# EXAMINATION OF TOURIST COMPLAINTS TOWARD ACCOMMODATION BUSINESSES: THE CASE OF KAYSERI

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## ABSTRACT

Due to developments in information and communication technologies, social media channels have become one of the most important tools utilized in the exchange processes between consumers and businesses. Particularly due to the nature of tourism products, which cannot be experienced beforehand, feedback regarding the complaints of tourists who have already experienced the product is highly important in the decision-making processes related to tourism. Based on this information, the study focuses on examining the complaints of foreign tourists about accommodation businesses, which are among the most critical components of tourism enterprises. The examination of foreign tourists' complaints was deemed appropriate in the context of Kayseri, a destination that is striving to gain global recognition in health, cultural, and winter tourism, and where no prior study on tourists' complaints has been found. The complaints about accommodation businesses in Kayseri were decided to be analyzed based on reviews on TripAdvisor, as it is one of the most preferred social media channels globally for evaluating tourism enterprises. Therefore, the study aims to present findings and recommendations regarding the complaints of foreign tourists that will help improve the service processes of businesses in Kayseri and facilitate the decision-making processes of foreign tourists. In this regard, 314 complaints written in different languages by foreign tourists on TripAdvisor have been examined within the scope of the study. Content analysis revealed that "rooms" were the most complained-about main theme. Additionally, it was found that significant complaints were made regarding perceived service quality, intention to recommend, and the intention to return.

***Keywords:*** *Accommodation Businesses, Tourist Complaints, Tripadvisor, Kayseri.*

# KONAKLAMA İŞLETMELERİNE YÖNELİK TURİST ŞİKÂYETLERİNİN İNCELENMESİ: KAYSERİ ÖRNEĞİ

## ÖZ

Bilgi ve iletişim teknolojilerinde görülen gelişmelere bağlı olarak sosyal medya kanalları, tüketici ve işletmeler arasındaki değişim süreçlerinde yararlanılan en önemli araçlardan biri olmuştur. Özellikle önceden deneyimlenemeyen yapısı nedeniyle turizmle ilgili tercih süreçlerinde turistik ürünü deneyimleyen turistlerin özellikle şikâyetlerine ilişkin geri bildirimleri oldukça önemlidir. Bu bilgiler doğrultusunda, turizm işletmelerinin en önemli bileşenlerinden olan konaklama işletmelerine ilişkin yabancı turistlerin şikâyetlerinin incelenmesi, araştırmanın konusunu oluşturmuştur. Yabancı turistlerin şikâyetlerinin sağlık, kültür ve kış turizminde dünyaya açılmak için çaba gösteren ve turistlerin şikâyetleri ile ilgili herhangi bir araştırmaya rastlanılmayan Kayseri destinasyonu örneğinde incelenmesi uygun görülmüştür. Kayseri'deki konaklama işletmelerine yönelik şikâyetlerin, küresel boyutta turizm işletmelerinin değerlendirilmesinde en çok tercih edilen sosyal medya kanallarından biri olmasından dolayı TripAdvisor'daki yorumlara dayalı olarak incelenmesine karar verilmiştir. Dolayısıyla araştırmanın amacı, Kayseri'deki işletmelerin hizmet süreçlerini iyileştirecek ve yabancı turistlerin karar süreçlerini kolaylaştıracak yabancı turistlerin şikâyetleri ile ilgili bulgu ve önerilerin sunulmasıdır. Bu doğrultuda, TripAdvisor'daki yabancı turistler tarafından farklı dillerde yazılan 314 yorum araştırma kapsamında incelemeye alınmıştır. Yapılan içerik analizi neticesinde, odaların en fazla şikâyet alan ana tema olduğu görülmüştür. Diğer yandan turistler tarafından algılanan hizmet kalitesi, tavsiye etme niyeti ve tekrar gelme niyetleri bakımından önemli düzeyde şikâyetlerin yapıldığı tespit edilmiştir.

***Anahtar Kelimeler:*** *Konaklama İşletmeleri, Turist Şikâyetleri, TripAdvisor, Kayseri.*

## INTRODUCTION

Approximately 4.76 billion people, accounting for 59.4% of the global population, use social media (Meltwater, 2023). Social media, through the interaction and online networks creates, facilitates information sharing and access to information regardless of time and place (Swart et al., 2019). In this regard, social media has transformed the marketing tools of tourism businesses, leading to a significant rise in online sales (Khrais & Gabbori, 2023) and providing opportunities to reach larger audiences (Hays et al., 2013). For tourists, social media not only makes acquiring information faster and easier (Tosyalı & Sütçü, 2016) but also enhances their touristic experiences (Ramos & Hassan, 2021). Therefore, it can be said that these developments provided by social media allow for the acquisition of more accurate information more quickly about tourism products that cannot be experienced beforehand, such as hospitality services, and have begun to be seen as a significant factor in decision-making processes.

Accommodation businesses are one of the most crucial variables for ensuring the development and sustainability of tourism due to their role in facilitating tourism mobility (Doğan & Ersoy, 2018). Additionally, accommodation businesses are among the enterprises that gain the most advantage in the global competitive environment by leveraging social media and its applications (Leung et al., 2013). Considering this information, the importance of social media applications for accommodation businesses becomes evident. In terms of influencing tourists' decision-making processes, complaints—considered a significant part of customer relationship management and an effective marketing tool for accommodation businesses—are particularly important (Aksoy & Yılmaz, 2022). Complaints shared on social media are seen as one of the most influential sources of information, helping informed tourists make better decisions (Karami et al., 2018). In this context, it is crucial to evaluate complaints made by tourists with a holistic approach and to implement preventive measures based on findings and recommendations.

Kayseri, with its natural and supporting resources, is one of the significant destinations striving to establish a presence in the global tourism market through local and private institutions, particularly in winter tourism (Gürbüz et al., 2019), cultural tourism (Çeşmeci, 2023), and health tourism (Bayram & Akkülah, 2020). Given that complaints from foreign tourists are crucial for a destination aiming to enter the global tourism market (Lee et al., 2011), this study finds it appropriate to examine the complaints of foreign tourists regarding accommodation businesses in Kayseri. Accordingly, the study investigates complaints written in different languages by foreign tourists about accommodation businesses in Kayseri, as featured on TripAdvisor – one of the world's largest online travel platforms and a prominent source for evaluating tourism enterprises (Alaimo et al., 2020). The study aims to present body of knowledge that will improve the service

processes of businesses in Kayseri and facilitate the decision-making processes of foreign tourists through the findings and recommendations obtained from these examinations. The lack of previous study focusing on the analysis and evaluation of tourist complaints in the context of Kayseri highlights the significance of this study. On the other hand, it is expected that presenting a body of knowledge that is likely to have a widespread impact on the literature regarding the insights derived from foreign tourists' complaints will help fill the existing gap in the literature specific to Kayseri.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media refers to the activities, practices, and behaviors among communities of people who gather online to share knowledge and opinions through web-based applications that make it possible to create and easily share content such as images, videos, and audio (Brake & Safko, 2009). With its increasingly dominant influence on people's daily lives (Swart et al., 2019), social media has become a crucial platform where tourists share their travel experiences, thereby serving as a support resource for all potential tourists who intend to visit the same destinations. Consequently, it influences touristic behavior and guides decision-making processes (Ramos & Hassan, 2021). Another significant impact of social media in tourism is observed at the business level, where it plays an active role in business processes and management, making it particularly important for accommodation businesses (Leung et al., 2013). Similarly, TripAdvisor has a significant impact on accommodation businesses, as it is one of the most preferred social media channels globally for evaluating tourism enterprises.

Accommodation businesses not only play a crucial role in national economies but also contribute significantly to the development of the tourism sector, making the enhancement of these businesses a necessity (Ramukumba & Ferreira, 2016). In this context, it is important not only to improve the business processes within accommodation businesses but also to evaluate their processes on social media channels in today's tech-driven world. One of the key elements on social media channels, particularly important for accommodation businesses, is tourist complaints, which are seen as a primary factor in ensuring tourist satisfaction (Xiang et al., 2017). A complaint is the expression of dissatisfaction experienced by consumers with a product or service, often conveyed through written or verbal feedback (Aksoy & Yılmaz, 2022). Tourist complaints, specifically, are reactions from tourists who, after experiencing tourism products, feel that their expectations and needs have not been met. These complaints are inevitable in the tourism industry due to four structural characteristics: the lack of coordination between different stages of the service delivery chain, sensitivity to uncertainties in the external environment, the rise of small, independent, and partially unregulated travel agencies, and the irregularity of consumer demand due to seasonal fluctuations (Hannigan, 1980).

Customer complaints, arising from unmet expectations and unsatisfied needs, serve as a crucial guide for accommodation businesses that seek to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage in the global market (Aksoy & Yılmaz, 2022). This is because effectively addressing and evaluating tourist complaints is essential for increasing customer satisfaction and fostering positive word-of-mouth communication in the accommodation industry (Deng et al., 2013). In other words, managing complaints with a customer-centric approach contributes to achieving service excellence in accommodation businesses and helps in fostering customer loyalty by making tourists feel valued (Mutlubaş, 2023; González & Capel-Davies, 2024). Furthermore, tourist complaints are particularly significant as they act as proactive indicators of structural flaws and deficiencies in the internal operations of accommodation businesses. In today's social media-driven world, the importance of such issues is further amplified by the potential for negative experiences to reach large audiences through widespread interaction (Hannigan, 1980).

Complaints that encompass feedback from tourists regarding their experiences, particularly when their needs and expectations are not fully met, are critical not only for improving the business processes of accommodation businesses but also for ensuring tourist satisfaction and loyalty. As a result, there has been a significant body of study in the literature focusing on tourist complaints in accommodation businesses (Hannigan, 1980; Ekiz et al., 2012; Lertputtarak & Samokhin, 2017; Marina & Diana, 2017; Özdal & Bardakoğlu, 2017; Şahin et al., 2017; Sari, 2018; Ünal et al., 2020; Zengin & Haliloğlu, 2020; Hien et al., 2022; González & Capel-Davies, 2024). For example, Ekiz et al., (2012) in their study analyzing 1,453 complaints on TripAdvisor related to luxury accommodation businesses in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, identified key themes such as room issues, rude staff, unknowledgeable staff, and lack of response to complaints. Similarly, González & Capel-Davies (2024) analyzed the sensitivity of accommodation businesses to external factors, a characteristic inherent to the industry's structure, and found that even the fatigue experienced by tourists during their travels can lead to complaints.

Demirci et al., (2015) investigated complaints from tourists staying at five-star hotels in Eskişehir and found high complaint rates related to low service quality, hygiene, and sanitation issues. Marina & Diana (2017) examined tourist complaints about accommodation businesses in Hunedoara, Romania, and identified themes such as sound insulation, old buildings, cleanliness, managerial issues, staff with no foreign language skills, old furniture, air conditioning problems, and high prices. Hien et al. (2022) explored complaints related to service, value, room quality, sleep quality, and cleanliness in accommodation businesses in Vietnam. They found that tourists were more likely to complain about service, sleep quality, and cleanliness. Lertputtarak & Samokhin (2017), studying tourist complaints at

four-star accommodation businesses in Pattaya, identified seven main themes: staff, rooms, bathrooms, breakfast, facilities, location, and parking. Şahin et al., (2017) analyzed 274 complaints on TripAdvisor related to accommodation businesses in Bishkek and found that issues related to products and pricing were significant factors in complaint formation.

Kılıç & Ok (2012), who investigated tourist complaints at five-star accommodation businesses in Istanbul, identified prominent themes including noisy and crowded environments, issues with extra services and high costs, and inadequate staff. They found that these complaints often led tourists to consider changing their accommodation. Ünal et al. (2020) examined complaints about accommodation businesses across 11 cities in the Marmara Region on Şikayetvar and identified price policies, staff, and service quality as the most frequently complained-about themes. Gürkan & Polat (2014), who studied complaints about 34 accommodation businesses in 14 different locations in the Aegean and Mediterranean regions, identified five main themes: service quality, facility amenities, staff, pool, and management. They also found that tourists were particularly dissatisfied with inadequate and poor-quality food and beverage services, insufficient cleanliness and hygiene, and inadequate or faulty materials used in the rooms. Zengin & Haliloğlu (2020) analyzed complaints on Şikayetvar and TripAdvisor about accommodation businesses in Sakarya, identifying eight main themes and 48 subcategories. They discovered that complaints were more prevalent in five-star accommodation businesses and that the most frequently complained-about main themes were the hotel's features and facilities and its management structure, while the most common subcategories of complaints were related to pricing policies and staff behavior.

Magatef et al. (2019) examined the evaluation of customer complaints in five-star hotels and their impact on customer satisfaction. The study found that the process of handling complaints in hotels affects customer satisfaction, particularly concerning the managers and staff responsible for addressing these complaints. Additionally, it was revealed that effective planning and action mechanisms need to be developed for evaluating complaints to ensure customer satisfaction and loyalty. Weiss et al. (2005) focused on the impact of factors such as food quality, service quality, atmosphere, and innovation on customers' intentions to revisit themed restaurants. They discovered that customers not only had no expectations regarding innovation but also viewed it as a complaint element. However, aspects like food quality and atmosphere, which were not perceived as complaint factors, were found to significantly influence revisit intentions. Birdir & Bal (2013), in their study on foreign tourists visiting Turkey, identified elements that satisfied and dissatisfied tourists in terms of complaints. Moreover, it was determined that a large portion of tourists intended to return to Antalya and were inclined to recommend it to others.

**METHODOLOGY**

The scope of the study encompasses accommodation businesses in Kayseri and the complaints from foreign tourists about these businesses on TripAdvisor. A scan conducted on TripAdvisor between June 22-27, 2024, revealed 105 accommodation businesses, of which 30 with no reviews were excluded, resulting in 75 businesses being included in the study. Additionally, reviews classified as "average," "poor," and "terrible" on TripAdvisor were considered complaints and included in the study. The "average" reviews were also included due to the possibility of containing complaint-related issues. Out of a total of 5,277 reviews for the relevant accommodation businesses, 1,172 were identified as complaints, and 314 of these were created by foreign tourists. Consequently, the study focused on analyzing the 314 complaints through content analysis.

Content analysis is a widely used technique in social sciences for analyzing information such as articles, documents, notes, and interviews, focusing on the frequency of occurrence of events and phenomena (Baltacı, 2019). According to another definition, content analysis involves evaluating all contents using an inductive approach and revealing relationships among them (Kolbe & Burnett, 1991). Therefore, the aim of the study is to provide insights that will improve the service processes of businesses in Kayseri and facilitate foreign tourists' decision-making processes by associating the findings and recommendations obtained through content analysis. The significance of the study arises from the fact that there has been no previous study specifically examining and evaluating tourist complaints in the context of Kayseri. The analysis revealed 7 main themes and 45 sub-themes. The themes were developed using those presented by Ak & Kızılırmak (2019). In addition, themes identified as specific to the accommodation businesses in Kayseri examined within the scope of the study were also included within the scope of the study.

**FINDINGS**

According to the study aims, 314 complaints made by foreign tourists on TripAdvisor about 75 accommodation businesses in Kayseri were evaluated, and content analysis was conducted. The analysis identified 7 main themes and 45 sub-themes related to the reviews. The main themes were classified as follows: rooms, staff and front office, food and beverage, general characteristics of the business, other services, and other complaints. The rooms theme comprises 11 sub-themes. The staff and other services themes each include 4 sub-themes. The food and beverage and other complaints themes each have 7 sub-themes. The front office and general characteristics of businesses themes each contain 6 sub-themes. Detailed information about the main and sub-themes, as well as the frequency of complaints, their percentages within the total frequency, and the percentages of the main themes within the total are provided in Table 1.

**Table 1.**

*Distribution of the Content of Complaints Made Against Accommodation Businesses in Kayseri*

| Main Themes | Sub- Themes | Frequency | Percentage | Total Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rooms | Cleanliness | 42 | 4,60 | 39,49 |
| | Size | 24 | 2,63 | |
| | Bathroom (small, old, dirty, etc.) | 47 | 5,14 | |
| | Furniture and equipment (quality, insufficient, etc.) | 27 | 2,95 | |
| | Condition (neglect, old, etc.) | 49 | 5,36 | |
| | Odor (smoke, etc.) | 29 | 3,17 | |
| | View | 3 | 0,33 | |
| | Wireless | 28 | 3,06 | |
| | Price | 3 | 0,33 | |
| | Air conditioning | 61 | 6,67 | |
| | Soundproofing (noise) | 48 | 5,25 | |
| Staff | Staff behavior (rude, etc.) | 31 | 3,39 | 15,32 |
| | Indifference of staff | 38 | 4,16 | |
| | Staff's lack of knowledge about the city | 8 | 0,88 | |
| | Staff performance (language, etc.) | 63 | 6,89 | |
| Fron office | Extension of the check-in process | 11 | 1,20 | 7,01 |
| | Misleading information | 11 | 1,20 | |
| | Double payment (with subsequent refund) | 7 | 0,77 | |
| | Extra charges (bills, etc.) | 8 | 0,88 | |
| | Lack of luggage carrying service | 4 | 0,44 | |
| | Reservation issues and room changes | 23 | 2,52 | |
| Food and beveraege | Variety in breakfast | 33 | 3,61 | 15,10 |
| | Quality of products | 37 | 4,05 | |
| | Hygiene | 10 | 1,09 | |
| | Taste, service speed, and ambiance | 44 | 4,81 | |
| | Lack of local products | 1 | 0,11 | |
| | Insufficient lunch and dinner options | 7 | 0,77 | |
| | Stale foods | 6 | 0,66 | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **General characteristics of businesses** | Location | 17 | 1,86 | 10,27 |
| | Security | 1 | 0,11 | |
| | Parking | 23 | 2,52 | |
| | Elevator capacity | 14 | 1,53 | |
| | General and lobby condition (neglect) | 28 | 3,06 | |
| | Overall cleanliness | 11 | 1,20 | |
| **Other services** | Guest relations | 1 | 0,11 | 4,60 |
| | Problems with spa, pool, and hamam | 27 | 2,95 | |
| | Room service | 7 | 0,77 | |
| | Service (airport, ski resort, etc.) | 7 | 0,77 | |
| **Other complaints** | Complaint policies | 3 | 0,33 | 8,21 |
| | Inadequate management and lack of responsibility | 22 | 2,41 | |
| | No outside food or drinks allowed | 4 | 0,44 | |
| | Lost items | 4 | 0,44 | |
| | Pests | 1 | 0,11 | |
| | High cost of extra services | 16 | 1,75 | |
| | Room key issues | 12 | 1,31 | |
| | Mini bar not replenished | 13 | 1,42 | |
| | **TOTAL** | **914** | **%100** | **%100** |

Table 1 shows that the most frequent complaints about rooms in Kayseri's accommodation businesses are related to air conditioning, with 61 occurrences (6.67%). This is followed by complaints about the physical condition of the rooms, soundproofing, and bathrooms. The least number of complaints are related to the view and price. Among complaints about staff, the most prominent is related to staff performance concerning foreign languages (63 - 6.89%), followed by indifference of staff, staff behavior, and staff's lack of knowledge about the city. The most frequent complaints about food and beverage are related to taste, service speed, and ambiance (44 - 4.81%). The quality of products and variety in breakfast are the other two most complained-about subthemes. The fewest complaints are about the lack of local products. Regarding the front desk, the most frequent complaints are about reservation issues and room changes (23 - 2.52%), while the least frequent complaints are about the lack of luggage carrying service.

Among the general characteristics of the businesses, the most frequent complaints are about the general and lobby conditions (28 - 3.06%), followed by complaints about parking, with the fewest complaints related to security. For other services

provided by the accommodation businesses, the most frequent complaints are about issues with the spa, pool, and hamam (28 - 3.06%). Complaints about room service and service facilities have the same frequency, while guest relations has the fewest complaints. In the "Other Complaints" category, which is not classified under specific themes, the most frequent complaints are about inadequate management and lack of responsibility (22 - 2.41%) and the high cost of extra services such as food and drinks (16 - 1.75%). Complaints about not allowing outside food and drinks, lost items, and pests are among the least frequent.

Findings related to the total percentages of the main themes reveal that complaints about rooms (39.49%) are the most frequent. Following rooms are complaints about staff, food and beverage, general characteristics of the businesses, other complaints, the front desk, and other services. Sub-themes that make rooms stand out compared to other themes include cleanliness, size, bathroom (small, old, dirty, etc.), furniture and equipment (quality, insufficient, etc.), condition (neglect, old, etc.), odor (smoke, etc.), wireless, air conditioning, and soundproofing (noise). Thus, it is evident that the factors contributing to complaints in Kayseri's accommodation businesses are related to rooms. Additionally, it is noteworthy that there are complaints about the very limited or non-existent complementary services such as bars, entertainment venues, and restaurants in the city, even though these are not directly related to the accommodation businesses. Example complaints about Kayseri's accommodation businesses on TripAdvisor are presented below.

> "I had a terrible experience staying at the this hotel. The room was definitely not hygienic - there was hair on the towels, and the flushing button on the toilet was broken. It was clear the towels had been used before."

> "The staff's attitude was also very rude. When we arrived at the hotel around 10pm and ordered food, we were forced to wait for an entire hour before being told there was nothing left in the kitchen except soup and bread. However, we could clearly see other guests finishing their meals in the restaurant. Additionally, the new plates we were given had visible stains on them. I would strongly advise anyone to avoid staying at this hotel location. It was an incredibly unsatisfactory experience from start to finish."

> "It was very complicated to find the hotel. The entrance is very confusing, and the signs direct you to the back. Arriving by car, we didn't notice any road signs, and when booking online, some basic directions relative to a well-known place, like the train station, would have been helpful. I'm still not sure if I paid twice because my reservation indicated 'prepaid,' but at the hotel, they made me use my credit card again. The restaurant is quite poor."

"I stayed at this hotel during the Basketball World Cup, as it was the official media hotel. It was obvious that it had just opened shortly before the World Cup because the service was still not well-coordinated. At the bar, we sometimes waited up to 45 minutes for our drinks, yet we were asked to pay the bill twice. There were also some issues with foreign languages. Additionally, the hotel is not really centrally located in the city center; a taxi ride costs between 4 and 6 euros."

"Very hot suite with a non-functioning air conditioning system. Cleaning was fine, breakfast was okay. But the temperature in the room was unbearable. Therefore, I cannot recommend the place. The pictures showed that there were two bathrooms, but there were not. So, unfortunately, no recommendation from me."

"The staff doesn't speak English well, but they are friendly. It seems to be family-run. The hotel is quite far from the airport. The breakfast was not as good as expected, and the facilities are somewhat outdated."

"The hotel is very rundown and hasn't been renovated in a long time. The furniture and plumbing are worn out, and the room smells like cigarettes. There is also a smell of sewage. The hotel staff is unfriendly, and their attitude towards foreigners is very poor. The hotel manager, who was even unfriendly in the evening, completely ignores you when you say 'Good evening' at the reception. The breakfast is very bad. During my 7-day stay, the bed linens were never changed, and the room was never cleaned. The liquid soap and shampoo are diluted with water. The hotel's website features fake photos; the reality is completely different. This is not a three-star hotel, just a hostel."

Some notifications regarding complaints about accommodation businesses in Kayseri have been identified. Although all complaints indicate some negative perceptions related to service quality, the frequency of complaints specifically highlighting service quality and their significance for accommodation businesses, including findings related to the tendency to recommend and the intention to return, are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.**
*Other Notifications Regarding Complaints About Accommodation Businesses in Kayseri*

|  | Frequency |
|---|---|
| Service Quality | 176 |
| Tendency to Recommend (Negative) | 51 |
| Intention to Return (Negative) | 27 |

According to Table 2, 176 reviews have been identified that report complaints related to service quality. As previously mentioned, all complaints are related to perceptions of service quality, with a particular focus on comments highlighting perceived service quality. This finding is significant, as it reflects that over 50% of the 314 reviews analyzed highlight this issue. Additionally, the tendency to recommend (51 instances) and the intention to return (27 instances) are prominently emphasized in the complaints made by tourists on TripAdvisor. This indicates that these aspects are critically important for tourism businesses, including accommodation businesses. Below are examples of complaints related to these notifications made by foreign tourists on TripAdvisor.

> "This was my second stay in this hotel and since my last stay in December 2015, a downgrade in quality of services and charges applied to certain items are are quite obvious. First of all, last time I received prompt reply from hotel staff (email communication) to all of questions I had prior to my arrival to the hotel. This time, they turned a blind eye. Secondly, during check in, man with white glasses at the reception was not polite... quite opposite to the impression I had last time. Thirdly, last time wine opener they would give you for free (off course if you return it after use), this time they charge it 15TRY. I don't need to take it home, I just want to open one bottle of wine, why should I buy it? Last time I gave this hotel five stars (well deserved) but this time only three in order to address bad things I have experienced during my stay. I don't think that I will be staying in this hotel during my next trip to Kayseri. Too bad, it's a really good hotel otherwise."

> "I would not recommend anyone to go to this hotel. The service was terrible and staff impolite. I went with a group of friends and we were all treated with disrespect. The food was also very bad. Never going back to this place and neither should you !!"

> "I spent 3 nights in this hotel in October and would never stay there again. The room is not suitable for 2 people with a suitcase each (we were traveling for 8 days). Everything was cramped and small. The mattress kept slipping almost off the bed when turning over, but it couldn't fall off entirely because there wasn't enough space. My friend and I had two separate beds. The kettle didn't work and wasn't replaced despite my request (twice). The liquid soap was also missing, despite asking for it twice. As participants in a group tour, we had half board. But the highlight was the drink prices: 1 glass of wine was €9, yes, €9!!!! We only drank once! I'm familiar with these hotels from other countries, but this one was 'exceptional' in a negative way."

## CONCLUSION

The examination of foreign tourists' complaints about accommodation businesses in the Kayseri example constitutes the scope of this study. In this context, a total

of 314 reviews classified as "average," "poor," and "terrible" on TripAdvisor concerning accommodation businesses in Kayseri were analyzed. Findings related to the total percentages of main themes reveal that the most frequent complaints about accommodation businesses in Kayseri are related to rooms. When evaluated in terms of sub-themes, complaints about air conditioning were found to be prominent. Other factors contributing to the prominence of room complaints include small, old, or dirty bathrooms, poorly maintained or old rooms, and noise issues. The relevant literature indicates similar complaints regarding main themes such as rooms and sub-themes like cleanliness, bathroom conditions, air conditioning, and sound insulation, which align with these findings (Au et al., 2009; Demirci et al., 2015; Lertputtarak & Samokhin, 2017; Marina & Diana, 2017; Sparks & Bradley, 2017; Sangpikul, 2021; Hien et al., 2022). These issues reflect concerns related to the location and structure of accommodation businesses but are particularly linked to tourists' comfort and, consequently, their satisfaction.

Complaints about personnel represent the second most frequent main theme. Consistent with the literature (Au, Buhalis, and Law, 2009; Lertputtarak & Samokhin, 2017; Sparks & Bradley, 2017; Ünal et al., 2020; Zengin & Haliloğlu, 2020), issues such as rude behavior, indifference, and lack of knowledge of staff have been noted as frequent complaints by tourists across various facilities. Additionally, sub-themes related to foreign language proficiency of staff (Marina & Diana, 2017; Kılıç & Ok, 2012), rude behavior, and ignorance (Ekiz et al., 2012; Alrawadieh & Demirkol, 2015) have been identified. The staff's proficiency in foreign languages, their behavior and attentiveness toward tourists, and their knowledge about Kayseri as a destination are crucial factors directly related to tourist satisfaction and should be included in the accommodation businesses' strategic planning. Food and beverage-related feedbacks, which are the third most frequent complaints in terms of total percentages, show similarities with Hien et al. (2022) findings and indicate issues with taste, service speed, and ambiance in accommodation businesses. Complaints about breakfast, product quality, and hygiene have also been identified as significant sub-themes (Kılıç & Ok, 2012; Alrawadieh & Demirkol, 2015; Ak & Kızılırmak, 2019; Sangpikul, 2021).

Data related to the general characteristics of accommodation businesses in Kayseri show that complaints about general and lobby maintenance (Marina & Diana, 2017), parking (Lertputtarak & Samokhin, 2017), and location (Lertputtarak & Samokhin, 2017) are prominent. Findings related to the main theme of general characteristics of businesses are similar to the literature (Gürkan & Polat, 2014; Demirci et al., 2015; Hien et al., 2022). Complaints in sub-themes cover services that can be considered complementary and are important for tourist satisfaction given the integrated nature of tourism businesses. In the main theme categorized as other complaints, which could not be classified under specific themes, findings

show similarities with the literature regarding management inadequacy and lack of responsibility (Gürkan & Polat, 2014; Marina & Diana, 2017; Ünal et al., 2020), high costs of extra services (Kılıç & Ok, 2012; Marina & Diana, 2017; Şahin et al., 2017), and complaint policies (Ekiz et al., 2012; Alrawadieh & Demirkol, 2015).

Consistent with the relevant literature, complaints about the front desk (Kılıç & Ok, 2012; Alrawadieh & Demirkol, 2015; Ak & Kızılırmak, 2019; Sangpikul, 2021) have also been identified. Sub-themes related to reservation problems and room changes (Au et al., 2009), extended check-in times (Ekiz et al., 2012), and misleading information (Alrawadieh & Demirkol, 2015) are particularly prominent. Addressing complaints about the front desk, as it is the first department tourists encounter, is crucial for preventing complaints about other services during their stay (Lertputtarak & Samokhin, 2017). Complaints about other services, such as issues with the SPA, pool, and Turkish bath, are prominent (Gürkan & Polat, 2014; Lertputtarak & Samokhin, 2017; Zengin & Haliloğlu, 2020; Hien et al., 2022). Given that SPA, pool, and Turkish bath services are essential for tourists across all types of accommodation businesses, implementing improvement or enhancement activities regarding these complaints is crucial for accommodation businesses in Kayseri.

It has been found that complaints emphasizing service quality in accommodation businesses in Kayseri are significantly frequent. Similar results are seen in the relevant literature concerning service quality perceptions, which significantly impact tourist loyalty (Ekiz et al., 2012; Gürkan & Polat, 2014; Demirci et al., 2015; Sangpikul, 2021; Mohd Shahril & Aziz, 2022). It can be said that tourists' reactions as distrust, disloyalty, dissatisfaction are normal in light of the complaints mentioned above. According to the analysis, 51 tourists expressed a negative tendency to recommend, and 27 tourists indicated they had no intention of returning. Although these numbers may seem small, it is important to consider that there may be tourists who left without expressing their dissatisfaction and complaints, indicating significant losses for accommodation businesses.

The findings obtained in this study, which align with the relevant literature, have been presented with a holistic approach to improve the service processes of businesses and facilitate the decision-making processes of foreign tourists. Another aim of the study is to provide recommendations that will have a widespread impact, particularly for improving the service processes of businesses. Based on the findings, the recommendations are as follows:

- Renovate Physical Structures: Given issues such as dirty rooms and bathrooms, outdated equipment, odors from smoking between rooms, faulty or insufficient air conditioning, and general noise due to the businesses being a city hotel, businesses should undergo renovation processes to address these physical

structural problems. Responsibility for these problems should be assigned to the personnel and follow-up should be ensured.

- Improve Wireless Infrastructure: Given the potential negative impact of wireless issues in today's technological and internet-driven world, it is important to enhance the infrastructure. A management approach that focuses on keeping up-to-date with technological developments should be adopted.

- Staff Training and Incentives: In addition to providing training on professional topics, foreign languages, and communication for all staff, implement incentive and disciplinary systems. Supports should be provided to ensure that personnel have up-to-date professional and technical information.

- Increase Awareness and Involvement: Ensure all staff are informed about complaints and the complaint management process, and increase their awareness and involvement in this process.

- Optimize Front Desk Operations: Considering that any negative experience at the front desk can affect the entire vacation, increase the number of reservation, baggage handling, and reception staff, direct them to training, and improve the systems used. Additionally, front office practices should be supported with up-to-date automation systems.

- Enhance Food and Beverage Services: Address issues related to the taste and service speed of food and beverages by employing qualified staff and creating themed restaurants to improve ambiance. Improvements in kitchen and service practices should be made, especially with the support of academic experts.

- Address General Facility Needs: Allocate sufficient space for parking based on the location of the business, enhance security, increase elevator capacity, and improve and clean the overall structure.

- Improve Additional Services: Resolve issues related to room service, ski resort services, and spa, pool, and Turkish bath facilities. Address negative perceptions of these services, such as being broken, closed, poorly maintained, or overpriced.

- Enhance Complaint Handling Policies: Improve the complaint policies by responding promptly to tourist complaints. Employ responsible and effective managers, as this process is particularly related to management.

- Improve Extra Service Quality: If price reductions cannot be made, enhance the quality and visibility of extra services and maintain a transparent pricing policy. To ensure transparency, the use of electronic and internet-based applications should be ensured.

- Address Other Complaints: Improve policies to eliminate complaints about issues such as bringing outside food and beverages, lost items, pests,

problematic room cards, and mini-bar restocking. If improvements cannot be made, implement complaint policies that positively influence tourist perceptions.

- Enhance Perceived Service Quality: In addition to the above recommendations, conduct activities that make tourists feel valued to positively affect perceived service quality, recommendation tendencies, and return intentions.

- Implement Influencer Marketing: Carry out influencer-supported marketing practices to ensure positive perceptions and image.

- Manage Social Media Complaints: To prevent the widespread dissemination of tourist complaints in today's social media world and avoid negatively impacting potential tourists' decision-making, implement mobile or traditional complaint management applications within the accommodation business.

- Establish Customer Relations Department: Set up a customer relations department with professional staff to handle tourist complaints directly.

- Implement Service-Profit Chain: Finally, effectively manage the service-profit chain, which is one of the fundamental approaches in marketing, linking staff satisfaction to tourist satisfaction and ultimately to business profitability.

- In this study, complaints made by foreign tourists about accommodation businesses in Kayseri on TripAdvisor, which is considered an important platform in terms of tourist complaints and decision-making processes, have been examined. Therefore, the focus on TripAdvisor and the complaints from foreign tourists regarding accommodation businesses in Kayseri can be regarded as a limitation of the study. Consequently, it is recommended that future studies related to Kayseri includes not only TripAdvisor but also other platforms, and that complaints made by all tourists, not just foreign ones, be evaluated. Additionally, to provide diverse insights into the relevant literature, it is suggested that complaints related to different destinations be examined

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