

ROLE OF HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT IN SPORT TOURISM

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ABSTRACT

According to data of World Tourism Organization (WTO), there is an increase in the number of tourists travelling around the world by years. Parallel to the increased number of people travelling around the world, the increase in the “sports” movement, which is another type of tourism, had influence on tourism sector. Significant effects of widely distributed and mass sports organizations on tourism sector were distinguished on structural features of accommodation enterprises. In order to fulfill expectations of event participants (event spectators or sport lovers), hotel enterprises should differentiate from other hotels in terms of management strategies, functions and activities. In this end, the aim of this study is to reveal differences between sport hotels and ordinary hotels. Literature search was used as the model for determining the difference. In conclusion, it was determined that sport hotels and ordinary hotel have significant differences in many aspects.

Key Words: Sport hotels, sport tourism, sport hospitality, hospitality management.

1. Introduction

In recent years, special interest tourism of various types has become increasingly popular. One form of special interest tourism which has garnered particular attention is travel related to sport or sport tourism (Gibson, et. al., 2003).

The Travel Industry Association of America (2003) estimated that in a year’s time, over 50 million adults in the United States traveled 50 miles or more to attend organized sport events, competitions or tournaments as either spectators or participants (Daniels, et al., 2004). Research which has been implemented in Australia suggest that both large-scale and small-scale sport events can attract participants, spectators and tourist, increase media attention, and create a positive image among community residents, as well as visitors (Funk and Bruun, 2007).

Sport tourism broadly defined is “leisure-based travel that takes individuals temporarily outside their home communities to participate in physical activities, to watch physical activities, or to venerate attractions associated with physical activities” (Gibson, 1998). Thwaites (1999) has shortly defined sport tourism as “travelling in order to participate in or observe sporting activities”.

The demand for sport tourism throughout the world has risen in recent years primarily because of a greater emphasis on health and fitness and the increased use of sport events by cities in order to attract sport tourists (Herstein and Jaffe, 2008).

Two important factors can be attributed to the growth in sport tourism over the last two decades. First, a general growth in discretionary income has provided consumers with greater choices concerning their leisure and recreational activities. Second, cities turned to sporting facilities in the early 1980s as a way to assist downtown

development and draw attention to their central localities (Shonk, Chelladurai, 2008).

Sport facilities which are part of sport tourism have existed for thousands of years. Ancient cultures, including the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, and Chinese, invested in the creation of sport facilities that were used to promote sport for a variety of purposes, including military readiness, entertainment, and physical wellness of their people.

Although many previous studies performed on sport facilities, sports hospitality has not been given required importance both in the practice and in the literature.

Sport hospitality establishments play principle role in fulfilling primarily accommodation and secondarily food-beverage, training and match and watching those activities. Therefore, it is required to clarify unique features and to determine differentiations from ordinary hotels in order to better define sport hospitality establishments.

2. Research-Objectives

As travel became more wide-spread and facilitated due to globalization, the participation to international organization and activities was increased. People not only participate to mass tourism activities also referred as “sea-sand-sun”, but they are started to interest in different types of tourism. Being one of divergent tourism activities leading people to travel, sports tourism can be expressed as an activity increasing international movements as different sports organizations are held in different states and even in different continents.

Sport tourism is a social, cultural and economic case deriving from unique interaction between activity, people and the location (Weed and Bull, 2004). Sport establishments are

enterprises founded for shaping social lives of human and for organizing different sport activities. Facilities structured for sport-oriented visits provide help for fulfilling satisfaction of people benefiting from or desiring to benefit from quality and sport branch-based services (Ramazanoğlu and Öcalan, 2005).

As importance attached to the health increased and sport activities are increasingly used in urban regions as an attractive element influencing people travelling for sport activities, a rapid increase is recently experienced all over the world in the demand for sport tourism.

Irrespective of the role, common feature of sport-oriented travels is the accommodation activity. Therefore, people generally fulfill accommodation needs in accommodation facilities located in the destination people visit for watching or participating to sportive activities. In this end, it is the principal aim of this study to clarify differentiations of accommodation activities operating for fulfilling accommodation, food-beverage, entertainment and physical sport activity of people participating to sport-oriented travels from ordinary accommodation facilities and to determine qualification required to be possessed by such facilities.

3. Research Methods and Procedures:

Method of literature search was preferred in this study for clarifying difference between ordinary hotels and sport hotels. Relevant national and foreign literature was searched and differences between sport based accommodation facilities and other (traditional) accommodation facilities were revealed out within a general framework. In this end, the importance of this study is based on the determining differences between sport based hotels and ordinary hotels by making a mutual comparison in terms of management strategies, target audience, functions and operations fields.

4. Sport Based Hotels

Prior to descriptions on sport based hotels, it will be useful to describe target audience of such enterprises.

People travelling for sportive purposes are individuals participating to sport activities throughout holiday time and they are addressed in three groups (Herstein and Jaffe, 2008):

1. Participants of sport activities: The travel for participating to an organized sport activity.
2. Watchers of sport activities: They travel for watching an organized sport activity.
3. Sport-lovers: They travel for participating sport activities organized by them.

Some authors suggested that in Europe the trend was away from spectating to active participation. He identified three types of active sport vacations (Gibson, 1998):

1. The pure sport holiday, such as a trip to go skiing;
2. Taking advantage of the sport facilities at a holiday destination, although sport is not the primary purpose of the trip;
3. The private sporting holiday, where tourists take part in non-organized sports activities such as volleyball on the sand or beach cricket.

People included any of above mentioned types will need accommodation at the location where they participate to the activity. This particular target audience will need several different requirements varying from that of other types of tourism. There will be significant differences particularly in food-beverage service and sport infrastructure.

At this point, several examples of said differences may include offering particularly healthy, nutritive and fitting meals in the menu of sport based hotel, clients profile comprised of sport-lovers or sport teams and advertisement heavily based on media directly related with sports activities such as sport newspaper and sport channels (Herstein and Jaffe, 2008). For satisfying tourists travelling for sportive purposes, sport based hotels should accordingly arrange structural and administrative aspects of facilities and they will thus differentiate from other enterprises on particular aspects. Those differences are more clearly and obviously shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Management strategy of sports hotels vs other hotels

Characteristics	Sports Hotels	Ordinary Hotel
<i>Identity</i>	Limited identity, focused only on sports-oriented holiday experiences	Very general identity, focused on dream vacations
<i>Missions Statement</i>	Providing a sports vacation – “Sports lover’s paradise”	Providing an experiential vacation – “Enjoying freedom”
<i>Customer types</i>	Sports lovers (families and young people) and sports teams (professionals)	All kinds of customers (from children to older clients)

<i>Functions</i>	Focusing only on sports activities	General-enjoyment activities such as entertainment, sightseeing trips, plays and musicals, games etc.
<i>Food</i>	Based on special healthy menus	Very popular food, based on favorite dishes (not necessarily healthy)
<i>Employees</i>	Sports lover	Do not have any special interest
<i>Architecture</i>	Internal and external décor reflects sports environment	Each hotel has its own thematically-based internal and external décor
<i>Advertising</i>	Sports-related media such as sports newspapers and TV channels	General tourist-and vacation-related media such as TV vacation programs, newspaper vacation supplements and radio programs
<i>Public relations</i>	Sporting events linked to the hotel's location	General events connected to hospitality, pleasure and vacations

Source: Herstein and Jaffe (2008)

There are two types of sports-related tourism; firstly, where sport is used by destinations seeking to develop their tourism profiles, and secondly, where tourism has emerged spontaneously as a result of sports activity. As the interaction between tourism and sports industry is reflected in sport based hotels, several administrative differences shown in Table 1 occur. On the contrary to ordinary hotels, sport based hotels should necessarily possess those qualifications in order to better respond to expectations of target audience.

Another important difference between ordinary hotels and sport based hotels is that this type of tourism is seasonal. In particular, seasonality generally exhibits a dramatic tourism peak during the summer months. Most of the literature describes seasonal variations in visitation that result in a number of negative effect on the destination. But sport is a dynamic phenomenon and the development of all-season sports facilities reinforces this point (Higham and Hinch, 2002). While seasonality of the tourism has negative influences on the sector, an advantage can be also mentioned for sport based hotels that such hotels are also preferred by different sports braches and in the out-of-season periods for activities, trainings and sport camps.

It can be observed that there are also several organizational differences in enterprises operating in the form of sport based hotel or in ordinary enterprises which also serve for sport tourists. Such type of accommodation facilities are obliged to employ staff with technical specialization in relevant sport branches, for example, sports sales manager.

Sport Tourism Quality is indicated by four primary dimensions each of which is defined by two or more subdimensions. The primary dimensions are (Shonk, Challedurai, 2008);

- (a) access quality (composed of access to destination, sport venue, hotel),
- (b) accommodation quality (including the environment, interactions, and value),
- (c) venue quality (comprised of environment, interactions, and value), and

(d) contest quality (indicated by process of the contest and the product of the contest).

It is possible to witness examples of sport establishment in Turkey and around the world. Examples of them include Dionysos Hotels (Turkey), Limak Arcadia Golf & Sport Resort (Turkey), Disney's All-Star Sport Resort (USA), Sport Hotels Resort&Spa (Andorra), Alfamar Beach and Sport Resort (Portugal), Hotel Adler Spa & Sport Resort (Italy).

Recently, agencies dedicated for organizing accommodation and food-beverage services of sport based enterprises were founded in this field and such agencies specialized solely in this field. Those companies determine specific needs of each sport branch and they lead accommodation facilities according to needs of customers. Limited number of sport based accommodation facilities made it necessary for ordinary accommodation establishments differentiate the services for those customers.

Those agencies both organize accommodation facilities and sell tickets for sport games.

The Year 2010 will be very active in terms of sports tourism. Many local and international organizations will be held primarily including FIFA World Cup to be held in South Africa and it is believed that sports tourism will further expand due to those organizations.

5. Conclusions

Sport is an important social phenomenon which attracts attention of each individual from all age groups, although in different type and level, and which became a billion dollar industry (Gençer et. al, 2008). The ever increasing interest to sport all around the world is associated with dynamism in the sport tourism. Tourism is among the largest sectors of the world due to both economic and social and societal aspects. Therefore, increased interaction between sport and tourism will ensure mutual benefit for both sectors, which already have high level of compatibility (Kurtzman and Zauhar, 2003). Ability of organizations

being included in the sport tourism is dependent on linking the sport activity with settlement site (R.T.Gençer, et. al, 2008). Accordingly, structure of surrounding and facilities where sport activities are performed is of extreme importance for fulfilling expectations of sport activity participants. Quality of the service offered in sport based enterprises will play determinative role in customer satisfaction (R.T.Gençer, et. al., 2008).

In this end, efforts were made in this study to determine structural status and qualification of accommodation facilities responding to needs of sport activity participants such as accommodation, food and beverage and entertainment.

In the study, differences of sport based hotels from ordinary hotels were examined in terms of food and beverage menus, public relations and advertisement activities, architectural structures, profiles of target customers and functional aspects.

Results of the study is characterized as a recommendation for accommodation facilities in order to determine missing points by comparing actually possessed qualification with those of competitor enterprises. Moreover, determination of qualitative differences between ever increasing number of sport facilities all around the world (Sport Hotels, Sport Resorts, Spa&Sport Resors, etc.) and other hotels is also important considering the contribution to the literature.

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