

Termal Otel İşletmelerinin Müşteri Yorumlarının İncelenmesi: TripAdvisor Örneği

Öz: İletişim teknolojisinde yaşanan gelişim ile birlikte insanların ve özel olarak müşterilerin istedikleri bilgiye ulaşması daha kolay bir duruma dönüşmüştür. Özellikle müşteriler bir satın alma davranışında bulunmadan önce geçmiş yorumları incelemekte ve bunlara dikkat etmektedir. Turistlerde bir müşteri olarak tatil tercihi sürecinde destinasyon ve otel seçiminde benzer şekilde bir davranış sergilemektedir. Literatürde, termal otel işletmelerinin müşteri yorumlarının incelendiği araştırmalar sınırlıdır. Bu kapsamda bu araştırmanın temel amacı, Yalova'nın Termal ilçesinde hizmet veren 4 ve 5 yıldızlı termal otel işletmelerindeki müşteri yorumlarını inceleyerek termal otellerinde müşteri memnuniyetini etkileyen unsurları belirlemektir. Bu amaç doğrultusunda Termal ilçesindeki dört tane 4 yıldızlı ve bir tane 5 yıldızlı termal otel işletmesinin TripAdvisor müşteri yorumları incelenmiştir. Söz konusu yorumlar 01.01.2021-01.09.2022 tarihlerine aittir. Bu tarihler arasında 127 yorum bulunmaktadır. Bu araştırmada nitel araştırma yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Yorumlar içerik analiz tekniği ile incelenmiştir. 127 yorumun 73 tanesi harika kategorisinde yer alırken, 103 tanesi ise Türkçe olarak yazılmıştır. İçerik analizi sonucunda otelin genel özellikleri, insan kaynakları, odaların özellikleri, yiyecek-içecek, termal hizmet olanakları ve Covid tedbirleri olmak üzere 6 ana tema ve 51 alt tema oluşturulmuştur. İnceleme sonucunda yorumların sırasıyla otelin genel özellikleri, insan kaynakları, yiyecek-içecek, termal hizmet olanakları, odaların özellikleri ve Covid tedbirleri üzerinde yoğunlaştığı belirlenmiştir. En fazla olumlu ve olumsuz yorum yapılan alt temalar; otelin genel özelliklerinde hizmet kalitesi, insan kaynaklarında personelin ilgili olması, yiyecek-içekte yemeklerin lezzetli olması, termal hizmet olanaklarında termal alanların güzel ve yeterli olması, odaların özelliklerinde odaların temiz olması, Covid tedbirlerinde ise önlem yeterliliğidir. İnceleme sonucunda, termal otel işletmelerinin başarılı olmasında ve tercih edilmesinde hizmet kalitesi ve personelin ilgili olması önemli iki unsurdur. Ayrıca müşterilerin yemeklerin lezzetli olmasına ve çeşitliliğine de önem vermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Termal Turizm, Termal, Termal Otel İşletmeleri, Müşteri Yorumları, TripAdvisor

Examining Customer Reviews of Thermal Hotel Businesses: TripAdvisor Example

Abstract: With the development in communication technology, it has become more accessible for people, especially customers, to get the information they want. In particular, customers examine and pay attention to past reviews before making a purchase. Tourists, as a customer, exhibit similar behavior in the choice of destination and hotel during the holiday preference process. In the literature, research examining thermal hotel business customer comments is limited. In this context, the primary purpose of this research is to determine the factors affecting customer satisfaction in thermal hotels by examining the customer comments in the 4 and 5-star thermal hotels serving in the Termal district of Yalova. For this purpose, TripAdvisor customer reviews of four 4-star and one 5-star thermal hotels in the Termal district were examined. The comments in question belong to the dates 01.01.2021-01.09.2022. There are 127 comments between these dates. A qualitative research method was used in this study. Comments were analyzed using by content analysis technique. Of the 127 comments, 73 were in the excellent category, while 103 were written in Turkish. As a result of the content analysis, six main themes and 51 sub-themes were created: general features of the hotel, human resources, features of the rooms, food and beverage, thermal service opportunities, and Covid measures. As a result of the examination, it was determined that the comments focused on the general features of the hotel, human resources, food and beverage, thermal service facilities, the characteristics of the rooms, and Covid measures, respectively. The sub-themes with the most positive and negative comments; The service quality in the general features of the hotel, the concern of the personnel in the human resources, the delicious food, and beverage, the nice and sufficient thermal areas in the thermal service facilities, the cleanness of the rooms in the features of the rooms, the adequacy of the precautions in the Covid measures. As a result of the examination, the quality of service and the relevance of the personnel are two critical factors in the success and preference of thermal hotel businesses. It also attaches importance to the deliciousness and diversity of the customers' meals.

Keywords: Thermal Tourism, Termal, Thermal Hotel Businesses, Customer Reviews, TripAdvisor

1.INTRODUCTION

Individuals encounter negativities in different ways in daily life. With the increase of negativities, various mental and physical disorders occur. The need to reduce these ailments and be healthier is increasing. With the increasing continuation of these travels for health purposes, health tourism has developed and is now considered a popular type of tourism (Ergen & Aydemir, 2020). One of the types within the scope of health tourism is thermal tourism. Thermal tourism is the whole of treatments with healing waters (Demir et al., 2017). With the

increasing interest in thermal tourism, hotel businesses operating only on thermal tourism have become widespread.

Thermal hotel businesses, like other businesses, aim to provide better service to their customers and become a preferred position. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to ensure that customers are satisfied with the services offered. Customer satisfaction can be completed in different ways for businesses. Customer satisfaction can be achieved in other ways, such as performing the first service delivery without mistakes, having qualified employees, or being at the top level in thermal facilities. However, everything may not go as the thermal hotel businesses want, and the customers may leave the hotel without being satisfied. Customers who are dissatisfied and leave the businesses with a bad experience can convey this to their environment or negatively assess the business on different social media platforms (Sujithamrak & Lam, 2015).

Customers who choose a destination or hotel take both positive and negative reviews into account. They choose based on these opinions (Anderson, 2012). As a result, customer reviews are an essential issue for hotel businesses. This crucial question has also caught the attention of the literature. Researchers are examining the customer reviews of thermal hotel businesses (Ak & Sürücü, 2018; Aylan et al., 2015; Çimenci & Ayyıldız, 2021; Tunçer, 2020). In this context, the primary purpose of this research is to determine the factors affecting customer satisfaction by analyzing the customer reviews in the 4 and 5-star thermal hotels serving in the Thermal district of Yalova. For this purpose, TripAdvisor customer reviews of thermal hotel businesses were examined. The results will be estimated to contribute to thermal hotel management practices and literature on thermal tourism.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Health Tourism

Today, people in developed countries desire to escape cities' dull crowds and stress (Garcia-Altes, 2005). This desire causes the search for different activities and destinations. There is a search for a vacation. One of the results of looking for a holiday can be to participate in health tourism. An individual participating in health tourism wishes to eliminate the negativities of business life and living in the city (Carrera & Bridges, 2006). At the same time, they go to destinations with healing waters to improve their physical and mental health and become more productive (Seow et al., 2021). It benefits from the healing waters, the sea, sand, the sun, and other beauties (Avcıkurt & Çeken, 1998).

Recently, while people are looking for solutions to their health-related problems, they move out of their cities and countries to get support from businesses and physicians in different destinations. Therefore, all intercity and intercountry activities for therapeutic purposes are included in the scope of health tourism (Aydın, 2012, Hall, 1992). Health tourism is a sub-branch of tourism and is also a type of alternative tourism (Ianeva & Basmadzhieva, 2022; Topal & Ergen, 2017). It is possible to list the characteristics of health tourism, which is different from other types of tourism in terms of process and operation, as follows (Özalp, 2005):

- Health tourism is one type of tourism which needs knowledge and facilities.
- Hospitals and businesses operating in health tourism must provide services to international standards.
- It is essential to have staff able to speak a foreign language, communicate with the patient and resolve the problems of the healthcare institution.
- It is a complex type of tourism that can provide various services for patients and their companions.

- Publicly funded advertising and marketing is required for the target audience identified. In these ads and promotions, the health and insurance institution that will allow patients to receive services abroad should be chosen.

Health tourism provides many benefits to countries. The first of these benefits is economic returns. Countries that attach importance to health tourism contribute to regional development by increasing their global market share. Within the framework of this competition, to attract foreign patients to their countries, they also keep up with technological developments and provide services to the citizens of their own countries.

2.2. Thermal Tourism

Thermal tourism includes mineral water, thermal baths, mudbaths, and inhalation (Hall, 2012). Moreover, supportive treatments include physiotherapy, climate therapy, exercise, rehabilitation, and psychotherapy. Treatment applications are also used for hobbies and entertainment. Thermal is a Latin word given by the thermos. While the word thermal is used in the sense of natural hot waters, the term thermal is used to indicate the temperature-related properties of the waters, and the term thermalism is used to examine the resources and to use them for health purposes (Kahraman, 1987). Thermal tourism, evaluated within the scope of health tourism, uses mineral waters containing molten minerals for treatment, well-being, and relaxation (Kozak, 2006). The main benefits of thermal tourism can be listed as follows (Culture and Tourism Ministry, 2007):

- Operation of thermal tourism facilities with a high occupancy rate
- It is known that it can be quickly packaged with alternative tourism types.
- Being a 12-month type of tourism, not seasonal
- In addition to improving human health in thermal tourism facilities, it also meets their entertainment and rest needs.
- The fact that thermal tourism facilities can quickly amortize your cat.

As the basis for thermal tourism is health, it is not made in all regions. In the area where thermal tourism will be held, first of all, there should be a thermal source, the environment should not be destroyed, a calm and serene environment, and most importantly, the air should be clean. In general, equipment that should be in thermal facilities can be listed as follows (Kök, 2013; Zengingönül et al., 2013):

- The thermal water must have some physical and chemical properties, the temperature of the thermal water must be at least 20 degrees, and the water must have mineral value.
- The thermal facility must have a suitable environment and infrastructure for alternative treatments (Thermo, inhalation, climate therapies).
- Sports equipment must be available for patients and their companions who want to do sports.
- To meet the beauty and care needs of those who will receive service at the facility, there should be alternatives such as a hairdresser and mud bath and experienced personnel and infrastructure for those who want a massage.
- Healthcare professionals should be present along with some instruments and units (x-ray, laboratory, etc.) used in diagnosing patients in health institutions.
- The facilities should be far from the city's center, calm, and intertwined with nature. Outdoor walking and sports areas must be available.

Having thermal water and various opportunities in a region does not mean that that region is suitable for thermal tourism. Detailed analyzes are required to ensure this compliance and to establish a thermal tourism facility in the region. Adequate research should be done by

taking into account factors such as infrastructure, superstructure and geographical conditions while performing the analyses.

3. METHOD

This study aims to identify the factors influencing customer satisfaction by reviewing customer feedback at 4 and 5-star hotels in the Termal district. For the study, a qualitative research methodology was adopted. The qualitative research method enhances the subject's sense and determines the questions' details (Rubin & Babbie, 2016). These comments are in the range of 01.01.2021 to 01.09.2022. There are 127 comments in all between these dates. The comments were analyzed using content analysis. Content analysis and data are assessed together and categorized by themes (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2018). Six major themes were identified during the review of the content analysis. Key themes are general hotel features, human resources, room features, food and beverage, thermal facilities, and COVID-19 related measures. Each main theme was looked at as both positive and negative. Both get the comments and perform the content analysis jointly with the authors.

5. FINDINGS

Customer comments on thermal hotel businesses cover January 2011 and September 2022. There are a total of 127 comments between these dates. These comments were first examined in terms of comment category and comment language. The findings associated with the two criteria are shown in Table 1. When the categorical classification of the comments in Table 1 is examined, a significant part of the comments is in the category of excellent (73 comments). In the type of the writing language of the comments, it is seen that the comments were written in 5 different languages, and most words were written in Turkish (103).

Table 1. Classification of Comments

Criteria	Category	n	%
Comment Category	Fantastic	73	57.5
	Very good	12	9.4
	Average	6	4.7
	Bad	5	4
	Terrible	31	24.4
	Total	127	100
Comment Language	Turkish	103	81.1
	English	12	9.4
	Russian	10	7.9
	Japanese	1	0.8
	Arabic	1	0.8
	Total	127	100

Table 2 shows the findings of the customer comments regarding the general features of the hotel. The sub-themes of the general characteristics of the hotel are listed in Table 2. In the theme of general features of the hotel, the most positive emphasis is on the service quality of the hotel (34), the cleanliness of the hotel (22), the view of the hotel (19), and the location of the hotel (18). The least emphasized positive sub-themes are that the hotel is new (1) and unique day gestures are made at the hotel (1). It is seen that the most negative comments related to the sub-theme of poor quality service (20) were made in the theme of the general features of the hotel. The least mentioned sub-theme negatively in the general characteristics of the hotel is that the hotel is suitable for families with children (1).

Table 2. Findings related to the general features of the hotel

Theme	Comments	Sub Themes	n	%
General Features of the Hotel	Positive	Hotel service quality	34	27.6
		Hotel is clean	22	17.9
		The view from the hotel	19	15.4
		Hotel location	18	14.6
		Hotel is relaxing	9	7.3
		The hotel is suitable for families with children	6	4.9
		Architecture of the hotel	5	4
		The calm of the hotel	4	3.3
		Hotel price	2	1.6
		The hotel has enough activities	2	1.6
		Making special day gestures at the hotel	1	0.8
		Hotel is new	1	0.8
		Total	123	100
	Negative	Poor service	20	38.5
		Hotel is expensive	9	17.3
		Hotel is not clean	8	15.4
		To be crowded	6	11.5
		Hotel is old	4	7.7
		Insufficient activity	4	7.7
		Not suitable for family with children	1	1.9
		Total	52	100

Table 3 includes the findings related to the theme of human resources. The sub-themes of the human resources theme are listed in Table 3. In the human resources theme, it is emphasized that the employees are mostly interested (40) and smiling (38). The least emphasized positive sub-themes are that employees are respectful (5). The most common negative aspects of human resources are that the employees are indifferent (16) and insufficient personnel (11).

Table 3. Findings related to the human resources

Theme	Comments	Sub Themes	n	%
Human Resources	Positive	Employees' Relevance	40	35.4
		Employees being friendly	38	33.6
		Having enough employees	12	10.6
		Employees being helpful	10	8.8
		Employees are courteous	8	7.1
		Employees' Respect	5	4.4
		Total	113	100
	Negative	Employees' Indifference	16	59.3
		Being underemployed	11	40.7
		Total	27	100

Table 4 includes the findings related to the theme of room features. The sub-themes of the room features theme are listed in Table 4. Room cleaning is mentioned most positively in the theme of room features (19). The least emphasized positive sub-theme is that the room design is beautiful (5). The most common negatives in the theme of room features are that the room is not clean (14) and the room furnishings are impaired (11). In the theme of room features, it was mentioned that the room was the least uncomfortable (1).

Table 4. Findings related to the room features

Theme	Comments	Sub Themes	n	%
Room Features	Positive	The room is clean	19	47.5
		The room is nice	9	22.5
		The room is large	7	17.5
		The room design is good	5	12.5
		Total	40	100
	Negative	Room not clean	14	35.9
		Poor room furnishings	13	33.3
		Poor room insulation	6	15.4
		Room is cold	3	7.7
		Narrow room	2	5.1
		The room is uncomfortable	1	2.6
		Total	39	100

Table 5 shows the findings related to the theme of thermal service possibilities. The sub-themes of the theme of thermal service facilities are indicated in Table 5. In the theme of thermal service facilities, the most positive sub-theme is that the thermal facilities are beautiful (29), and the least emphasized positive sub-theme is that the thermal facilities are sufficient (4). In the theme of thermal service facilities, it was mentioned that the thermal facilities were mostly inadequate (16) and that the thermal areas were coldest (4).

Table 5. Findings related to the thermal service facilities

Theme	Comments	Sub Themes	n	%
Thermal Service Facilities	Positive	Good thermal facilities	29	54.8
		Clean thermal areas	14	26.4
		Massage is good	6	11.3
		Adequate thermal facilities	4	7.5
		Total	53	100
	Negative	Insufficient thermal facilities	16	51.6
		Pollution of thermal areas	11	35.5
		Thermal areas are cold	4	12.9
		Total	31	100

Table 6 shows the findings related to the food and beverage theme. In the theme of food and beverage, it was mentioned that the food was mostly good (46). The food and beverage theme said that the most negative meals were bad (22), and the meals were not varied (14).

Table 6. Findings related to the food and beverage

Theme	Comments	Sub Themes	n	%
	Positive	To be beautiful	46	79.3
		To be diverse	12	20.7

Food & Beverage	Negative	Total	58	100
		To be bad	22	57.9
		Lack of variety	14	36.8
		Have a queue	2	5.3
		Total	38	100

Table 7 presents the findings associated with the Covid-19 Precautions theme. As the comments for the study cover Covid-19 content and beyond, the Covid-19 Precautions theme was created. The majority of Covid-19 measures assessments are that Covid-19 measures are insufficient (12).

Tablo 7. Findings related to the Covid precautions

Theme	Comments	Sub Themes	n	%
Covid Precautions	Positive	Precautions are sufficient	4	25
	Negative	Insufficient precautions	12	75
		Total	16	100

5. CONCLUSION

Establishing long-term communication with customers is a necessity for any business. Businesses that successfully establish relationships with customers gain an advantage in meeting customers' expectations and having a loyal customer profile. Meeting the customers' expectations ensures that the negative evaluations that may occur are at a minimum level. Customers whose expectations are met make more positive evaluations. In this context, this study examines the customer evaluations of 4 and 5-star thermal hotels in the Termal district. This review has determined the factors that the customers are satisfied with and not in the thermal hotel enterprises. The data obtained for analysis were obtained from TripAdvisor.com. A total of 127 customer reviews were reviewed.

The most mentioned among the guest reviews are the general features of the hotel. In the general features of the hotel, factors such as the quality of the hotel's service, the view, and the location are positively in the foreground. In the overall general features of the hotel, the most negative complaints relate to the quality of service. Within the theme of the general features of the hotel, the quality of service is mentioned both positively and negatively. However, there are more positive comments about the quality of service. Quality of service is the primary driver of client satisfaction and is expected to be the most cited driver. In addition to the quality of service, the hotel's view and location are also at the forefront of positively rated factors. Geranaz and Yetgin (2021) argue that the beauty and nature of the hotel's natural environment attract and appease guests. Therefore, it is consistent with positive reviews on the view and location of the hotel.

After the general features of the hotel, the most evaluated theme is human resources. In the theme of human resources, it was stated that the employees should be interested and smiling positively. Similarly, Geranaz and Yetgin (2021) found that there were a lot of positive comments about the caring and smiling faces of the employees. In the theme of human resources, there are also negative evaluations stating that employees are indifferent and inadequate. This result is similar to some studies in the literature. Saatcı et al. (2022) found that customers complain about the indifferent attitudes of the staff and the lack of sufficient staff. Çimenci and Ayyıldız (2021) state that the lack of personnel has a negative impact on customers

The cleanliness of the rooms is at the forefront of positive and negative reviews of the room's features. Negative reviews refer to improper furniture in the rooms. Customers make sure the rooms are clean. Customers wait for a clean room during the holidays. Doğancılı et al. (2018) indicate that cleaning is a priority issue. Concerning food and beverages, food quality predominates in positive assessments. In the same way, in the negative review, it is said that the food is bad and inadequate. Ayyıldız and Baykal (2020) note that there are many reviews of food tastes. Regarding COVID-19 measures, customer reviews are negative and proper precautions are not taken. In the theme of thermal installations, mention is made that thermal facilities are the most positive. In the negative, it is indicated that the thermal facilities are insufficient and dirty. Ayyıldız and Baykal (2020) claim that client complaints are related to pool maintenance. Çimenci and Ayyıldız (2021) report numerous complaints about thermal areas in thermal hotels. Specific suggestions can be made based on the results of the research. These:

- Overall, efforts should be made to improve service quality and sustain it successfully.
- Employees should behave on a customer basis.
- Employees must smile as they communicate with customers.
- Businesses should have enough employees.
- Staff should be trained to take a relevant and friendly approach to service.
- Particular attention should be paid to the cleanliness of the parts, and checks should be carried out within a short period.
- Furnishings in rooms must not be old and rotten.
- Make sure the food and beverages are varied and delicious.
- Thermal zones should suffice. Customers should not queue for thermal zones.
- It is necessary to take care of the cleanliness of the thermal zones. The cleanliness of these common areas used by customers can directly affect satisfaction.

This study is limited to four and five-star hotels in the Termal district. Also, comments were reviewed for one year. In future studies, customer reviews of thermal hotel businesses in different regions can be evaluated, and comparisons can be made between areas. Customers' comments may cover a more extended period. In this way, it can be learned whether the complaints that have been going on for a long time continue.

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