

# Satisfaction of Tourist at the Tourist Destination Portorož - Piran

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## Abstract

In our research we measured tourist satisfaction at the destination Portorož - Piran. The survey was conducted with the continuous monitoring methodology, according to the criteria given by the Directorate for Tourism of Slovenia, along with their standardized questionnaire for tourist destinations, which is based on the world-renowned models of user satisfaction. We administered the questionnaires in the period of high season, during summer from June till September and in December 2013. Several factors were analysed: the socio-demographic structure of the tourists, their countries of origin, their main tourist motives for visiting this tourist destination, their sources of information about the resort, the frequency and length of the tourists' stay, their placement according to individual accommodation facilities, the tourists' therapeutic, sport, recreational and other needs, their satisfaction with health care and tourists' provisions, planned trips at the tourist destination and its surroundings. The goal of this paper is to determine the level of satisfaction of tourists at the tourist destination Portorož - Piran in the high season. In addition, we examined the theoretical knowledge, of renowned domestic and foreign experts, on the satisfaction of tourist and related factors, determined the level of tourist satisfaction and factors that influence the satisfaction of tourists in this destination, we identified the main tourist motives (desires and expectations), identified possible shortcomings in this tourist destination and developed recommendations for professionals.

**Keywords:** satisfaction, tourist destination, tourism, tourists, tourist offer, travel motives, quality of tourism services, sustainable development

**JEL classification:** L83, L84, Q26

## Introduction

Tourism is nowadays very important because besides earnings also offers many jobs, while providing visitors - tourists opportunities for rest, relaxation and sightseeing offered by a single tourist destination. Tourist destinations are becoming more attractive and have increasingly high quality offer, therefore also the demands and expectations of tourists are rising.

Customer satisfaction is one of the main objectives in the marketing, as the main key to achieving competitive advantage. The satisfaction of tourists should be included in the strategic and operational planning of tourist organisations. It is connected with the loyalty of destination, which means that satisfied tourists will be returning to this destination and recommend it to others (Tsiotsou, 2006, 19).

The increasing importance is attributed to tourist satisfaction and to the quality level offers of tourist destinations, so the tourist destinations have to successfully develop their offer according the principles of sustainable development. Jurinčič (2009) in his study confirmed that sustainable development is the most appropriate form of development of tourism in Slovenian Istria, because it takes into account both, environmental as well as economic and social aspects of development.

Identifying and monitoring the perception of the place and tourist satisfaction and the quality of the place helps us detecting new marketing opportunities or threats. In doing so, they should be given special attention and treatment particularly negative impressions of tourists who draw attention to weak points. This is necessary to adjust marketing activities and corrective measures.

In this article we have pursued the following objectives set:

- reviewed the relevant literature in the field of consumer satisfaction
- examined the theoretical knowledge of renowned domestic and foreign experts on the satisfaction of tourists and related factors
- examined the reasons that have a significant impact on tourist satisfaction
- determined the level of satisfaction of tourists in the tourist destination of Portorož - Piran
- identified and compared the level of satisfaction of tourists by nationality
- identified factors that influence the satisfaction of tourists at the tourist destination
- determined the characteristics of tourist trips
- identified the main tourist motives (desires and expectations of tourists)
- identified possible disadvantages of the tourist offer.

### *Satisfaction of Tourist – Model of Tourist Satisfaction*

Portorož - Portorose is one of the biggest tourist destinations in Slovenia and the most important tourist centre on the Slovenian coast. Portorož reputation has developed tourism here because of the mild climate, clean air and seawater and successful treatment with brine and saline mud (Žitko, 1996).

Portorož offers different types of accommodation, modern spas, an international airport, a large marina, sports facilities, cultural and convention center, casinos and entertainment, allowing guests a nice rest and relaxation (Vinčec, 2009, 119).

Due to the proximity of interesting towns and cities (such as Venice, Porec, Brioni, Pula, Trieste, Lipica, Postojna Cave, Bled, Ljubljana), it also provides a number of interesting excursions (Žitko, 1996, 32-33).

The satisfaction of tourists can be defined as the overall assessment of the tourist's experience of staying in a particular resort or destination. This is a general assessment of tourist's sense of satisfaction that arises from excess of expectations (Brenčič et al., 2007).

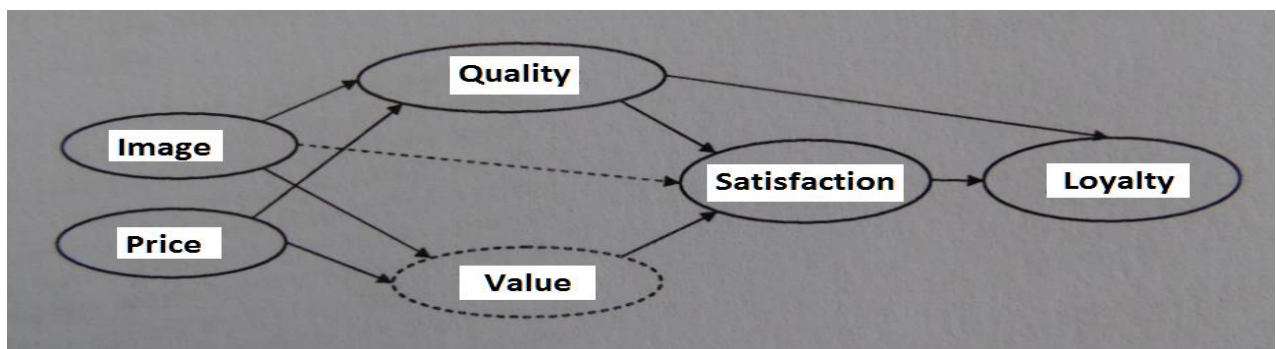
The satisfaction of tourists is also one of the most important indicators of performance and competitiveness of tourist destinations. Kotler (1998, 40) states, that satisfaction is the human sense, which is the result of a comparison between the expectations of a product or service and a real perception of it.

The satisfaction of tourists should be understood as one of the main goals of the business and as a source of competitive advantage as well as an investment that brings measurable business benefits. Direct benefits and factors that bring satisfaction are (Brenčič et al., 2007):

- increasing the volume of consumption,
- a higher level of loyalty,
- willingness to pay more with less sensitivity to the rise in prices,
- higher expectations and greater tolerance of errors,
- less sensitivity to the efforts of competitors,
- lower costs of acquiring new guests (compared to maintaining existing)
- lower operating costs with loyal guests over the long term,
- greater prestige tourist destination or company and
- greater willingness to recommend tourist town to friends and acquaintances.

Satisfaction has been studied from several angles and for different types of destinations. It has been suggested that emotions are those that mostly influence on tourist satisfaction (pleasure), followed by demographic variables (education, age, leisure activities), which were also identified as good predictors of satisfaction of tourists. The satisfaction of tourists should be determined with the extent of the expected desired value (loss, benefits) that during the visit is realized (Tsiotsou, 2006, 20).

Figure 1  
Model of Satisfaction of Tourists



Note: Key elements of the model, which served as the basis for the design of the questionnaire are as follows (Methodology for continuous monitoring of tourist satisfaction, 2007, 6): *IMAGE*: what makes tourists think about a particular resort (sensations, ideas, impressions and opinions of tourists on popularity, uniqueness and prestige tourist destination); *PRICE*: is appropriate or beneficial in the aspect of tourists; *QUALITY*: what is available in the tourist offer; it is the perceived quality of different aspects of the tourist offer (information, people, other facilities) and the perceived importance of the individual elements of the tourist offer specific tourist site; *VALUE*: what a tourist gets and what it means to him; a perceived "usefulness" value obtained for money and well-being; there is intellectually component (utility residence) and the emotional component (enthusiasm staying in resort); *SATISFACTION*: overall assessment experience to stay in a certain tourist destination; a general assessment of satisfaction, surpassing expectations and praise; *FIDELITY*: is a tourist intends to return and what he intends to say on; it is therefore a possibility of return visits and recommendations to friends and relatives.

Source: Methodology for the continuous monitoring of tourist satisfaction (Brenčič et al., 2007, 6)

## Methodology

In the empirical part of the thesis we analysed the satisfaction of tourists at the tourist destination Portorož - Piran. We used non-experimental research, the method of data collection was survey, and the technique of data collecting was questionnaire. The survey was conducted according to the Methodology for continuous monitoring of tourist satisfaction of the Ministry of Economy, Directorate for Tourism and their standardized, publicly accessible questionnaire for destination ([http://www.mgrt.gov.si/si/delovna\\_podrocja/turizem\\_in\\_internacionalizacija/turizem/zagotavljanje\\_kakovosti](http://www.mgrt.gov.si/si/delovna_podrocja/turizem_in_internacionalizacija/turizem/zagotavljanje_kakovosti)), based on the world-renowned models of satisfaction of consumers (mostly American – ACSI). Questionnaire was organized for the needs of our own research and has been prepared in Slovenian, English, Italian and German language.

The sample we used in our research were tourists in the tourist destination Portorož - Piran, who were here on vacation during the high season. The survey was conducted among tourists of different nationalities and took place in writing in TIC (tourist information centre) TIC Portorož and Piran – in cooperation with TZ (Tourist Association Portorož) and in hotels LifeClass Hotels & Spa. Data was collected during the summer season (1<sup>st</sup> June till 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013) and during the period of New Year holidays (from 15<sup>th</sup> December 2013 till 15<sup>th</sup> January 2014). Analysis of the primary data was carried out with the help of statistical program "SPSS" and used descriptive statistics, t-test and analysis of variance and factor analysis.

## Results

The statistics of visits in the year 2012 shows 408.625 arrivals per year in the destination Portorož - Piran and for the year 2013 shows 402.373 tourists arrivals. The expected rate was at least 0.1% response rate, or 403 responses to the survey. But the feedback rate of correct and fully filled questionnaires reached only 0.05 %.

In a survey that we conducted among tourists in the destination Portorož - Piran, we gained a total of 204 completed questionnaires. Interviewing at the tourist destination took place in two periods - during the Christmas holidays and the summer holidays, which coincides with the two peaks of the high tourist season in the destination Portorož - Piran.

Table 1

The Period of Implementation of the Survey

	Number of Units	Share
Winter	48	23,5
Summer	156	76,5
TOTAL	204	100,0

Note: Most (76.5 %) answers we gained in the implementation of the summer survey, while the remaining 23.5 % in performance during the winter survey. The disproportionate nature of the shares is not surprising since the majority of tourists visit the tourist resort Portorož - Piran during the summer season.

Source: Author's Research

Table 2

Gender of Respondents

	Number of Units	Share
Men	52	28,6
Women	130	71,4
TOTAL	182	100,0

Note: The study involved almost three quarters (71.4 %) of women and 28.6% men.

Source: Author's research

Easy comparison of averages shows that in the survey there are recorded only a slight difference in opinions according to gender. The arithmetic mean of satisfied surveyed men shows the score 4.71, the score of women only slightly higher 4.77 on a 5-point Likert scale. The statistical test of comparison of averages, i.e. t-test for independent samples we analyzed the difference of averages, but the statistics  $t = -0.733$  and  $sig = 0.465$  shows that women are not more satisfied with the visit of the tourist destination than men.

Table 3  
Satisfaction with the Destination (average values)

	N	Average	Standard Deviation
I am pleased that I decided to visit this tourist destination.	197	4,72	0,533
The quality of the offer of this tourist destination is very high.	188	4,32	0,714
The visit to this tourist destination exceeded my expectations.	191	4,25	0,806
I will return to this tourist destination.	164	4,32	0,886
I will recommend visiting this tourist destination to my friends and relatives.	196	4,51	0,727

Source: Author's Research

On average, the respondents were very satisfied with the visit of a tourist destination Portorož - Piran (average 4.72 on a 5-point scale). Accordingly, the highly rated is the possibility of further intervention by the recommendation of the tourist destination to friends and relatives (average 4.51). On average, they assess the quality of supply in the tourist place and the possibility of re-visit tourist destination with slightly lower grades (both with an average value of 4.32). Respondents, however, on average estimate that the visit exceeded their expectations slightly lower (4.25).

Tone of the hypothesis was performed using regression analysis where we used multiple regression analysis to measure the appropriateness and benefits of price satisfaction with the destination. The factors significantly explain 15.1 % of the variability of satisfaction with the visit of a tourist destination, so in general we can confirm the hypothesis that price has a significant impact on satisfaction with the tourist destinations. In the model we also confirmed the statistically significant factor for price of the tourist offer ( $B = 0.15$ , sig. = 0.036), while at the same time also indicates the impact of the price of accommodation ( $B = 0.15$ , sig. = 0.060) on the tourist satisfaction. The most important factor of tourist satisfaction with the destination is the perceived price, while a little affect has also the price of accommodation.

Respondents in open responses overwhelmingly praised the beauty of creation, nature neatness and cleanliness, and professionalism of the staff and especially positively assessed the beautiful historic centre of Piran. Several respondents also praised the good food. At the same time, there was some criticism on the one hand, about the loud music at night, on the other hand, on the absence of offers nightlife and activities. Two people raised concerns about costly and insufficient parking spaces and two about high prices and paying of the entrance to the beach. Two respondents proposed amendments in order, namely fewer boats in the heart of the tourist destination, and the use of solar panels. Despite the criticisms of some respondents, they were positively impressed by the tourist destination Portorož - Piran.

With the analysis of variance we analysed differences in the arithmetic average in conformity with the arguments relating to the nationality, while we were dealing with low representation of tourists from other countries formed 4 groups. The first group includes the Slovenian tourists, the second Italians, the third Germans, while the fourth group is represented by tourists from other countries. The last represents an important restriction on the comparison of inequality groups, as in the whole sample, more than half were Italians, while only 18 Slovenian and 24 Germans tourists and 49 tourists from other countries. Even if we formed groups, we have to note that because of their small sizes constitutes a restriction on the performed analysis. The

comparison of averages shows namely the differences that have emerged in the samples surveyed, but with the analysis of variance ( $\text{sig} = 0.174$ ), however, we cannot confirm statically significant differences between the groups in relation to their country of residence.

## Discussion

In 2013 at the tourist destination Portorož – Piran there were recorded 1.300.000 overnight stays. In October 2014 the hotels of Portorož - Piran recorded a 1% decrease than in November and 2% fewer nights than in 2013. Nevertheless, the figures for 2014 were encouraging. Namely, in the first eleven months of that year, hotels of Portorož - Piran generated 1.065.867 overnight stays, which is 1% more than in the same period of the year before. In December there is usually a major part of foreign overnight stays and the foreign guests has an average stay of three days (Tourist Association Portorož, 2003).

Each tourist destination wants to be interesting and attractive for domestic and foreign tourists. A tourist destination becomes popular for tourists when its tourist offer meets expectations, needs and wishes of tourists.

Due to the economic crisis, which is already present in most European countries and because of a variety of favourable competitive tourist offers in the Mediterranean, we have to increasingly strive to better understand the characteristics, needs, desires, tourist motivations and expectations of tourists visiting the Slovenian coast. We have to focus on customer satisfaction in the tourist destination, it is the only way we will achieve that with the tourist offer are satisfied and will return to the destination again.

Tourists return to the destination if they have a quality service and there is an acceptable price, and particularly if there is the relationship between quality and price. The kindness and hospitality of the people and an excellent climate have an additional impact on the welfare and satisfaction of tourists in this area. Research results have shown that it could be meaningful if hotels at the tourist destination lowered their prices for beaches and in the front of the beaches there would not be anchored boats. Important fact is also that tourists feel safe and have a variety of opportunities for leisure activities (sports, entertainment, wellness, tourism). Tourist satisfaction is directly related to the loyalty of destination, which means that if tourists remain satisfied with the destination, they will return again and probably they recommend the visit to the others.

## Conclusion

One of the limitation in the research was that the study included only those tourists who were present in Portorož in a given periods - only high season type of tourist.

Methodological limitations, however, are that the survey was carried out on the spot (not by mail and not via the Internet) - the surveyed tourists had to be physically present in the tourist destination of Portorož - Piran on-site survey. So respondents were only tourists who were currently staying in the destination Portorož - Piran (exclusively that season). Participation in the survey was entirely voluntary and every tourist was able to express his/her opinion freely without restrictions (regardless of nationality, sex.). The questionnaires could be completed by every tourist who has visited Portorož - Piran (if he stayed overnight or even if he came only to a daily trip).

As a further restriction we would like to highlight the fact that there was a possibility that we got up to 50 percent less completed questionnaires than we planned because the survey was voluntary, with no rewards for cooperation.

Unfortunately nowadays tourists do not want to answer the questionnaires if they do not have certain motivation (prize drawing, winning). Consequently, the limitation of research, represent a small and non-random sample, so the results cannot be generalized to the entire population of a tourist destination.

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