

ДЕМОНСТРАЦИОННЫЙ ВАРИАНТ

Направление: «Менеджмент»

Профиль: «Экономика впечатлений: менеджмент в индустрии гостеприимства и туризме»

КОД – 145

Время выполнения задания – 180 мин.

Прочитайте статью¹ и сделайте ее критический анализ на русском языке.

INTRODUCTION

Hostel backpacking has emerged as a global cultural, economic and social phenomenon (*Thyne & Nash, 2005*), supported by the relative ease of international travel, the emergence of low cost airlines and a growing network of hostels. Backpacking is perceived to have grown substantially over the last years and has received an increasing importance in the tourism market literature (*Leslie & Wilson, 2006; Musa & Thirumoorthi, 2011*). Backpackers are considered a valuable niche market for tourism development given that on average they stay longer, visit more locations than mainstream tourists (*Chitty, Ward & Chua, 2007*) and their spending patterns largely benefit small local enterprises (*Musa & Thirumoorthi, 2011*).

The focus of this research is to gain a better understanding of the requirements of hostel backpackers. The more hostel managers know about their market, the more effective their market strategy will be. As the success of this type of accommodation is largely dependent on backpackers' patronage, it is of utmost importance to understand what factors influence the backpackers' overall experience in this budget accommodation.

Recent studies have also argued that to view hostel backpackers as a homogenous group could mislead market decisions and that research on backpackers profile and preference are warranted (*Thyne et al., 2005*). Therefore, in order to delight experience for backpackers' hostel managers must be aware of how to fulfill the needs of different market segments.

The objectives of this paper are twofold: (i) to identify the key attributes that determine hostel backpackers' overall experience; (ii) to identify whether the key determinants vary according to the demographic profile of the visitors. Lisbon is chosen as the target destination for this study, due to its popularity as a destination and given that the city has received awards in the hostel business.

This paper begins with reviewing the literature in the area of hostel backpacker tourism. This is followed by methodology, which briefly includes the description of the qualitative and quantitative approaches used. Results will be analyzed before drawing out the final conclusion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Hostel concept

Hostels offer a budget accommodation and target a particular tourist segment commonly known as backpackers (*Nash, Thyne & Davies, 2006*). Hostelling International, a hostel federation founded in 1932 that has over 4000 affiliated hostels around the world, defines the hostel as a good quality budget accommodation that offers a comfortable night's sleep in friendly surroundings at an affordable price.

Hostels are not homogeneous. Hostelbookers, the famous hostel booking website, provides some interesting definitions for different types of hostels. There are 'family hostels', which offer low budget rates and clean and comfortable rooms in order to attract parents looking for a cheap family holiday in a destination. 'Activity hostels' are the ones that focus on providing

¹ Подготовлена на основе: Oliveira-Brochado A., Gameiro C. Toward a better understanding of backpackers' motivations // *Tékhné*, 2013, Volume 11, Issue 2.

a wide range of activities for their guests, like surfing, skiing, hiking, biking, scuba diving, amongst many other possible activities. 'Party hostels' are perfect for travelers looking to party and to experience the night scene of a city. These hostels have no curfew, usually have a bar in the hostel providing drinks and snacks, and organize activities like pub crawls, where guests get together with a local guide for a bar tour of the city.

The backpacker – a definition, types of backpackers and motivations

Defining what or who a backpacker actually is should be considered as a challenging task. Backpackers are not easily distinguished economically or demographically (*Nash et al., 2006*) and might be best described and defined in social terms (*Pearce, 1990*).

The literature has established some basic criteria to identify a backpacker (*Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995*): aged frequently between 20 and 24, but can range from 15 to 60 years of age; preference for budget/low cost accommodation options; emphasis on meeting other travelers and having memorable experiences; flexible and independently arranged travel plans; longer rather than brief vacations; and preference for informal and participatory recreational activities. Although backpackers spend less on a daily basis than other tourists, the overall backpacker spending should not be neglected, due to the larger stay (*Hecht & Martin, 2006*).

As backpackers tend to be socially active, to enjoy meeting other people and making friends, to get to know new cultures and costumes and to share experiences, informal and word-of-mouth communications are of utmost importance for this group of travelers (*Moshin & Ryan, 2003*).

The idea behind the backpacker and backpacking in general has been changing for a long time now (*Musa & Thirumoorthi, 2011*). First of all, backpackers are not today only young and budget-conscious tourists (*Reisinger & Mavondo, 2002*). This preconceived idea behind backpackers is being challenged by the "peter pan" travelers (*Moschis, 2002*), who are trying to get a chance to live a second youth (*Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995*), and also the "baby boomers" who are rediscovering hostels and enjoying their old age in the best way they can, or want to travel but do not have large retirement incomes and have to opt for cheaper accommodation options (*Moschis, 2002*). Moreover, there is an emergence of the "backpacker-plus" market, that encompasses well-educated, future leaders of society, or professionals on temporary leave but with clear intentions to return to their 'normal' life (*Hampton, 1998; Musa & Thirumoorthi, 2011*).

A crucial aspect fairly important to highlight is the motivations behind backpacking that differ from the mass tourism ones. The destination is not most of the times the major motivation for traveling (*Hecht & Martin, 2006*). Backpackers tend to seek personal development and a sense of discovery, to experience other cultures and environments, to meet other people, to make new friends and to improve knowledge/education (*Leslie & Wilson, 2006*). Backpackers were found to be significantly less motivated by the needs for luxury than mainstream travelers (*Larsen, Øgaard & Brun, 2011*).

In their study, *Hecht and Martin (2006)* found that motivations, expectations and demands about traveling and hostels vary according to backpackers age, gender and country of origin. The youth tourists seek more interaction with fellow travelers and value more excitement and thrill than transition and contemporary backpackers. The contemporary backpacker demands a wider choice of room types and they are willing to pay for their choices. With the increase of age, the budget for accommodation tends to increase too, and privacy is a privilege contemporary backpacker's value.

Backpackers' service quality preferences

Nash et al. (2006) conducted a study, in association with the Scottish Youth Hostel Association (SYHA) and concluded that backpackers considered the cleanliness of rooms, value for money, location and self-catering facilities to be the most important elements of the service quality provided by a hostel.

Regarding service preferences, *Hecht and Martin (2006)* found that the most important service aspects to backpackers staying in Canada Hostels were: cleanliness, location, personal service, security and hostel services (e.g., internet, laundry facilities). However, service preferences vary according to three key demographics, as follows: gender, age and country of origin.

Musa and Thirumoorthi (2011) attempted to examine the critical factors of success of the best hostel in Asia. The owners of this hostel considered that there are two vital parameters that have to be fulfilled in order to achieve service excellence and delighting the guests: firstly, the staff must have good social and interpersonal relationship skills and also adequate knowledge about the local area; second, keeping the hostel clean is an absolutely indispensable need that shall never be compromised. For backpackers, the most important dimension of service quality experience was tangibles, followed by empathy and assurance. The most satisfactory elements within the tangibles were facilities and equipment, location, cleanliness, friendly, welcoming and home-like atmosphere. As to the assurance dimension, the courtesy of the employees and respect, politeness and good communication with the customers were elements highly praised. The most significant elements from the empathy dimension were the provision of caring and individualized attention, sensitivity and effort to understand customers' needs. Willingness to help customers was considered the most important element for the responsiveness dimension.

METHODOLOGY

This research took a two-step approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods. An interview with a hostel manager and a content analysis of hostel booking websites were carried out in order to identify the main aspects that customers value in a hostel experience. Then, a survey was performed in order to gather data from hostel customers.

In-depth interview

Few people may know hostel customers better than the hostel manager and the hostel staff. As managers are in contact with backpackers on a daily basis, they are aware of important insight regarding their costumes, personalities, likes and dislikes. Moreover, keeping customers satisfied is their job.

An Interview Guide was drafted, comprising four main sections. The first part aims at gathering information regarding the Hostel sector in Lisbon and in Portugal, namely the available market statistics (e.g., number of hostels, number of guests per year). The second part comprises questions about customers booking preferences and behaviors (percentage of guests that book online, most popular booking websites, perceived influence of positive online and offline word-of-mouth for the hostel occupation). The third topic addresses the importance of hostel booking websites ratings and international hostel awards for travelers, when they are looking for a hostel to stay. The last section relates to service quality issues, as the main determinants of hostel customers evaluations, feedback provided and procedures to manage complaints. An in-depth interview with the manager of *This is Lisbon* hostel, that agreed to participate in this study was conducted.

Content analysis of hostel booking websites

Nowadays a large number of travelers use the Internet to seek accommodation information (*Litvin, Goldsmith & Pan, 2008*) and customers' posts and evaluations are considered a reliable source of information. Hostel booking websites or the hostels' websites are the most popular sources of information travelers look for to help them on the selection of the hostel to book in each city they travel to. Backpackers usually tend to look for hostels that have the largest number of reviews, suggesting that more people have stayed and the evaluations made are more precise since it has a large number of opinions influencing it. Additionally, if the reviews made are well reasoned, logical and persuasive, they can positively influence the likelihood of purchase by the reader (*Park, Lee & Han, 2007*).

In order to get a better understanding of the most important aspects backpackers look for when picking a hostel, a content analysis of four hostel websites was performed. The selected websites were: Hostelworld.com, Hostelbookers.com, Hostels.com and Booking.com.

Survey

Instrument

After conducting the two qualitative studies, a survey was developed. The questionnaire was divided in three sections. The first part focused on the nature of the trip, the stay in Lisbon and the booking process. In the second section travelers were asked to rate the importance of a list of 10 items for the evaluation of the overall experience at a hostel, using a seven-point Likert scale, from 1 (not important) to 7 (extremely important). The list provided to backpackers was based on the items displayed on hostel booking websites for evaluation and on the literature review on customer satisfaction in hostels. The last section of the questionnaire deals with the demographics of the travelers.

Sample design

The target population of this study comprises the guests who have stayed and experienced a hostel in Lisbon at least one night. The sampling technique used was a convenience sampling procedure.

Statistical methods

Tables of frequencies and descriptive statistics were provided for each variable. In order to study the differences amongst guests regarding gender, country of origin and age, the non-parametric *Kruskal–Wallis* test was used. The goal was to identify the different demands that different guests have, so the service provided is even better and more personalized. The data analysis was conducted by means of SPSS 20.0.

RESULTS

Interview with a hostel manager

According to the hostel manager, there is no official organization that accounts for hostels and backpack tourism statistics in Portugal, as the number of hostels, guests or the market volume.

The hostel manager maintained that around 80% of the guests used to book online, mainly at websites like hostelbookers.com and hostelworld.com, the two most popular websites for hostel booking. Around 10% of the guests' book directly from *This is Lisbon* hostel website, that was recommended by friends or family members.

The staff asks directly guests when they are leaving the hostel to leave a comment, review, suggestion or rating in websites like hostelworld or hostelbookers. The hostel monitors guests' evaluations at hostel booking websites and uses complaints for continuous improvement. In this context, two examples were provided: one guest commented in hostelworld.com the lack of lights in the rooms and the management decided to place more lamps in the rooms; other guests complained about the lack of privacy in the bathrooms, therefore the hostel management had to change the glass window in the bathroom doors.

According to the hostel manager the most important elements for travelers when evaluating a hostel are the staff, location, cleanliness and atmosphere. *This is Lisbon* hostel has won the award for best staff in Europe. In this hostel all the staff members have at least a bachelor degree, speaks various languages and share the hostel values. In order to enhance the social atmosphere, the hostel organizes surf lessons, cinema sessions, walking tours and cooking lessons.

Finally, guests with different cultural backgrounds, ages and gender value different characteristics of the service. For example, Brazilians look for privacy, Germans care about recycling and green consumer behaviors and Australians value the social atmosphere. Privacy is most important for female and the older guests.

Content analysis of websites

With the purpose of identifying the most important aspects for hostel backpackers, a content analysis of four booking websites obtained from the in-depth interview was conducted.

Survey

Demographic profile description

From the 313 respondents, 50.8% are male and 49.2% female. Regarding the marital status the majority of respondents are currently single, representing 82.7% of the sample. The remaining part of the sample is married or is living together with a partner (16%) and only 1.3% of the respondents are divorced or widowed. Regarding the employment situation the vast majority is currently studying (60.6%). From these, 22.8% are also working at the same time. The remaining sample is employed and has a job (27.7%), leaving only 1.9% of unemployed respondents. Concerning age, the sample mean is 25.74 years old. Hostels are becoming more diversified in terms of the age of guests (*Hecht & Martin, 2006; Ross, 1997; Ryan & Mohsin, 2001*) and this is visible through the analysis of the sample, with roughly 15% of the respondents being 30 or more. Guests from 25 different nationalities answered the questionnaire and the three most represented countries of origin were USA (17.9%), Germany (14.7%) and Australia (10.5%).

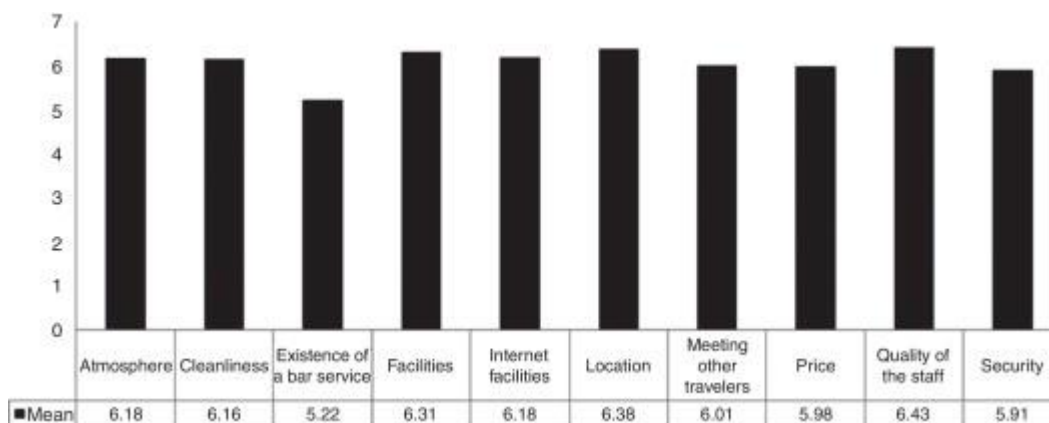
Details of the stay in Lisbon

From the total sample, 70.6% of the respondents were in Lisbon for the first time and only 2.1% were in a hostel for the first time. The main purposes of the visit to Lisbon were holidays (68.7%), studying (11.2%), visiting family/friends (10.5%) and work (8.9%). Most of the people were traveling with company (61%) although still a considerable percentage (39%) came alone to Lisbon.

The booking was mainly done through the Internet, as was expected. Hostelworld was the most used website, with 47.9% of the respondents booking through it, confirming the leadership of this website on the business. The remaining booked through hostelbookers (27.8%), from the website of the hostel they were in (12.1%) and from other websites.

Backpackers' preferences (Graph 1)

The item that has the most importance on satisfaction during a hostel stay was the *quality of the staff* ($M = 6.43$; $SD = 0.98$), followed by the *location* ($M = 6.38$; $SD = 0.08$), *facilities* ($M = 6.31$; $SD = 0.82$), *internet facilities* ($M = 6.18$; $SD = 0.93$), *atmosphere* ($M = 6.18$; $SD = 1.17$), *cleanliness* ($M = 6.16$; $SD = 0.97$) and *meeting other travelers* ($M = 6.01$; $SD = 1.09$). The *existence of a bar service* ($M = 5.22$; $SD = 0.84$), *security* ($M = 5.91$; $SD = 1.36$) and *price* ($M = 5.98$; $SD = 1.69$) received the lower ratings of importance.



Graph 1. Importance overall scores by item

The aim of the next section is to investigate whether the importance ratings vary according to the gender, age and country of origin of the hostel backpacker.

The results of the Kruskal–Wallis test revealed that the importance ratings of the items *meeting other travelers*, *atmosphere*, *security* and *facilities* vary according to backpackers' gender. Male respondents are more concerned about meeting other guests in the hostel than their female counterparts, and are thus more motivated to make new friendships with other travelers. Female respondents gave more importance to security than males, result that is in accordance to the conclusions of *Hecht and Martin (2006)*. Female are also more concerned with hostels' atmosphere and with facilities than male guests. Some hostels are already addressing this issue, offering female dorms and bathrooms with accessories as hair dryers (*Table 1*).

Table 1. Kruskal–Wallis test by gender

| Item | Male | Female | Test statistic (χ^2_{K-W}) | p-value |
|----------------------------|------|--------|-----------------------------------|---------|
| Atmosphere | 6.06 | 6.30 | 4.54 | ** |
| Location | 6.36 | 6.40 | 0.31 | |
| Quality of the staff | 6.48 | 6.37 | 0.75 | |
| Facilities | 6.21 | 6.40 | 2.95 | * |
| Price | 5.92 | 6.05 | 2.31 | |
| Cleanliness | 6.11 | 6.20 | 0.23 | |
| Security | 5.75 | 6.07 | 5.39 | ** |
| Existence of a bar service | 5.36 | 5.06 | 1.17 | |
| Meeting other travelers | 6.22 | 5.80 | 7.32 | *** |
| Internet facilities | 6.26 | 6.10 | 1.38 | |

*Statistically significant at the 10% level

**Statistically significant at the 5% level

***Statistically significant at the 1% level

Moreover, the Kruskal–Wallis test results also revealed that the importance ratings of the items *meeting other travelers*, *atmosphere*, *security* and *facilities* vary according to backpackers' group age, youth tourists, transition backpackers and contemporary backpackers.

The most significant difference between age groups was observed for the item *meeting other travelers*. Contemporary backpackers give less importance to this social aspect than younger ones. That is an expected result, as hostels are majority occupied by younger people. The youth tourists have more in common amongst them and so it is easier for them to establish a connection with a fellow traveler. The importance of atmosphere was more important for youth tourists and transition backpackers than for contemporary backpackers. A good atmosphere, socially open, is important for younger guests, who travel mainly to expand their knowledge, achieve some independence and meet other travelers (*Hecht & Martin, 2006*).

The importance of security increases with backpackers' age group. This is an expected result, a young people judged travel related hazards to be less risky (*Larsen et al., 2011*).

Finally the importance placed on *facilities* seems to increase with age. Indeed, the budget for accommodation, the willingness to pay more for privacy, comfort and better facilities in general is positively correlated with age (*Hecht & Martin, 2006*).

The country of origin of backpackers' was organized in 4 main groups: USA and Canada; South America; Europe; Australia.

Several differences were found between backpackers from different regions. The Australians and North Americans (USA and Canada) place more importance on atmosphere than South Americans and Europeans. For the Australians atmosphere is the second most important item on the list. The Australians are the ones who give more importance to the location of a hostel, followed by Europeans, then South Americans and finally North Americans. For

Australians and Europeans, location is actually the most important item on the list. The quality of the staff received the highest mean overall score. However, this item is more important for North Americans and Australians than for Europeans. Guests from USA and Canada gave more importance to price than their counterparts and for Australians the existence of a bar service is more important than for the rest of the groups. The Europeans seem to be less interested in meeting other travelers than other guests. Finally, the Internet facilities are more important to North Americans and Australians, while South Americans and Europeans give less importance to this item (*Table 2*).

Table 2. Kruskal–Wallis test by nationality

| Item | USA/ Canada | Latin America | Europe | Australia | Test statistic (χ^2_{k-w}) | p-value |
|----------------------------|----------------|------------------|--------|-----------|---|---------|
| Atmosphere | 6.39 | 6.08 | 6.06 | 6.67 | 12.23 | *** |
| Location | 6.10 | 6.29 | 6.44 | 6.73 | 14.42 | *** |
| Quality of the staff | 6.65 | 6.50 | 6.32 | 6.61 | 9.08 | ** |
| Facilities | 6.50 | 6.50 | 6.26 | 6.06 | 5.79 | |
| Price | 6.50 | 5.96 | 5.82 | 5.91 | 16.87 | *** |
| Cleanliness | 6.02 | 6.38 | 6.14 | 6.15 | 2.53 | |
| Security | 5.66 | 6.13 | 5.95 | 5.94 | 2.83 | |
| Existence of a bar service | 5.18 | 5.46 | 4.93 | 6.33 | 22.45 | *** |
| Meeting other travelers | 6.21 | 6.29 | 5.82 | 6.36 | 6.18 | * |
| Internet facilities | 6.55 | 6.13 | 6.06 | 6.27 | 14.69 | *** |

*Statistically significant at the 10% level

**Statistically significant at the 5% level

***Statistically significant at the 1% level

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicated that Lisbon already has popularity with hostel backpackers and a position in the market place on which to build. Indeed, almost 30% of the guests had already been in Lisbon before. Given that about 80% of the respondents selected and booked in a hostel book website, hostels should use this vital channel of distribution for marketing purposes. Moreover, guests' evaluations should be properly monitoring for a continuous improvement.

Quality of the staff was the item that had the best overall importance score. Nowadays the importance of recruiting the right staff, sharing the hostel values and mission is of utmost importance. They are the frontlines and can have an important role to satisfy guests' requests. The location, facilities, Internet facilities, atmosphere and cleanliness items were also considered extremely important.

However, the results revealed that treating the backpackers as a homogenous group would be a mistake. Age, gender and the country of origin should be subject to the attention of hostels' management.

Female backpackers exhibited different demands than the male ones. Indeed, security, facilities and atmosphere are more important for this group. Therefore, in order to please their female guest hostel management could improve security by offering a 24 hour reception, extra locks on the windows and doors and a separate female floor with key access and female showers. Nonetheless male respondents are more motivated to meet other travelers than female guests. An exciting and socially open environment should be provided to male backpackers. Staying in a hostel is an experience rather than an accommodation.

Backpackers are nowadays heterogeneous in terms of age groups. Hostels have to be aware of this tendency in order to address the different demands for the different age groups. Regarding the demographic description of the sample, it is important to highlight the existence of 15% guests with 30 years old or older, an emerging market segment previously described in the literature as contemporary backpackers. Given that older guest security and facilities are more important than for young tourists, a vast choice of room types should be provided. Since price is less important for this group, they are willing to pay high price in order to have private rooms and washrooms. For younger backpackers' atmosphere and the opportunity to meet other travelers are the more important than for older ones. For them, staying in a hostel is an experience rather an accommodation.

The country of origin of backpackers should be also subject to the attention of hostel management. As an example, for North Americans, price is much more important than for the other groups. For Australians, the bar service is more important than for other guests and Location is more important to Europeans. Latin America guests seem to be less familiar with the hostel concept. To address this issue, the hostels can educate them on backpacking and hostels.

The main limitation of this study relates to its being an analysis based on hostels located in a single city, Lisbon. Moreover, as data was gathered in winter, it was hard to perform the personal interviews due to the seasonality issue. A more appropriate time to gather data would be in summer months, when the majority of visitors take their holidays and hostels register a high occupancy rate. Another limitation was the availability and patience of the guests to fill the questionnaire. When traveling, completing a questionnaire is not the most interesting thing to do, especially in Lisbon, where there is always something to do and something new to see.

Вопросы для размышления

1. В чём заключается методология исследования, какие методы сбора и анализа данных использованы авторами настоящего исследования? Представляются ли они вам спорными, необоснованными или недостаточными? Почему? Аргументируйте свой ответ.
2. Сформулированы ли в статье гипотезы? Если «да», то какие, каким образом они проверяются?
3. При подготовке данного задания из оригинальной статьи были исключены некоторые смысловые блоки, что повлекло в отдельных случаях некоторую неясность и нелогичность в изложении материала. Какие это блоки?
4. Предложите методологию исследования (желательно – не повторяющую в полной мере исследование, отражённое в статье), направленного на выявление факторов, которые препятствуют развитию хостелов в России. Сформулируйте цель, задачи, методы сбора и анализа данных этого исследования.