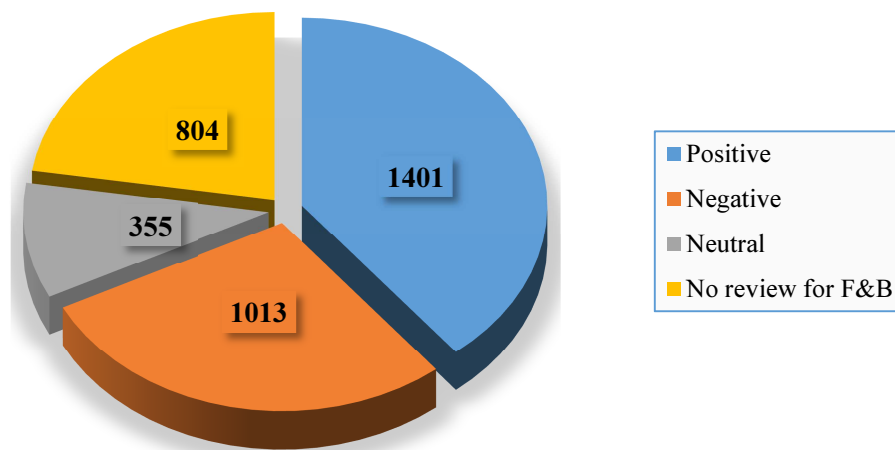


Content analysis of reviews

According to the descriptive analysis of reviews, the distribution to categories is as follows; 804 (22.5%) of 3,573 reviewers did not submit any review on F&B services, however, there are 1,013 (28.4%) negative reviews, 355 (9.9%) neutral reviews (e.g. restaurant was crowded but meals were tasty) and 1,401 (39.2%) positive reviews on F&B services in thermal hotels.

Figure 2 shows how F&B services are important for visitors of thermal hotels with a total of 78.5% evaluation rate. One of the purposes of the study is to reveal the factors affecting the tourists' satisfaction or dissatisfaction in F&B services of thermal hotels. However, neutral reviews contain both positive and negative opinions about F&B services in thermal hotels. Therefore, each positive and negative evaluation item for the F&B services in the neutral reviews has been distributed to the positive and negative categories to identify all factors that affect tourists' satisfaction or dissatisfaction in F&B services. Thus, positive reviews increased to 1,756 and negative reviews to 1,368.

Figure 2 Review categories



Satisfaction factors

According to the content analysis of reviews, there are four main factors affecting the tourists' satisfaction in F&B services in thermal hotels. As seen in Table 3 these factors are taste of food, employee, quality of food, and activities in restaurants.

Table 3 Factors affecting tourist satisfaction in the services F&B (N=1,756)

| Factor | n | %* |
|--------------------------------|-------|------|
| Taste of food | 1,258 | 71,6 |
| Employee | 812 | 46,2 |
| Quality of food | 657 | 37,4 |
| Activities in the restaurant/s | 482 | 27,4 |

*Respondent could mention a number of responses.

Taste of food: 1,258 of 1,756 (71.6%) of the positive reviews mentions taste of food which is a critical factor for F&B services to satisfying both national and international tourists in the thermal hotel. Basil & Basil (2009) also found taste as a major indicator of satisfaction in their

research with 95% in upscale restaurants. Similarly, Clark (1998) finds that taste of food is an important factor in consumer food choice. In this research 71.6% ratio proves that taste of food is a critical factor for satisfying tourists who use F&B services of thermal hotels. Some of the reviews are as follow;

“the evening meal was a buffet, the range was ok and the food was tasty” England, Score: 4, Travels with family.

“The service is great and the food tastes good”, Thailand, Score:5, Couple.

“Food was plentiful & good tasty meals”, Turkey, Score:5, Travels with family.

“The buffet breakfast is really tasty” USA, Score: 4, Solo.

“...There is a dish I highly recommend of flat bread with spinach and cheese rolled up, so tasty” Canada, Score:5, Travels with family.

Employee: The importance of employees in the service sector has been known for a long time (Kuo, 2007). Many studies proved the existing direct relationship between employee or employee-related factors and customer satisfaction (Gould-Williams, 1999; Winstead, 2000; Keung, 2000). Accordingly, the employee is also revealed as a satisfaction-providing factor in F&B services in thermal hotels. Among 1,756 positive reviews, 812 mentioned employees. Such as;

“..... brilliant staff was great and it was just a great stop over....” Australia, Score:5, Travels with friends.

“...Foods are delicious and staffs are very helpful...”, Turkey, Score:5, Travels with family.

“...The restaurant staff were very helpful and very kind”, Spain, Score:4, Couple.

“Waiters in the bar were perfect, meals were delicious”. Canada, Score:5, Solo.

Quality of food: Quality of food is an important success factor for both restaurants and hotels (Giritlioglu, et al., 2014). This factor can also be applied to thermal hotel F&B services. Mela (1999) states the quality of food is an indicator of matching the consumers’ expectations in restaurants. According to content analysis, 657 of 1,756 reviewers mentioned it positively.

“The hotel provide with breakfast and diner included and even this is like a buffet style, you will find there a very good quality of food with so much choices it can satisfy all the tastes”, Canada, Score: 5, friend.

“The hotel caters for large bus tours so the buffet had a good variety of food at a good quality for both the evening meal and breakfast”, Australia, Score:4, Solo.

“The food was healthy and good quality”, Turkey, Score:5 , family.

“Food quality is very good and it makes me happy”, Singapore, Score:5, Couple.

Activities in the restaurant/s: The main motivations of visitors to thermal hotels can be considered as health, refreshment or relaxing (Kelly, 2012). However, unexpectedly, many tourists (482 in 1,756) were satisfied with activities in restaurants.

“...the lounge area was great with a large open fire and live music..”, Ireland, Score:5, Couple.

“Dinner outdoors was a perfect setting - there was a live "Turkish Pancake" Counter serving excellent pancakes! The music was soft & soothing”, India, Score:5, friends.

“Dinner for group guests was served next to cold water swimming pool, with wide variety of food, and live music from keyboard playing good old time songs from the 60s-70s”, Italy, Score:4, family.

“There's live music and belly dance show after dinner”, Turkey, Score: 5, Business.

Dissatisfaction factors

The factors that cause dissatisfaction with F&B services in Thermal Hospitals were identified by content analysis in this study. In this context, four dissatisfaction factors were derived from the content analysis, including high price, variety of food, the capacity of restaurant/s, and freshness of food (Table 4).

Table 4 Factors causing tourist dissatisfaction in the F&B services (N=1,368)

| Factor | n | %* |
|------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| High price | 1,024 | 74.8 |
| Variety of food | 752 | 54.9 |
| The capacity of restaurant/s | 542 | 39.6 |
| Freshness of food | 412 | 30.1 |

*Respondent could mention a number of responses.

High price: The effect of the price on customer preferences and satisfaction is emphasized in many researches (Hill, Roshe, & Allen, 2007; Saraiva, Cid, & Baião, 2011; Rahman, Kalam, Rahman, & Abdullah, 2012; Gagić, Tešanović, & Jovičić, 2013). Particularly, unfair priced or high priced F&B affects customer satisfaction in a negative manner. In this research, during the content analysis process, it is understood that the hotels are usually operating half-board. It means that tourists pay for everything except breakfast and dinner. Especially the beverage prices of all hotels disturb visitors extremely. 1,024 of 1,368 revivers' mentioned price related comment for F&B negatively, such as;

“Beverages were the most expensive we had come across, approx. 30% higher than everywhere else!” Argentina, Score:2, family.

“The buffet dinner was tasty with a good quality as was breakfast but I found the drinks prices high.” England, Score:3, Solo.

“All drinks and snacks double the price as bars and cafes outside and the cheapest bottle of wine being 35 euros” Turkey, Score:3, friend.

“They are demanding cash for drinks at the pool (who carries cash to the pool??) and at crazy prices; 9 euro for a beverage.” Canada, Score:2, family.

Variety of food: Variety of food in the menus suit individuals' daily life preferences in restaurants. In addition, Abbey, Wright, & Capra (2015) stated that the power to choose from the menu increases levels of individuals' food service satisfaction up to 30%. This factor not only includes the number of meals on buffet or menu but also includes alternative food options like vegetarian and dietary ones (Zhou, Ye, Pearce, & Wu, 2014). Variety of food related reviews consists 752 of 1,368 negative reviews.

“The food menu wasn't that great ...even though they served buffet but it lacked variety!” India, Score: 2, Couple.

“The buffet dinner and breakfast the food is tasty and for my wife who is a vegetarian there is no specific dishes.” Netherlands, Score:2, family.

“The food is tasteful but not plenty, vegetarian options are very poor.” USA, Score:2, Solo.

“...Limited food varieties served during dinner.....” Indonesia, Score: 2, Couple.

“...Food quality is good but for 5 star ,variety of foods is inadequate.” Turkey, Score:3, Business.

The capacity of restaurant/s: Noone and Mattila (2009) states that crowdedness is a negative factor for customers in perceiving the quality of restaurants. According to Toktassynova & Akbaba (2017) crowded service environment take the great portion (82.1%) of negative reviews in their study. Similarly, the capacity of restaurant/s is a dissatisfactory factor for thermal hotel customers', too (542 of 1,368). The following reviews depict it clearly.

“...Buffet: chicken and chips were OK, great salad selection, but restaurant was very crowded with group tours....” China, Score:2, Friends.

“The buffet hall is huge but it got messy with crowds, some food strewn on the floor.” Spain, Score: 3, family.

“...Buffet was crowded with people, pushing and shoving to get a crack at what was mostly mediocre food.” USA, Score:2, Solo.

“They do not re-set the tables at breakfast, so when my daughter and I came down at 8:30am after most of the big tour buses had gone we could not find a clean place to sit.” Argentina, Score:2, Family.

“restaurant is small. most of the tables are for big groups that is already reserved by the waiters.” Italy, Score:1, Couple.

Freshness of food: There is an increasing tendency towards consumption of fresh F&B by contemporary consumers (Melia, 2011). This situation makes the consumer more sensitive to healthy and fresh food. It is a fact that, if tourists feel distrustful about healthiness or freshness of food, that reduces the satisfaction of F&B services (Hwang & Lorenzon, 2008). A few of the 412 (30.1%) negative comments about freshness of food can be found below.

“Breakfast served comes with very limited choice, no fresh fruits.” N.A., Score:1, Family.

“The dinner was cold, and after complaining about it and asking for new food, they took our plates, and literally microwaved it for us.” Germany, Score:1, Couple.

“breakfast is insufficient, no muesli, no fresh fruit juice, no fruits, no milk.” England, Score: 3, Friend.

“Food in the buffet was not inspiring or fresh.” Australia, Score:2, Solo.

“The food was cold and not fresh. However, you have to pay extra for everything, even for water.....” Canada, Score:1, Couple.

One-way ANOVA analysis

For the purposes of the study, one-way ANOVA was performed to determine whether satisfaction levels of F&B service has an affect on overall hotel performance. As mentioned in the previous sections, comments were divided into 4 categories but for the one-way ANOVA analysis, only three categories (negative, neutral and positive review) were taken into account to get a clear picture of comparison between review categories and overall hotel scores. Firstly, the homogeneity of the variance was checked by Levene’s test in order to identify the requirements for ANOVA (Levene=13.142; $p=0.068$). Then, One-way ANOVA was performed with hotel score as the dependent variable and review group as the fixed factor. In the cases where significant results have been obtained in ANOVA, Least Significant Difference (LSD) was applied to identify where differences lie between categories on hotel performance ($\alpha= 0.05$).

Table 5 ANOVA results

| Dependent Variable | Factor Variable | Mean* | SD | n | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|----------------|-------|-------------|--------|------|
| Hotel Score | Negative | 2.341 | 1.025 | 1,013 | | | | | |
| | Neutral | 3.476 | .921 | 355 | | | | | |
| | Positive | 4.434 | .712 | 1,401 | | | | | |
| Between Groups | | | | | 2,575.96 | 2 | 1,287.98 | 1717.3 | .000 |
| Within Groups | | | | | 2,074.51 | 2,766 | .75 | | |
| Total | | | | | 4,650.47 | 2,768 | | | |

* 1 = Terrible, 2 = Poor, 3 = Average, 4 = Very good to 5 = Excellent

Results (see Table 5) showed that there are significant differences ($F = 1717.3$; $p < 0.000$) in relation to review categories on hotel scores. According to this, the mean hotel scores of the negative reviews are at the lowest level (2.34) and it is followed by neutral reviews (3.47) and positive reviews (4.43) respectively. Moreover, the post hoc LSD test (Table 6) showed that all the review categories were significantly ($p < 0.000$) different from each other. Most researchers have examined the impact of F&B services on customer loyalty and customer satisfaction in hotel businesses and satisfaction with F&B services has been directly related to hotel satisfaction (Alén et al., 2006; Kundampully & Suhartanto, 2000; Acharya, Sengupta, & Mishra, 2011). Similarly, in this study, in a manner of conforming to descriptive statistics of review categories and ANOVA results, there is a strong relationship between customers' satisfaction on F&B services and overall thermal hotel satisfaction.

Table 6 Multiple comparisons (LSD).

| | (I) Group | (J) Group | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------|------------|------|
| Hotel Score | Negative | Neutral | -1.134* | .053 | .000 |
| | | Positive | -2.092* | .035 | .000 |
| | Neutral | Negative | 1.134* | .053 | .000 |
| | | Positive | -.957* | .051 | .000 |
| | Positive | Negative | 2.092* | .035 | .000 |
| | | Neutral | .957* | .051 | .000 |

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

CONCLUSION

F&B services are one of the most important parts of tourism industry. In addition, the F&B department is one of the most revenue-generating departments, as well as positively affecting customer loyalty and customer satisfaction in the hotel. This also applies to thermal hotels. Therefore, understanding visitor expectations and perceptions of F&B services is one of the critical factors in achieving customer satisfaction in the thermal hotel. This study contributes to tourism literature by revealing the satisfactory/dissatisfactory factors of F&B in thermal hotel visitors of Denizli, Turkey.

Unlike many other studies, the current research investigated the satisfactory and dissatisfactory factors of F&B services in the thermal hotel by examining the reviews of guests in TripAdvisor. In the study, firstly, the F&B related reviews were divided into three categories (negative, neutral and positive), then the comments in the neutral categories were

included in the positive and negative categories according to their contents. After the content analysis of the positive and negative reviews, there are 4 satisfied and 4 dissatisfied main factors identified. The satisfactory factors of F&B services in the thermal hotels were found as; taste of food, employees, quality of food and activities in the restaurants (e.g. live music). On the other hand, the main factors where the reviewers are dissatisfied were determined as; high price, variety of food (lack of vegetarian menu, steak menu etc.), capacity for restaurants (i.e. crowdedness in restaurants) and freshness of food. The results of this study are similar to the study of Giritlioglu et al., (2014). Accordingly, thermal hotel customers pay attention to tangible features of F&B services in both studies. Therefore, thermal hotel managers should pay particular attention to tangible characteristics of F&B services. These results contribute to increasing managerial success by guiding hotel managers with limited resources to which areas resources should be transferred. Moreover, the present study revealed the direct relationship between catering services and overall hotel satisfaction. This proves that F&B services are vital for the thermal hotel.

This study has some limitations that should be considered in the interpretation of the study. First of all, the current study is based on textual data collected from TripAdvisor, so some of the necessary details like demographic or tripographic information are lacked (Berezan et al., 2015). Future research, particularly for the case studies, may use reviews from other online sites and additional methods, to validate and extend these findings. Additionally, the current study only used the reviews of the tourists who stayed in the thermal hotels in Denizli, Turkey. Therefore, findings of F&B services in the thermal hotels cannot be generalised. In future research, data can be collected from different thermal cities to conducting a comparative analysis of competing cities.

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