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I



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FACULTY OF HOTEL MANAGEMENT
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THE ONLINE PRESENTATION ANALYSIS OF THE SERBIAN HOTEL OFFER

Saša Mašić¹; Ivan Milošević²;

Abstract

With regard to the impact of the hotel Internet presentation on the creation of potential consumers' attitudes in the pre-consumption stage, this paper aims to identify the ways in which the hotels in Serbia are presented on their own internet portals. The research data show that 91% of the 347 analysed hotels in Serbia have a functional internet portal. Also, the set of additional analytical instruments was applied in order to identify the links towards hotel profiles on social media, the offer of hotel virtual tours and interactive chat boxes with the reservations departments, the translation accuracy of the portal contents into various foreign languages as well as the correlation between the foreign language translations in accord with the source of the tourist demand. Hotels are then grouped according to the category, location and affiliation to a hotel chain, with a view to ascertaining and analysing the statistically significant differences relating to the factors under examination.

Key Words: *hotel product quality, online hotel reviews, booking, perceptions*

JEL classification: *L83, M30.*

Introduction

The number of active internet users worldwide is constantly increasing. According to the data issued by the International Telecommunication Union (2018), the number of the internet users has risen from one billion users in 2005 to 3.6 billion users in 2017. Practically, the half of the overall world's population makes up active internet users. A rapid growth

¹ Saša Mašić, PhD, Professor, The College of Hotel Management, Kneza Višeslava 70, Belgrade, sasa.masic@vhs.edu.rs

² Ivan Milošević, PhD, Professor, The College of Hotel Management, Kneza Višeslava 70, Belgrade, ivan.milosevic@vhs.edu.rs

of technology and internet expansion have changed the way in which hotel guests learn about the hotel services as well the way of booking them. Online reservation sources are becoming a more prominent sales channel. Bui et al. (2014) state that 57% of the total hotel sales are done via online sources. It should be emphasized that online sales include various channels, not only the direct sales over the hotel website. As an indication of participation of direct online reservations we can use the data which suggest that, taking into account top 50 markets in 2015, some 59.7% of online reservations were made through direct channels (Marvel, 2016). It makes us infer that the hotels operating in the most developed markets provide between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{5}$ of the total reservation value over websites/e-mails alongside with the powerful growth of various internet intermediaries.

Li et al. (2015) state that in the existing market conditions one cannot or should not ask the question whether the hotel should have its own website, because it is regarded as an absolute must. Apart from answering the question whether all the Serbian hotels have their own website and whether between different hotel groups there are statistically significant differences, this paper is aimed at the content analysis of the Serbian hotels' websites with a view to ascertaining internet adoption and use of e-commerce by the Serbian hotels.

The first hotel analysis of hotel website content was carried out by Murphy et al. (1996). They analysed 32 separate features on 36 websites of different hotel chains. Then, they grouped these features into 4 different categories „promotion and marketing“, „service and information“, „interactivity and technology“, and „management“. Based on the research data, they concluded that management functions were the rarest used ones, whereas, at the same time, the service and information functions were the most used ones.

Chung and Law (2003) conducted a study which was aimed at the model development which would provide a quantitative evaluation of hotel website performances in terms of the websites' information richness assessment. The first stage of the study included the development of a conceptual framework for hotel website performance assessment consisting of five different dimensions: „facilities information“, „customer contact information“, „reservations information“, „surrounding area information“, and „management of website“. Then, using a questionnaire, they offered the hotel managers to assess the importance of

those dimensions which served as the basis for the construction of the overall performance indicator.

Baloglu and Pekcan (2006) analysed „interactivity“, „navigation“, and „functionality and marketing practices on the Internet“ of Turkish 4-star and 5-star hotel websites and, based on the conducted investigation, they inferred that „that the hotels in Turkey are not utilizing the Internet to its full potential and effectively e-marketing their hotels regardless of the hotel type” (p.171) and proposed a series of possibilities for the improvement of their interactivity and functionality.

Musante et al. (2009) did research directed at investigating the contents and effectiveness of different category hotel websites. The websites were investigated in the light of 27 content items. They conclude that there are statistically significant differences in terms of the contents and effectiveness of different category hotel websites.

Diaz and Koutra (2013) analysed the hotel chains' websites regarding six features: „informativeness“, „usability“, „credibility“, „inspiration“, „involvement“ and „reciprocity“. They grouped the hotel chains into luxury, midscale and economy segments. Their research findings indicated that there were statistically significant differences in five out of six observed features between the examined groups, resulting in the better results being recorded for the websites of the luxury hotel chain segment. The only exception is recorded for the feature of „usability“, which had a better result being recorded for the websites of the economy hotels segment.

Escobar-Rodriguez and Carvajal-Trujillo (2013) conducted an analysis of the Spanish hotel chains' websites which they divided into groups in relation to their size aimed at analysing and comparing website strategies. Their findings showed that Spanish hotel chains' websites are largely oriented towards consumers, and almost never towards the investors. The significant positive relationship between the size of the Spanish hotel chain and the connection of the website with hotel profiles on the social media platforms was identified.

Salavati and Hashim (2015) investigated the Iranian hotels' website contents focusing on 48 different features grouped into 6 categories: “hotel information”, “product information”, “non-product information”, “payment”, “customer relationship management” and “reservation”. The

hotels were grouped according to the category. Statistically significant difference between the websites of different category hotels is recorded only for the category of “product information” with the highest category hotels demonstrating better performances than other hotels. Using the obtained findings, they concluded that Iranian hotels were still in the initial stage of internet adoption and the use of e-commerce. Consequently, only 8% of the Iranian hotels had its own website, and none of them had an option for the real-time online reservation. Also, only half of the overall number of the Iranian hotels’ websites offered the multilingual option.

Besides the afore-mentioned studies, other studies which are aimed at assessing the hotel websites can be introduced (e.g. Wan, 2002; Schegg et al., 2002; Gan et al., 2007; Schmidt et al., 2008; Lee & Morrison, 2010; Ting et al., 2013; Akincilar & Dagdeviren, 2014).

Research methodology

The research, which is an integral part of this paper, was conducted in January 2018. The initial step of the research was the identification of categorised hotels in Belgrade. The database containing this information was taken from the internet portal of the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications. In the next stage of the research, by the use of the name and location of the categorised hotels, each of these was directed an enquiry via Google web search engine in order to ascertain if the hotel had a functional web portal. An enquiry was sent to the total of 347 hotels. The next step included a contents analysis of the individual hotel internet portals and each of the tested in the following terms:

- If the hotel website has chat box which provides users with direct and explicit communication with the hotel reservations service;
- If the hotel website offers possible virtual tours to users;
- If there is a website form through which it’s possible to make hotel service reservation;
- If there are links to the hotel’s social media profiles;
- If there is an adequate translation of the contents into foreign languages.

With a view to identifying and analysing statistical differences between websites of different hotel groups, they are divided according to the following criteria: a) their category; b) macro location of the hotels into

the city/town hotels, mountain hotels, spa resort hotels and other hotels; c) affiliation/non-affiliation to the hotel chain.

Results and discussion

One of the most significant and the most available internet channels is certainly the hotel's own website. The hotel's own website provides hoteliers with the utter control of the contents by which the hotel is represented as well as the construction of the direct channel of the hotel's services sale and the avoidance of commission pay-out to various third party online intermediaries. The October 2017 research shows that 50% of third-party online intermediaries' users before the reservation-making via those intermediary portals also visit the hotel website and for as many as 85% of them, the price is the determinant for the selection of the specific hotel service reservation channel (<https://www.hospitalitynet.org/opinion/4084884.html>). It means that consumers, after they have found and got interested in the certain hotel's offer on the portal of many internet intermediaries, tend to look for the hotel's website in order to gather sufficient information and compare the price.

The research data show that 91.07% of the categorised hotels in Serbia have an internet website. Since we live in an era of the highly computerised society, it is hard to grasp the fact that as much as 8.93% of the hotels in Serbia does not have their own website. The results of the Pearson's chi-squared test - $\chi^2=19.638$, $p<0.05$ prove the existence of statistically significant differences between the different categories of hotels in relation to the existence of the hotel's own website. One should also bear in mind that the notion of the statistically significant difference means the difference which, regardless of its size, is not incidental.

Table 1: *The participation of the hotels with a functional website all over Serbia - according to the category*

Category	Number of Hotels	Number of Hotels Having a Website	Participation
5*	9	9	100%
4*	120	118	98.33%
3*	134	121	90.29%
2*	71	58	81.69%
1*	13	10	76.92%

Source: *Author's Own Research*

Based on the data presented in Table 1, one can draw a conclusion that all the hotels of the highest category have a website as well as that the participation of the hotel having a website decreases from one category to another. It is alarming that almost a quarter of the one-star hotels and a fifth of two-star hotels do not have their own website at all.

Hotels are then divided into groups with regard to their macro location and are grouped into mountain, spa and city hotels. The results of Pearson's chi-squared test - $\chi^2=0.129$, $p=0.988$ do not show that there are statistically significant differences between these groups. Statistically significant differences are not perceived either between the hotel groups operating as part of international hotel chains and independent hotels, - $\chi^2=1.114$, $p=0.291$.

A virtual tour of the hotel allows consumers to form as real expectations as possible and improve the guest awareness of the hotel at the pre-consumption stage (Kosar et al., 2017). Lee and Oh (2007) conducted research in which they proved that the existence of the hotel virtual tour on the hotel's website creates psychological relief and influences the reduction in the degree of travel anxiety. The same findings were also reached by Ahn et al. (2013) who investigated a broader context of VR (virtual reality) functions on hotel websites on the degree reduction of travel anxiety.

Besides the advantages provided by the hotel virtual tour function, this research shows that this option is offered only by 25 of the hotels in Serbia, that is 7.2% of the overall number. The stated data show that Serbian hoteliers have not sufficiently recognised the potential benefits from a virtual tour function on the hotel's own website. At a first glance, it might seem that there are statistically significant differences between sites of different category hotels, with regard to virtual tour function. As a result, between the websites of hotels of the highest and lowest category, the virtual tour offer is not perceived per hotel, while the scope of it in other categories ranges from 7% to 9%. Still, the results of chi-squared test - $\chi^2=2.450$, $p=0.654$ imply an opposite conclusion. The same conclusion can be drawn if the hotels are grouped in terms of their macro location - $\chi^2=0.686$, $p=0.876$ and affiliation to hotel chains - $\chi^2=0.882$, $p=0.348$.

Hotel web portals can provide users with a chat box, that is live chat service with sales/reservations staff of the hotel. The chat box is usually

automatically started if the hotel website is visited. A potential guest can in real time get the necessary information and make a direct reservation of the hotel service. These platforms usually offer a possibility of file sharing which allows conversation participants to share different files without the use of an e-mail or any other web platform. Since the hotel reservations/sales department is not available 24/7, with chat box being active round the clock, the majority of chat boxes provides users with an opportunity to leave a message which will be at a short notice responded by the hotel reservations/sales staff. Also, since the communication and hotel reservation creation could include the sensitive data exchange (eg. credit card number), it is crucial for these platforms to have a guaranteed secure data transfer. By investigating the price and offer of the software solutions providing live chat, one can conclude that the very price of the software should not be a limiting factor for the implementation of this solution practically. The price is frequently formed on a monthly/yearly level with regard to the number of accounts (reservations agents). The software solution prices range from the cheapest (10 dollars per month) to a lot pricier solutions (<http://socialcompare.com/en/comparison/compare-live-chat-support-software-help>). It is clear that apart from the best software meant for live chat hotels have to provide staff whose job description will include a prompt response to the requests made via this communication channel, since it the users will expect their enquiry dealt with as soon as possible. The recruitment of such associates could pay off provided the hotel's internet portal is highly visited. It is not realistic to expect that Serbian hotels could profit from hiring additional staff who will be in charge of this communication channel, but it seems plausible that the existing staff (especially the front office staff) can be trained to use this potentially profitable communication channel. There are also efforts to use the artificial intelligence to communicate with potential guests via the chat box application instead of the hotel staff. It results in a chatbot which includes „a program which simulates an intelligent conversation with webpage visitors, dedicated to hotels“(Lasek & Jessa, 2013, p.146).

The results of this research show that only 12 hotels in Serbia (3.46%) have a reservations chat box on their portal. The results of Pearson's chi-squared tests make us conclude that there is no statistically significant difference relating to the feature between hotels belonging to different categories - $\chi^2=6.624$, $p=0.157$. The difference is excluded also if hotels are grouped based on their macro location - $\chi^2=2.562$, $p=0.464$, as well as in terms of their membership to a hotel chain - $\chi^2=0.407$, $p=0.524$.

One of the basic features of the hotel website is being the direct channel of hotel services sales. The solutions on the website in this regard are completely different. Certain portals only offer an e-mail address by which a potential guest can send a reservation request. However, this implies that the guest will be precise about listing all the elements which a hotel reservation typically contains. Therefore, Samčević (2012) states that the reservation is valid if it contains information such as: the guest's identity, the arrival time, room type booked, the method of account settlement and the identity of the request sender. Regular hotel guests, including various intermediaries in the tourism market, will know which information is necessary to include in the reservation request, but the question arises in terms of all the interested guests. This is why certain hotel portals include a pre-defined form in the hotel service reservation link, which makes the guest complete the certain data and leave the contact e-mail address. This information is transformed into an e-mail message by the programme code, which is sent to a pre-determined e-mail address of the reservations department. However, it is questionable if the potential guest can be, at the moment of the request dispatching, guaranteed the available capacity during the requested period. Thus, a number of hotel sites provide additional functionality which allows guests to in real time check the availability of a certain type of accommodation unit during the required period. The basis which provides such functionality is a high-quality property management system. The highest level of functionality is the one which, apart from the insight into capacity availability, provides an opportunity to, in real time and completely online, make a hotel service reservation and get the instantaneous hotel booking confirmation.

Based on the research results, one may conclude that out of 316 hotels that have a website 231 (73.10%) provide some of the previously introduced possibilities for sending a reservation request or making an online reservation. It is alarming that such a possibility is not recorded on as many as 85 websites (26.90%). It is important to note that several portals feature a reservations link, but following that link a user only reaches online travel agency (OTA) Booking.com. This seems unreasonable for several reasons. Booking.com is certainly one of the largest OTAs which charge its services with a relatively high price. The existence of the hotel offer on the Booking.com portal increases visibility and sales, which is an indisputable fact. However, it remains unclear why some hotel companies direct the potential guests who have invested some time and effort in finding their own website towards making a reservation

via an OTA, thus increasing their own expenses. Creating a simple online form for dispatching reservation enquiries requires no additional investment at all, but may result in the cost reduction of the commission that a hotel pays to an OTA.

The results of Pearson's chi-squared tests make us infer that based on the feature of presence/absence of possibility of reservation request dispatch there is a statistically significant difference if the hotels are observed in terms of their category ($\chi^2=24.120$, $p<0.05$) and the membership to a hotel chain ($\chi^2=4.242$, $p<0.05$), whereas at the same time it is not related to the type of the tourist destination in which the hotel is situated ($\chi^2=3.706$, $p=0.295$).

Table 2: *The possibility for booking hotel services via hotel's own website in Serbia*

	Hotel category				
	5*	4*	3*	2*	1*
BOOKING POSSIBILITY	100%	83.90%	70.49%	51.72%	70%
	Membership to an International Hotel Chain				
	Part of a Chain		Not Part of a Chain		
BOOKING POSSIBILITY	100%		71.90%		

Source: *Author's Own Research*

The data presented in Table 2 indicate that an online enquiry/reservation option is significantly more frequent with the higher category hotels in comparison to the mid and lower category ones. The hotels operating as part of chains integrate their offer in central reservation systems of the corporation they are part of, so they are expected to have a reservation option via the hotel's website.

If we analyse more closely the web portals of such 231 hotels which provide some form of enquiry or reservation, the following structure is obtained:

- 120 (51.95%) sites offer only the possibility for dispatching reservation requests;
- 19 (8.22%) sites offer the checking of capacity availability in real time which precedes the reservation request dispatch;
- 92 (39.83%) sites offer complete functionality which provides hotel service online reservation.

The higher category hotels prevail among hotels which on their web portals provide complete functionality regarding hotel service reservation. A total of 88.89% of sites of 5-star hotels provide such functionality, 46.61% of sites of 4-star hotels, 19.83% of sites of 3-star hotels, 6.90% of sites of 2-star hotels and 10% of sites of 1-star hotels. It is evident that with regard to the observed feature 5-star hotels are absolute leaders which on almost all their sites provide the possibility of online hotel service reservation in real time. Indeed, the results of Pearson's chi-squared test ($\chi^2=53.776$, $p<0.05$) confirm that there is a statistically significant difference between the hotels of different category regarding this feature. A statistically significant difference is also perceived between the hotel group operating as part of international hotel chains and other hotels - $\chi^2=27.749$, $p<0.05$. Such findings are not surprising since international hotel chains, as a rule, have a developed central reservation system.

Given the impact of the social media on the hotel company business performance (Baka, 2016; Ladhari & Michaud, 2015; Taylor et al., 2015; Cantalops & Salvi, 2014; Kim et al., 2015) it is important to determine the degree to which the Serbian hoteliers have recognised the social media importance in the modern market. The research included the identification of the links toward hotel profiles on different social media on hotel websites for every individual hotel in Serbia. This research did not focus on the contents analysis representing hotels on social media, but it was concentrated on answering the question concerning the social media platforms being preferred by the Serbian hoteliers.

By analysing all the hotel websites it can be inferred that Facebook is by far the most popular social media platform with the Serbian hoteliers- 60.81% of the Serbian hotels have their own page on this social media platform. Instagram comes second with 27.38% of the hotels, then Twitter – 24.78%, Youtube – 16.43%, Google+ 13.54%, LinkedIn – 6.63%, Pinterest – 3.75% and Foursquare – 1.44%. If we compare these data to the results obtained in the research carried out by Mašić and Kosar (2016), certain changes are noticeable. Namely, Facebook was also the popular social media platform then, but with a significantly larger participation – 77.3%. Twitter was the second with the participation of 27.2%, Instagram was third with 18.7%. It is clear that over the last 2 years Facebook has lost its popularity with the Serbian hoteliers, and simultaneously a rapid growth of Instagram's popularity has been recorded. Facebook is still expected to be the most popular social media

platform with the hoteliers for several reasons. According to Statista.com (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/>) Facebook has the most active users, around 2.17 billion, which is considerably higher than Instagram – 800 million or Twitter – 330 million. Simultaneously, unlike its competitors, Facebook offered hoteliers with additional functionality and provided its users with the possibility of sending a hotel reservation request directly from the hotel Facebook page. For every hotel website, the number of different social media profiles towards which there are links has been ascertained. The results of Kruskal-Wallis test - $\chi^2(4) = 69.528$, $p < 0.05$ indicates that there are statistically significant differences between the hotels of different categories with regard to this feature.

Table 3: *The average number of website links toward hotel profiles on different social media – according to the hotel category*

Category	Number of Links
1*	0.90
2*	1.02
3*	1.27
4*	2.33
5*	3.89

Source: *Author's Own Research*

As the data presented in Table 3 and Table 4 point out, higher category hotels have a considerably higher proclivity for using social media in comparison to the lower category hotels. Consequently, the highest category hotels' web pages have links toward 3.89 hotel profiles on different social media on average, whereas the lowest category hotels have a significantly lower average – 0.9.

Table 4: *Serbian hotels' profiles on different social media – according to the hotel category*

	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	Youtube	Pinterest	Google+	LinkedIn	Foursquare
1*	46.2%	0%	15.4%	0%	0%	7.7%	0%	0%
2*	42.3%	8.5%	7%	12.7%	2.8%	8.5%	1.4%	0%
3*	54.5%	17.1%	16.4%	9%	1.5%	14.2%	1.5%	0.8%
4*	77.5%	48.3%	42.5%	25%	6.8%	16.7%	14.2%	2.5%
5*	100%	88.9%	66.7%	66.7%	11.1%	11.1%	33.3%	11.1%

Source: *Author's Own Research*

The results of Kruskal-Wallis tests show that there are no statistically significant differences between the hotels' proclivity for using the social media if they are grouped based on their macro location - $\chi^2(3) = 5.553$, $p=0.136$, or the membership to an international hotel chain - $\chi^2(1) = 2.050$, $p=0.152$.

The number of tourists visiting the Republic of Serbia is constantly increasing. According to the official data of the Serbian Statistics Office published in the Hospitality and Tourism Statistics (2018), last year the Republic of Serbia was visited by 1,497,173 foreign tourists, which is by around 16.8% higher than the previous year. It is for that reason important for the hotels' websites contents to be translated into foreign languages, that is, to make it understandable for foreign tourists. The minimal requirement in this regard would be a contents translation into the English language, which has de facto become the global language (Crystal, 2003).

The research shows that only 70.32% of hotel web portals in Serbia have the translated contents in English. The results of Pearson's chi-squared tests point out that there are still statistically significant differences in relation to the analysed feature if we group hotels according to their category - $\chi^2=36.065$, $p<0.05$, as well as if we group them according to the membership to an international hotel chain- $\chi^2=4.795$, $p<0.05$. At the same time, if we group hotels according to their macro location, and subsume them under spa, mountain and city hotels, no statistically significant difference is recorded - $\chi^2=3.050$, $p=0.384$.

Table 5: *The participation of websites whose contents are translated into the English language*

	Hotel Category				
	5*	4*	3*	2*	1*
Translated into English	100%	86.67%	65.67%	49.30%	64.54%
	Membership to an International Hotel Chain				
	Part of a Chain		Part of a Chain		
Translated into English	100%		69.35%		

Source: *Author's Own Research*

By analysing the results presented in Table 5 it can be concluded that, not surprisingly, web portals of all the hotels affiliated with international hotel chains have the contents translated into English. Also, it is observed that higher category hotels, as a rule, significantly more frequently

provide the website contents translation into English in relation to mid and lower category hotels.

These data are particularly interesting if they are cross-referenced with the data on tourists' arrivals and nights by type of accommodation (Statistical Yearbook of Serbia, 2017). Namely, according to these data, as much as 57.31% of the total arrivals of the foreign tourists is linked to 3-star, 2-star and 1-star hotels, whose web portal in significant numbers do not have the contents translation into English.

Apart from English, the hotel companies' web portals are also translated into other languages. For each of the individual web portals, the number of foreign languages translation has been determined. The results of Kruskal-Wallis test - $\chi^2(4) = 35.986$, $p < 0.05$ indicate that there are statistically significant differences between the hotels of different categories with regard to the observed feature. Not surprisingly, the higher categories hotels' web contents are translated into a greater number of languages. Consequently, the 5-star hotels' website contents are on average translated into 3 languages, whereas such average for 1-star hotels is below 1. Also, a significant difference is perceived between the hotels operating as a part of an international hotel chain, and independent hotels - $\chi^2(1) = 12.556$, $p < 0.05$. The websites of the hotels operating as a part of an international hotel chain are on average translated into 6 languages, whereas such average for independent hotels is below 1. Simultaneously, if we group hotels according to their macro location, no statistically significant differences for the observed feature are recorded - $\chi^2(3) = 1.444$, $p = 0.695$.

One might as well expect the web portal contents to be translated into the languages spoken by the potential guests. Based on the official statistical data on tourists' arrivals and nights by country of origin (Statistical Yearbook of Serbia, 2018), foreign guests visiting Serbia are grouped according to their mother tongues. So, for example, the guests from Brazil and Portugal on the one hand, or Germany and Austria on the other are subsumed under the same group. Consequently, the number of guests belonging to the same language group has been determined. On the other hand, the number of portals translated into different foreign languages has been determined. The analysis excluded the English language as a global language and the tourists who speak English as their mother tongue. Spearman's rank-order correlation was run to determine the relationship

between the number of guests from individual language groups and the number of web portals which have the contents translated into the analysed languages. The obtained result is $r_s=0.284$, $p=0.270$, and as p-value is greater than 0.05, it indicates that the correlation coefficient is not statistically significant, that is, there is unconvincing evidence about the significance of the association between the variables. In other words, it cannot be claimed that participation of the translation into the adequate foreign languages is in accord with the sources of foreign tourist demand.

Conclusions and implications

This study contributes to a better knowledge of Serbian hotels' web portal functionality. Its results show that Serbian hoteliers are still in the Internet adoption process, despite the fact that most Serbian hotels have a functional website. According to the obtained data, it can be inferred that having a website is linked to the hotel category, thus, higher category hotels more frequently have functional websites in relation to lower category hotels. Still, the very fact that a hotel has its own website does not speak volumes of the website quality and functionality.

Based on the conducted content analysis of the Serbian hotels' websites, significant differences between different hotel groups with regard to the observed features can be perceived. Differences between hotel groups are not confirmed only for the analysed features of „virtual tour“ and „chat box“ regardless of the hotel grouping criterion. When all other features are taken into account, significantly better performances of the higher category hotels' websites are recorded, which is in line with the previous research (e.g. Chung & Law, 2003; Musante et al., 2009; Diaz & Koutra, 2013; Salavati & Hashim, 2015). As a matter of fact, it is recorded that the functionality of the hotel websites increases in accord with the increase of the hotel category.

The research has shown that hotel macro location in relation to the tourist destination type is not a factor influencing the contents and functionality of the hotel websites. The obtained data provided no conclusion as to whether the recorded differences between hotel websites located in cities, spa resort or mountain resort centers represent something more than incidental differences.

The websites of the hotels operating as part of international hotel chains have recorded better results in comparison to independent hotels'

websites with regard to the following features – „multilingual option“ and „online reservation possibility“ – which has been expected since they have developed central reservation systems and business operations in a large number of countries.

The obtained results indicate that Serbian hoteliers do not take full advantage of all the possibilities provided by a good hotel website, that is, there is a lot of room for the improvement of the content-placement and functionality of the Serbian hotels' websites. Certain solutions do not require considerable investments. The interconnection between the hotel websites and hotels' profiles on the social media is not an expensive solution at all, and simultaneously provides an efficient communication channel with potential consumers. Mašić and Konjikušić (2017) state that in February 2017, 255 hotels in Serbia offered their services via Booking.com portal. The appearances on such a portal, by all means, contribute to the hotel's online visibility, but, at the same time, it is related to high costs. A smaller number of such hotels suggest on their own websites that potential guests should make a reservation via Booking.com portal. Why should they encourage the potential guests to make a reservation via an intermediary? The construction of an online form on their own website which can enable the dispatch of reservation requests would make a significant improvement, practically requiring no substantial investment, and would impact on the cost reduction in terms of lower commissions which would be paid to online intermediaries. The improvement of online reservation process functionality on the hotel's website to the level of complete automatisisation, on the other hand, requires substantial adaptations and investments, but it is certainly an option to be taken into account, especially in the light of the high costs of online intermediaries' services. Also, the following question could be raised: Is it really so expensive to provide a high-quality translation of website contents, which will result in the linguistically-adequate representation of the hotel product? Are the costs so high that they justify the use of multi-lingual automated translation systems such as Google Translate, resulting in an endless series of translation mistakes? It is essential to bring to the fore once more the fact that the hotels' own website represents the hotel in the Internet arena with some 3.6 billion users.

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