GROUP ANALYSIS OF OFFICIAL HOTEL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS

Akrivi Vagena[1] and Gerassimos Manoussakis[2]

[1]Department of Business Administration, University of Patras, 26504 Rio Achaia, Greece. Tel 0030 6972947794, vagenaakr@gmail.com

[2] Department of Surveying, National Technical University of Athens, 9 Iroon Polytechneiou, Zografos 157 80, Greece, tel. 0030 – 210 – 7722693, gmanous@survey.ntua.gr

ABSTRACT

The present research investigates the official classification systems in order to find common, important sectors and criteria.Some criteria indicate the perception of certification organizations, countries that apply them, and the hotel industry as to what is important for a hotel to offer. Official classification systems state their basic principles, which differ from one system to another and not all are met at the same time. Most countries give three reasons for entering a formal rating system: consumer protection, tourism planning and marketing. The study will present the practices applied in the hotel industry, through compliance with official classification systems. It will contribute to the existing knowledge of hoteliers, institutions and organizations that create hotel certification systems, and in general to the knowledge of the tourism industry.

The survey data were drawn from the analytical recording and processing of 39 classification systems, applied in different countries and continents.

KEY WORDS: HOTEL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS-HOTEL RATING - STAR RATING - RATING CRITERIA

1. INTRODUCTION

Among the advantages hoteliers expect from classification are increased prices and profit margins (UNWTO, 2015). Providing information to customers about the hotel category acts as a marketing tool in a highly competitive market environment, where differentiation from competitors can be a matter of survival. To illustrate the importance of classification systems, Israeli (2002) points out that, despite the Israeli Ministry of Tourism abandoned the national star rating system in 1995,due to the inspection and enforcement costs found to be too high, hotels continued to use and advertise the rating in stars previously awarded to them.According to Israeli (2002), the star category can be seen as an asset that creates a significant boost for growth in sales and prices. Such an upgrade, linked to entry into an official classification system, is often mentioned in the literature of tourism management (Abrate et al., 2011).

However, in countries where the official hotel classification system is voluntary, a significant part of hotels choose not to enter the system. InFrance, there are 25% unclassifiedhotels (INSEE, 2015a), whereas in the United Kingdom this figure is higher, equal to 29% according to Hotel Data Limited http://www.hoteldatauk.com.).

The reason why governments are involved in hotel classification lies in the fact that tourist accommodation has a significant impact on the tourist experience and therefore its quality must be manageable (HensW. 2015).

Among the many characteristics of classification management systems, UNWTO highlights eight main considerations:

I.   The obligatory or optional nature of the classification.

II.   The level of validity and of implementation.

III.   The matter of the ownership of the system—who manages the classifications—is a central issue.

a. The most extensively used are public systems managed by the government.

b. Private systems are basically managed by private enterprises that grant labels or "awards" according to criteria that they themselves establish.

c. Associations of hotel professionals manage the classification systems in several countries such as Germany or Switzerland. In Austria, this is done by the chambers of commerce.

d. Finally, there are mixed systems. (for example, in the United Kingdom), where the management involves automobile clubs, the regional governments and the national authority.

IV.   The duration of the validity of the classification is also an important matter to consider.

V.   Another matterto concern is the process of assessment for new hotels.

VI.   In a lot of countries,the cost of the assessment, is supported by public budgets.

VII.   The design processes for the set of criteria vary, depending on the countries and the organization applying the system.

VIII. How the classification system will become widely known.(UNWTO 2013)

According to Qi and Qiang (2013), star rating has a similar effect as word-of-mouth reputation, because it is an indicator of quality and measurement of the level of facilities and services. However, star rating is different from the brand recognition and reputation. Hotels with a higher star rating usually have higher prices and guests need to consider the relationship between benefits and costs on a case-by-case basis. Besides, there are hotels with lower star ratings that have a good reputation and brand awareness. Further, Qi and Qiang report that since hotel guests tend to have less information about lower-class accommodation, online reviews are more influencing. However, customers expect high-rating hotels to be of higher quality, so they do not necessarily have to refer to third-party reviews (Qi and Qiang, 2013).

Hotel star rating systems are intended to provide accurate and objective accommodation assessment data according to defined criteria and guidelines.

HOTREC (HOTREC, 2015) which represents hotels and restaurants in Europe, made a serious attempt to create a star rating system which should really provide a standardised methodology in all European countries.The initiative intends to reduce confusion about hotel stars and offer greater transparency in how hotels are presented to customers.Depside all the potential problems (Agarwal, S.2012), hotel classification into star categories remains a very important factor for both, customers and service providers.This is also significant for investments made for hotelsto upgrade star category.

According to AgušajB., BazdanV., LujakĐ. (2017) star rating has a significant effect on pricing, as pricing is significantly higher in five-star hotels than in four-star hotels or three-star hotels etc. This result should not come as a surprise., It comes as an additional element which reveals that the hotel's highest star rating implies a higher On-line rating. As a result, higher On-line hotel ratings are positively related to higher prices and pricing power.

A well-designed classification system helps government planning by providing valid and reliable statistical data for different types of accommodation. Helps identify the need to develop certain categories of premises.In addition, improves marketing strategies by allowing targeted hotel promotion to specific geographic locations (e.g. resort, city, riverbank, mountain). Itallows the travel industry and visitors easily and accurately identify the types of hotels they are looking for, encourages hoteliers to improve the level and range of facilities. It also highlights their weaknesses.Finally eliminates poor quality hotels which damage the good reputation of the besthotels (Vine P.1981)

Comparisons between classification systems have been reported in several studies. This survey attempts to group 39 official hotel rating systems according to their degree of similarity and studies rating criteria for each group individually. Through their common criteria it analyses in depth the structure and characteristics of the groups that are created. The study argues that a detailed comparison of different systems results in the extraction of important information about the hotel industry. The results of the analysis highlight the important factors concerning the official classification systems of hotels, helping to better understand them. Therefore, this study aims to support both academic and practical knowledge.

2. RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

For the purposes of the study, the analysis began with the search for groups of countries presenting common criteria. For this reason, a double input table called "Country Criteria Existence"(CCE) was constructed in Excel, because it lists the analytical criteria of the classification systems of the countries studied.

Horizontally, the first line presents the sectors and analytical criteria applicable to the rating systems of 39 countries. The first column of the table shows the countries whose classification systems are analysed. The entry elements of the table are "1" and the "blank", where *"1"* symbolizes the *existence of the criterion* in the classification system of the respective country and where the *"blank"* means that the controlled criterion *does not exist* in the classification system of the corresponding country.

The frequency of each criterion in the 39 countries was then searched. To do the above analysis, a second table was created in the MatLab program. The table in the first three columns indicates:
   I.   The first column contains the names of groups of countries in which common criteria are presented.
  II.   The second column contains the number of countries in each group.
 III.   The third column shows the number of common criteria for each group. The presentation of the groups of countries is done in descending order as to the number of common criteria.

The common criteria of the systems of each group of countries are then detailed. Where "1" the criterion mentioned exists in all countries of the group and where "0" the criterion is not common in that group.

2.1. Example of how the table is constructed

Suppose $i = 1, 2, \ldots, 203$ the number of criteria and $j = 1.2, ..., 39$ the number of countries.

Each criterion is also considered as a column. Let the k-criterion from the number of 203 criteria. From the elements of the k column of the CCE table (a_{jk}, $j = 1, 2, ..., 39$, k = constant), we select those where $a_{jk} = 1$. Supposing that m_k = the number of the seitems. Then we record the names of the number of m_k countries.

We do this for all 203 columns, so we end up with 203 country groups, $m_1, m_2, ..., m_{203}$. Then with MatLab code we construct the requested groups of countries (the 1st column and the 2nd column of the table) and find the common elements between the sets $m_1, m_2, ..., m_{203}$.

Data from the 39 national classification systems collected on the survey's central checklist were further analysed in order to find out which criteria are most widely used. It was also attempted to group countries according to the number of common criteria they use in their systems.

For the purposes of this research, convenience sampling was selected, given the limitations of finding published classification systems in English language. After a systematic research were found in English, issues with the detailed criteria for the hotel classification for the following countries:

Greece	Austria	Belgium	Czech	Denmark
Estonia	Germany	Latvia	Lithuania	Luxemburg
Malta	Holland	Slovenia	Sweden	Switzerland
Bulgaria	Cyprus	France	Ireland	Italy
Hungary	Grate Britain	Poland	Portugal	Romania
Slovakia	Spain	Malaysia	Iceland	Philippines
Lebanon	India	Seychelles	USA (AAA)	USA (Forbes)
Australia	AbuDhabi	Jordan	South Africa	

Table 1: Countries whose hotel rating systems have been analysed

For the processing of the large volume of data from the analyzed national classification systems, a special checklist was designed with a total of 203 evaluation points. In this list the details from a total of 39 national rating systems were recorded.

Content analysis was chosen as the most appropriate method for the comparative analysis of individual hotel classification systems.

Quality and quantitative content analysis as a research method can manage a large amount of data - as in our case - since it does not affect the behavior of informers, it is systematic,synergy with other methods is possible and finally detects trends (KimberlyA. 2016).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The criteria sectors and the individual evaluation criteria from 39 national hotel rating systems were recorded in detail and compiled in the central checklist of the research.They were further analysed in order to find out whichsectorsand criteria are being used more widely.Attempts were made to group the countries according to the number of common criteria they use in their systems.The created groups were divided into two subsets because it was observed that each subset of groups has different preferred criteria. The aim is to identify areas of criteria with the most common criteria per group. This will lead to useful conclusions about official hotel classification systems, about the governments that implement them, scholars, the hotel industry and also for hotel guests.
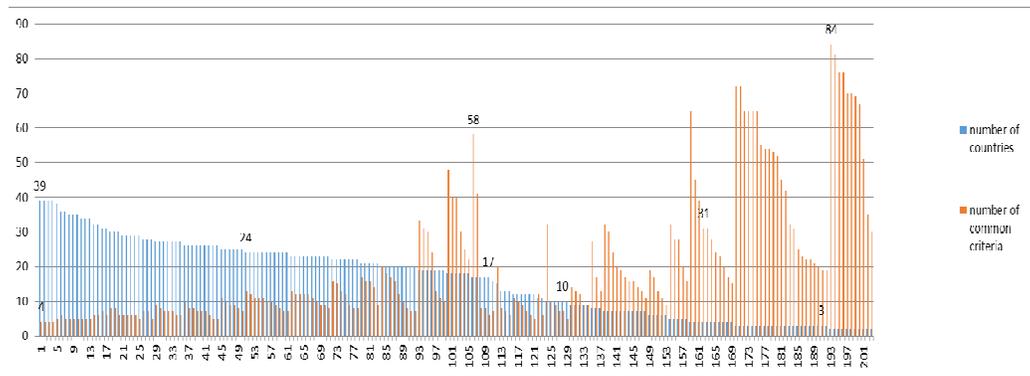
Figure 2: Number of common criteria in country groups of two (2) to thirty-nine (39) countries

For the purposes of this study, the total of the country groups in the diagram above is divided into two subsets.

Subset 1: includes groups of countries from 19 to 39 countries

Subset 2: includes groups of countries from 2 to 18 countries

Below are the sectors of the criteria of the hotel classification systems studied with the criteria identified in the study and belong to them. Alphabetically and in bold the criteria sectors are appearing and then the relativeindividual criteria for that subset follow. These refer to groups of countries of the first Subset.

- **(An) Annexes** (the building annexes of the hotels)
- **(BA) BackAreas**
- **(BSDB) Building Structure & Design**: Building, Entrance, Infrastructure/ Infrastructure, Disabled, Thermal Insulation
- **(BC) Business Center**: Internet access/ Connective Technology, Table/desk/desktop, Business Center
- **(C) Certifications**: Environmental certification, Certified procedures for disinsectization - myocide
- **(CI) Class and image**: SPA Center, Specialty restaurant & private dining rooms available, Private swimming pool
- **(COI) Classification organization and implementation**: Public nature of the system, Country-level application, Collective nature of the system, Mandatory system, Mandatory + graded evaluation criteria.
- **(CC) Cleanliness and Condition**: Frequency of room cleaning, Cleanliness and Hygiene, Laundry, evening housekeepingservice (turndown)
- **(CF) Communication Facilities**: Internet access/ Connective Technology
- **(CB) Conferences and banquets at the hotel**: Business Center, Multipurpose room

- **(Eco) Eco-friendly Practices: (ex. (a) Sewage Treatment Plant (b) rain water Harvesting (c) waste management (d) pollution control method for air, water and light (e) introduction of non-CFC equipment for refrigeration and air conditioning)**: Environmental certification

- **(EPAR) Exterior and Public Areas, Reception**: Internet access in public areas, Reception and lobby, Space available for at least two people to sit,Existence ofelevator, heating / air conditioning, Reception Hours, Entrance, Call center, Frequency of cleaning of public areas, telephone for the public in the reception area,Luggage storage service

- **(FBO) Food & Beverage Outlets**: Existence of restaurants, Breakfast provision, Food provision, Specialty restaurant & private dining rooms available

- **(GS) Guest services**: Internet access/ Connective Technology,Existence of an elevator, Guest services, SPA Center, Central Safe, Call center, Services for Disabled guests, Pool or sea towels, Laundry, Access for the disabled

- **(GB) Guest Bathrooms**: Adequateandgoodqualitylinens, Bath or shower in all rooms/apartments, Separation of the main WC from the area where the bathtub is locatedthe shower and sink, Additional amenities, 24hours hot water supply.

- **(GR-RF) Guest Rooms and in room facilities** :Rooms / Accommodations, in room TV, Autonomous heating/cooling, Adequate and multi-level lighting, Table/ desk/ desktop, Defined Luggage Rack, Kitchen equipment, furniture and similar catering equipment in the apartments, Frequency of room cleaning, Linen quality,PAY TV− Movie channels, Refrigerator or Mini bar in the guest rooms, in room breakfast provision, Bed length, Existence mirror/Full Length Mirror, Bed type, Bed width, Existence of wardrobe equipped, Additional new technology TVs in suite bedrooms, Hotel directory in at least two languages (printed or electronic), natural ventilation in a way that the customer can handle, Wake-up call, Adequate room lighting, Linen change frequency, Cleanliness and Hygiene, Choice of pillows, Electric socket with indication of voltage in each room, Soundproof,Second housekeeping service (turndown) in the evening, Mattress type, Mattress quality, Pillow type, Safe, In room Kitchen facilities, Existence of the Hotel's Operating Manual

- **(GSA) Guest satisfaction**: Sports Venues/ fitness center, PAY TV− Movie channels,SPA Center, Valet parking, Entertainment/sports/animation/ recreation, Public swimming pool, Private swimming pool

- **(HS) Hospitality and Services**: Internet access in public areas,Autonomous heating/cooling, Pay TV− Movie channels, Credit card services available, Central Safe, Valet parking, Second housekeeping service (turndown) in the evening,Services and access for the disabled,Hotel Site Appearance

- **(HCC) Hotel classification categories:**
     1*,2*,3*,4*,,5*

- **(Land) Landscaping**

- **(M-SO) Management and Style of Operation**: Private customer insurance, Minimum Room Rates, Hotel Site Appearance, Management, Perfection and functionality Hotel site

- **(RLF) Recreational and leisure facilities**: Sports Areas/ fitness center, Pay TV− Movie channels,SPA Center, Entertainment/sports/animation/ recreation, Shared swimming pool, Private swimming pool, Animation

- **(SP) Safety and Privacy at the hotel**: Central Safe, Uniformed Services, Security Service
- **(S) Staff**: Staff to know at least English, Staff knowledge
- **(AHB) The architecture of the hotel building**: Building
- **(HT) Hotel type**: Hotels

The following diagram shows that the dominant sector- the one with the most criteria for groups of countries from 19 to 39 - is guest rooms andin room facilities (35 criteria), followed by External and Public Areas and Reception (11 criteria), Guest satisfaction (10) and Hospitality and Services (9 criteria).
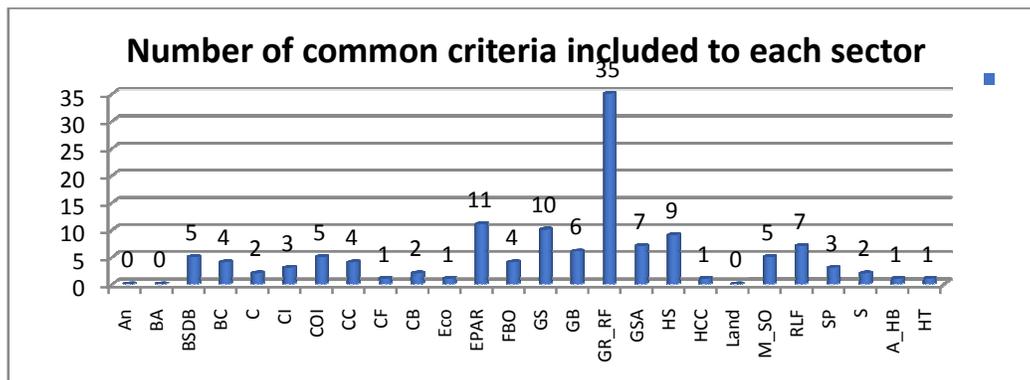
Figure 3: number of common criteria included to each sector

Below are the sectors of criteria of hotel classification systems for groups of countries from 2 to 18 (subset 2). In each sector are listed the individual criteria as identified in the study and belong to these sectors.

- **(An) Annexes**
- **(BA) Back Areas:**Toilets for the public, Elevator for staff, staff toilets and staff changing rooms
- **(BSDB) Building Structure & Design:** General Décor Style
- **(BC)BusinessCenter**
- **(C) Certifications:**Management System Certifications, Quality Certifications, Other Special Marks, Other Certifications
- **(CI) Class and image:**Breakfast quality, General Décor Style
- **(COI) Classification organization and implementation:** Mandatory system, Voluntary system, Region/State implementation, Mixed system assessment, Self-assessment by filling out a form
- **(CC) Cleanliness and Condition**: hygiene and safety rules in the kitchen, Dining areascleanliness
- **(CF) Communication Facilities**
- **(CB) Conferences and banquets at the hotel**

- **(ECO) Eco-friendly Practices:** (ex. (a) Sewage Treatment Plant (b) rain water Harvesting (c) waste management (d) pollution control method for air, water and light (e) introduction of non CFC equipment for refrigeration and αir conditioning.) : Use of energy-saving devices and accessories, Quality of waste bins and labelling for recycling, Smart Elevators/Lift (Energy- Saving), Waste disposal regulation

- **(EPAR) Exterior and Public Areas, Reception** : Common Areas, Public Toilets, a corner for indoor games facilities, Shared relaxation area for customers, Security cameras in important places (public areas and parking), Lighting All indoor areas are properly heated, air-conditioned and/or ventilated to ensure guest comfort, Reception Area, At least a Radio/ TV in common areas

- **(FBO) Food & Beverage Outlets:**Quality of utensils

- **(GS) Guest services**: Playground,Library, Breakfast Quality, Existence of at least one room for disabled guests, Transfer Service, In-Hotel Stores, Currency Services, wherever permissible by law there should be an elegant separate bar with an atmosphere of comfort and luxury, early breakfast service

- **(GB) Guest Bathrooms**: Square meters of bath, Telephone device in the bathroom,bath or shower with hot tub,Bathroom lighting

- **(GR-RF) Guest Rooms and in room facilities**: Bed lighting Specifications, Bedroom toilet furniture with mirror, Square meters of bedroom, Linen type, Magnetic/electronic keys, Cover quality -duvet, Floor Coverings, Type of cover - duvet, Quality of linen,square veranda or balcony, Fireplace in the room

- **(GS) Guest satisfaction**: Spa Facilities, Pool size, Playground, Library, Children'sPool, At least a Radio/ TV in common areas

- **(HS) Hospitality and Services**: Ability to provide laptop or tablet, Heating conditions, 24h Security Services, Hydromassage in the pool, a corner for indoor games facilities, At least a Radio/ TV in common areas

- **(HCC) Hotel classification categories:** 1+*, 2+*,3+*,4+*,5+*

- **(LAND) Landscaping**

- **(M-SO) Management and Style of Operation**: Proportion between number of rooms and number of staff.

- **(RLF) Recreational and leisure facilities**: Spa Facilities, Pool size, Pool Hydromassage, Shared relaxation area for guests, Children's pool, Creation of activities that showcase traditional culture and lifestyle

- **(SP) Safety and Privacy at the hotel**: 24h Security Services, Security cameras in important places (public areas and parking), Safe Electrical Installation, Fire Safety, Magnetic/Electronic Keys, safety lighting in case of power failure, Corridors covered with noise-absorbing material and slowing down combustion, Room doors made of fire resistant materials (min 1/2 h), Fire safety in the corridors, Medical services, Corridors equipped with communication system

- **(S) Staff**: Staff training, Staff behavior, Staff toilets, staff clothing, and staff changing rooms

- **(AHB) The architecture of the hotel building**
- **(HT) Hotel type**: Motels, Houses/ apartments for rent (guest house), Traditional guesthouses /Historic, Pesort, Bungalows & camping sites, Apartment hotel, City Hotel, Suites Hotel, Cabin, B & B, Hostel, Boutique Hotel, Mountain Hotel, Villa,Family Hotel, Ship Hotel, Island Resort, Green Hotel/ Sustainable hotel, Mixed-type hotel, Caravan-holiday park, Beach Resort, Innovative Hotel, Preserved Hotel

The diagram below relates theinvestigated sectors of the classification systems,with the most common criteria, for the groups of countries of subset 2.
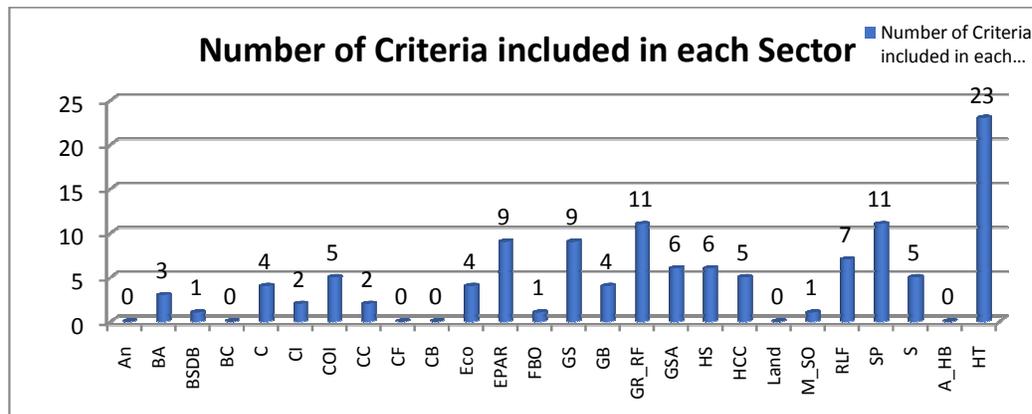

Figure 4: Number of criteria included in each sector for group of 2 to 18 countries

In chart D-4   above, the dominant sector is Hotel Type, i.e. most countries have the most common criteria in the Hotel Type sector (23),   followed by Guest Rooms and In Room Facilities (11), Safety and Privacy at the Hotel (11), followed by Guest Satisfaction (9) and External Public Areas and Reception (9).

In TH (HotelType) the value 23 means that in the groups of countries with number from 2 to 18 countries, there are 23 criteria concerning the sector "Hotel Type", and so on.

Table T 5 below shows the preferred sectors in each subset of the countries studied. In addition, the table shows that there are three common sectors, while there are three sectors which are important but different for each category.

Groups containing 19 to 39 countries		Groups containing 2 to18 countries
Sectors with the maximum number of criteria	Guest Rooms and In Room Facilities	Guest Rooms and In Room Facilities
	Exterior and Public Areas and Reception	Exterior and Public Areasand Reception
	Guest Satisfaction	Guest Satisfaction
	Hospitality and Services	Hotel Type
		Safety and Privacy at the Hotel

Table 5: Sectors with the most criteria for the two groups of countries studied

As an example, the following two indicative tables, D-6a and D-6b present groups of countries in relation to common sectors.The horizontal axis each time presents the areas of the criteria and the vertical axis is the percentages of the common criteria in the respective sectors.

Sector numbers are decoded as follows:

Sector 1: Number of common criteria

Sector 2: Predicted hotel categories

Sector 3: Types of accommodation that are starred

Sector 4:Certificationbody

Sector 5: System mandatory

Sector 6: Geographical reference

Sector 7: How to evaluate

Sector 8: Grouping ofcriteria

Sector 9: Method of evaluation

Sector 10: Building criteria

Sector 11: Rooms /apartments

Sector 12: Bath

Sector 13: Dining

Sector14: Reception and public areas

Sector 15: Swimming Pool

Sector 16: Spa and leisure/renewal facilities

Sector 17: Gardens and outdoor areas

Sector 18: Sectorfor other services

Sector 19: Sector foradministration

Sector 20: Personnel sector

Sector 21: Cleanliness / Hygiene and safety

Figure 6$^{\alpha}$: Preference of criteria sectors for 5 groups of countries
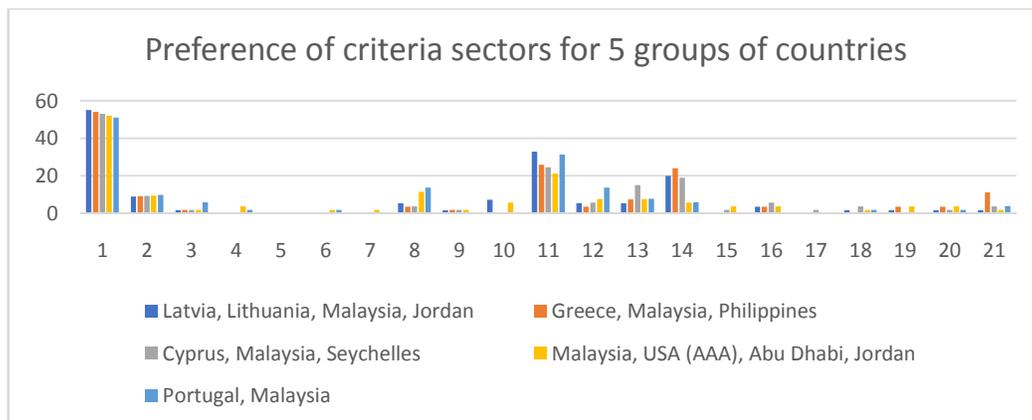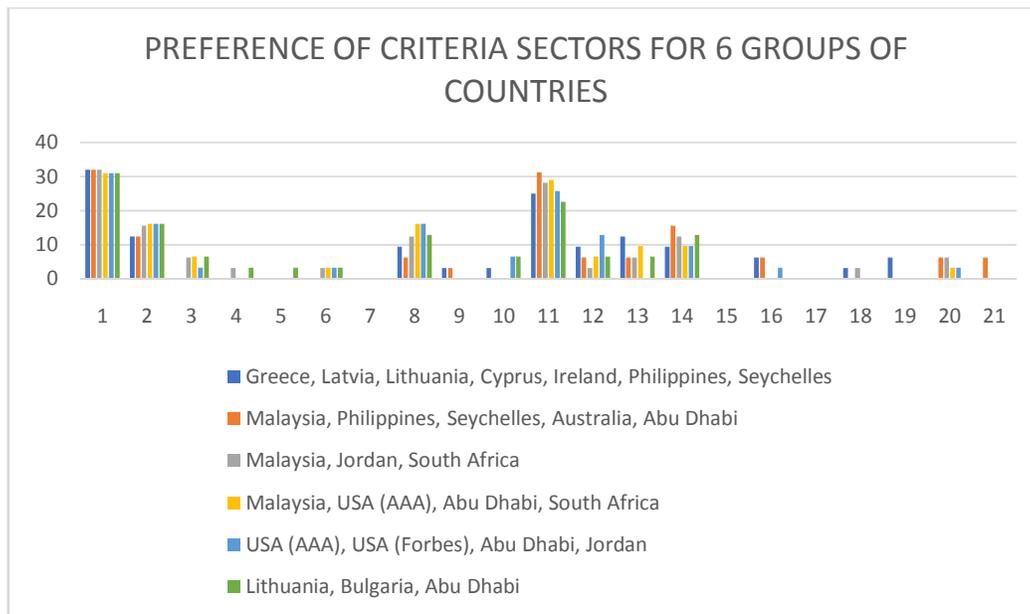
Figure 6ᵇ: Preference of criteria sectors for 6 groups of countries

It should be noted that when the number of common criteria in the country groups is high, the preferred sectors are the 2ⁿᵈ (Predicted hotel categories), the8th (Group ingofcriteria),the11th (Rooms /apartments),the12th(Bath),the 13th (Dining)and the14ᵗʰ (Receptionandpublicareas).

4. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the two sub-sets shows heterogeneity in national classification systems. The common criteria and areas identified by the investigation herein lead to the following conclusions:

I.   There is not a large number of common criteria either in all countries or in individual groups.
II. When countries rating hotels, they give weight to different criteria and sectors.
III. The countries studied apply most of their common criteria in the sectors listed in Table 5. These sectors are particularly important because they are adopted by bothsubsets of countries: a) Guest Rooms and In Room Facilities, b) External and Public Areas and Reception, c) Guest Satisfaction.
IV. However, Hotel Type sector is particularly important, because is the one with the most criteria applied for the group with a number of countries from 2 to 18 countries.

The study tried to fill the gap in literature so far by analyzing in depth a large number of official hotel rating systems (39) from the five continents.The analysis focused on the identification of common evaluation sectors and common criteria in each group of countries studied. The varietyof criteria that each country uses in its own official classification system makes hotel rating systems so complex.

It is also mentioned that in the investigated systems the important factors for the hotel industry are those that are relevant to the hotel rooms and the services provided to them.Great significance is given to the outdoor and public areas as well as the reception areaof the hotel. Customer service as well as the services provided along with privacy and security in hotels appear to be among the most important factors for the hotel industry. This also holds for countries and for organisations that implement the official hotel rating systems.

Limitations: Therewere two limitations for this investigation. Firstly, official hotel classification systems had to be found which were published on the internet and that all the analytical evaluation criteria and the procedures for their implementation were available.

The second limitation was that of the language. Systems from all over the world had to be found published in English. After a systematic research were found in English, issues with the detailed criteria for 39official hotel classification systems.

5. Literature

1] Abrate, G., Capriello, A. and Fraquelli, G. (2011), When quality signals talk: Evidence,Tourism Management, 32(4):912-921

2] Agarwal, S. (2012), "How three-star hotels vary in different countries", Economic Times,Available at: http://articles.economictimes. indiatimes.com/20120618/news/32299628_1_three-star-hotels-hotel-categorystar-rating

3] Agušaj B., Bazdan V., Lujak Đ. (2017), The Relationship BetweenOnline Rating, Hotel Star Categoryand Room Pricing Power, UDK / UDC: 640.4:338.51

4] Danziger, S., Israeli, A. and Bekerman, M. (2006), The relative role of strategic assets in determining customer perceptions of hotel room price, International Journal of Hospitality Management 25, 129–145.

5] Grossman, D. (2004) 'Confusion is the star of hotel rating systems', The Telegraph, Available at: http://www.telegraph.co. uk/travel/advice/Confusion-over-hotel-star-ratings/

6] Hensens, W. (2011), "Hotel rating through guest feedback", doctoral thesis, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth, available at: http://hdl.handle.net/10948/1631.

7] Hensens W. (2015), "The future of hotel rating", Journal of Tourism Futures, Vol. 1 Issue: 1, pp.69-73

8] Hewitt, E. (2008), "Star quality: what's in the rating?", Independent Traveler, available at: http://independenttraveler.com/resources/article.cfm?AID¼629&category¼13&page¼1

9] Hotrec (2015), hotels restaurants and cafés in Europe. Available at: http://www.hotrec.eu/about-us/membership.aspx (Accessed: December 2, 2019).

10]INSEE: 2015, Esane, INSEE database.

11]Israeli, A. A.: (2002), Star rating and corporate affiliation: their influence on room price and performance of hotels in Israel, International Journal of Hospitality Management

12]Kimberly A. Neuendorf and Anup Kumar (2016), Content Analysis, https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118541555.wbiepc065.

13]Olery.com (2012), "What do guests think? A report on the online reputation of UAE hotels", available at: http://l.olery.com/uae- report/? _ga¼1.212557079.2033310328.1366259764

14] Olery.com (2014), "Online reputation", available at: www.olery.com:reputation

15] Olivier Beaumais, Sauveur Giannoniy (2017), "Insiders vs outsiders in the hotel sector: is it worth entering an official classification system?" Universita di Corsica

16] Pascarella, S. (2005), "Deciphering hotel star-rating confusion", USA Today, available at: www.usatoday.com/travel/deals/inside/2005-01-19-column_x.htm

17] Qi, L., and Qiang, Y. (2013), "How hotel star rating moderates online word-of-mouth effect: A difference-in-difference approach", International Conference on Management Science and Engineering, China, 17-19 July 2013. Piscataway, NJ: IEEE

18] Thiessen, T. (2013), "Abu Dhabi folds reviews into hotel ratings", Hotel News Now, available at: www.hotelnewsnow.com/Article/12718/Abu-Dhabi-folds-reviews-into-hotel-ratings

19] UNWTO: 2015, "Hotel Classification Systems: Recurrence of criteria in 4- and 5-stars hotels", World Tourism Organization, Madrid.

20] UNWTO, World Tourism Organization (2013),http://www2.unwto.org/agora/about-hotel-classification-systems,UNWTO AGORA: an open forum to share dopinions an concept papers.

21] Vine, P.: (1981), "Hotel classification - art or science?", International Journal of Tourism Management

22] Vagena A. Papakostandinidis LA (2020), "Characteristics of official hotel classification systems", International Journal of Research in Tourism and Hospitality (IJRTH)Volume 6, Issue 3, PP 01-17

Web Sites

[1].   http://www.hoteldatauk.com

[2].   http://mot.gov.lb/Content/Uploads/AdministrativeTransaction/171218122022074~Classific ation%20Process.pdf

[3].   http://mot.gov.lb/AdminstrativeTransactions/Service%20of%20Tourism%20Equipment
[4].   http://aaa.biz/approved/assets/diamond_rating_guidelines_lodging.pdf

[5].   https://www.aaa.com/diamonds/inspector-shadows

[6].   https://www.theaa.com/hotel-services/ratings-and-awards

[7].   https://www.forbestravelguide.com/about

[8].   https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hotel_rating

[9].   https://uk.france.fr/en/holiday-prep/palace-status

[10].   https://uk.france.fr/en/holiday-prep/new-hotel-rating-system

[11].   http://pdtra.gov.jo/echobusv3.0/systemassets/0548c2cd-c74d-47cf-a52b-b652026feb64.pdf

[12].   https://www.tourismgrading.co.za/get-graded/whats-in-it-for-me/grading-criteria-3/

[13]. https://www.hotelstars.eu/belgium/news/press-releasesgermany/news-detailcurrentlyclassified/hotelstars-union-adopted-new-catalogue-of-criteria-for-hotel-classification/

[14]. https://www.loyensloeff.com/lu/en/news/articles-and-newsflashes/requirements-to-operate-a-hotel-in-belgium-n11720/

[15]. https://www.visitnordic.com/en/article/what-do-the-hotel-stars-mean

[16]. https://www.hotelstars.eu/ : Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic , Denmark, Estonia, Germany , Greece , Hungary , Latvia , Liechtenstein , Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands , Slovenia , Sweden , Switzerland

[17]. https://www.hotelstars.eu/

[18]. https://www.guide-to-bavaria.com/en/german-hotel-classification-system.html

[19]. http://germantouristhotels.germany-christmas-market.org.uk/hotel_ratings.htm

[20]. https://www.lvra.lv/en/certification/classification-criteria.html

[21]. https://chronicle.lu/category/at-home/28061-new-hotel-classification-system-unveiled

[22]. https://www.lookingforbooking.co.uk/hotel-classification-netherlands

[23]. https://www.total-slovenia-news.com/travel/2193-hotelstars-tourist-accommodation-rules-now-apply-in-slovenia

[24]. http://www.informus.info/eng/classification.asp

[25]. https://www.visitnordic.com/en/article/what-do-the-hotel-stars-mean

[26]. https://swissapproval.ch/services/hospitality-certification-services/hotels-classification-certificate-by-swiss-approval-inspection-and-certification/

[27]. https://www.ukecc-services.net/country.cfm/article/325/

[28]. https://sofiaglobe.com/2015/08/05/bulgaria-sets-new-rules-for-hospitality-industry-from-hotels-to-campsites/

[29]. https://www.ukecc-services.net/service.cfm/article/315/

[30]. http://www.tourism.gov.cy/tourism/tourism.nsf/All/41A8F9376348F872C225850B0042107F/$file/4741-7-2-2020-Nomos%20Aftoeksipiretoumenwn.pdf?OpenElement

[31]. http://www.tourism.gov.cy/tourism/tourism.nsf/All/902E993A5CE7B50CC225847B003F4319/$file/Peri_Xenodoxeion_kai_touristikon_katalymaton_genikoi_kanonismoi_2019.pdf?OpenElement

[32]. https://www.irelandhotels.com/gradingclassification.html

[33]. http://www.ireland.com/en-gb/accommodation/articles/classification-of-accommodation

[34].   https://www.touritalynow.com/italys-hotel-star-ratings/

[35].   https://www.hotelnewsnow.com/Articles/1063/Italy-establishes-hotel-classifications

[36].   https://www.italylogue.com/accommodation/what-the-italy-hotel-star-classification-system-means.html

[37].   https://hotellaw.jmbm.com/hotel_lawyer_new_star_rating_s.html

[38].   https://accace.com/hotel-establishment-operation-hungary/

[39].   https://masterpage.com.pl/star-ratings-guide-for-polish-hotels/

[40].   https://portugalvirtual.pt/_lodging/categu.html

[41].   https://www.alpharooms.com/hotelstarratings/portugal?utm_source=realstarratings&utm_medium=content&utm_campaign=realstarratings

[42].   https://www.hotelstars.eu/news/news-detail/hotelstars-union-adopted-new-catalogue-of-criteria-for-hotel-classification/

[43].   https://www.benidormseriously.com/spanish-hotel-star-ratings-explained

[44].   https://www.andalucia.com/hotels/star-system

[45].   https://www.alpharooms.com/hotelstarratings/spain

[46].   https://www.cataloniahotels.com/en/blog/how-are-hotels-rated-and-classified/

[47].   https://www.garrigues.com/en_GB/new/new-regulation-hotels-andalucia-changes-are-coming-classification-system-and-grand-luxe

[48].   http://asean.travel/2017/06/06/new-star-rating-system-implemented-malaysian-hotels/ [6/10/2017

[49].   http://www.hotelmanagement.net/own/malaysia-will-implement-its-new-hotel-rating-system-june-1

[50].   https://www.icetourist.is/Accommodation/Classification/Thehotelclassificationsystem/

[51].   https://jinisyssoftware.com/classification-hotels-philippines/

[52].   https://tourism.gov.in/hotels-restaurants

[53].   http://www.seychellesnewsagency.com/articles/9705/Seychelles+to+implement+rating+system+for+tourism+establishments

[54].   http://tourism.gov.sc/classifications/

[55].   CNN travel, (2014). https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/hotel-star-ratings/index.html
[56].   http://independenttraveler.com/resources/article.cfm?AID¼629&category¼13&page
[57].   Hospitality Know How: "http://knowhospitality.blogspot.com/2012/08/know-hospitality-classifications-systems.html