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*Source / Izvornik:* **Pomorstvo, 2020, 34, 396 - 404**

**Journal article, Published version**

**Rad u časopisu, Objavljena verzija rada (izdavačev PDF)**

<https://doi.org/10.31217/p.34.2.20>

*Permanent link / Trajna poveznica:* <https://um.nsk.hr/um:nbn:hr:191:645103>

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*Download date / Datum preuzimanja:* **2025-01-21**



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<https://doi.org/10.31217/p.34.2.20>

# Factors of perceived quality of maritime tourist destination's offer: Case of Opatija Riviera

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## ABSTRACT

The main goal of the paper is to determine underlying dimensions of perceived quality of maritime tourist destination's offer. Using the purposive sampling technique, data collection was carried out from January to August 2019 in the destinations of Opatija Riviera, yielding a sample of 155 valid responses. To gain better understanding of underlying dimensions of perceived quality of maritime tourist destination's offer, we, primarily, use exploratory factor analysis. The research findings have revealed that organization of a destination, gastronomic offer, natural resources, traffic infrastructure, destination's cultural resources, accommodation capacities, attractions and sports activities are the main factors of perceived quality of maritime tourist destination's offer.

## ARTICLE INFO

Review article  
Received 13 November 2020  
Accepted 8 December 2020

**Key words:**  
Perceived quality  
Maritime tourist destinations  
Opatija Riviera

## 1 Introduction

Tourism and hospitality is the most developed industry on world level which registers the fastest and strongest development on daily basis. The number of tourist destinations continues to register an increasing growth, resulting them being faced with a challenge of surviving on the tourist market and continuing their path towards developing the tourist offer of highest quality, satisfying the demands of contemporary tourists and through that achieving competitive position on the tourist market [23, 40, 42]. In order to be able to achieve this, significant attention needs to be given to the development of tourist products and services of highest quality, as well as their continuous improvement according to the preferences of contemporary tourists and in order to be able to completely satisfy their needs. Only tourist products and services which do not contain any lacks will be able to satisfy contemporary tourists who desire the very best for themselves and are willing to pay for it [15, 39]. In order to be able to achieve this, tourist offer developers need to have full comprehension of how tourists perceive the quality of tourist products and services in relation to the competitive destinations [14, 38, 41]. Opatija Riviera belongs

among the Croatian destinations with the longest tourist tradition. It is conveniently located and connected with the neighbouring countries such as Slovenia, Italy, Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina, etc. During their stay in Opatija Riviera destinations tourists can explore various sights, cultural particularities, visit the historical towns, explore beautiful beaches, enjoy walks through parks and promenades, experience-rich gastronomic offer characteristic for this part of Croatia, etc. It is necessary to mention that Opatija Riviera is also very famous for the development of specific forms of tourism like Nautical Tourism, Health Tourism and Business Tourism. In the summer months it attracts yachtsmen who can enjoy crystal blue sea, sailing and other activities. Development of Health Tourism and Business Tourism contributed to Opatija Riviera being able to do business throughout the entire year [2, 3, 4, 12, 30].

Despite positive movements, Opatija Riviera still needs to make additional efforts in developing its tourist offer, both quantitatively and qualitatively, to achieve future success. To consider in which direction to go in terms of further offer development, it is necessary to determine how tourists percept the quality of Opatija Riviera's tourist offer, which is the purpose of this research.

Based on the previously mentioned the authors have formed the following research question: What are the main factors associated with perceived quality of maritime tourist destination's offer?

The structure of the paper is as follows: after the introductory part, the authors will provide a theoretical background based on the newest and most important research in measuring perceived quality in tourism. Following, the methodology will be presented as well as the results of the empirical research. Based on the findings the authors will point out the potential improvements of tourist offer. Finally, in the last part the authors will present the synthesis of the results of this paper.

## 2 Theoretical background

Throughout the years, quality has become the fundamental factor for market survival, achieving profitability, competitiveness, and overall economic development of a country. In today's business quality is used as a managing tool and as a strategy [7]. As such, quality of services became a focus of many scientific and professional research [1, 11, 13, 32, 33, 34, 35] and in particular in tourism and hospitality industry. Tourists offer developers are aware that success and competitiveness can be achieved only through offering top quality products and services [24, 42]. In order to be able to do that, it is mandatory to determine what are the attitudes of tourists towards tourist products and services provided in a destination, and how they perceive the elements of tourist offer. This resulted in many researches being focused on how they perceive quality of tourist offer [14]. It is far more likely that tourists will observe services as a variety of attributes that may contribute to their purchase intention and perceptions of service quality [26]. Following the authors will present some of the most important findings in order to emphasize the importance of measuring perceived quality of tourist products and services. I.e., in their research Marković & Raspor [26] examined how customers perceive service quality in the Croatian hotel industry. Their aim was to evaluate how customers perceive the quality of hotel attributes and to determine the factor structure of service quality perception by using a modified SERVQUAL model. The results of their research determined that hotel guests have high expectations in terms of quality of service. In terms of perceived quality of hotel services, the results have shown that for hotel guests the main dimensions are reliability, empathy and competence of staff, accessibility and tangibles. Reliability has proven to be the most important predictor of perceived quality of services. Overall results indicated that modified version of SERVQUAL model being suitable for determining attitudes about perceived quality of services. Vinh and Phuong [43] analysed the interrelationships between destination brand image, destination perceived quality, tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty on the example of Danang in Vietnam. They managed to determine

a significant direct positive effects of destination brand image on destination perceived quality and tourist satisfaction, as well as that destination's perceived quality has both direct and indirect influence on loyalty of tourists. Mazumder and Hassan's focus [28] was aimed towards determining the gap between domestic and foreign guests in Bangladesh in terms of their expectations of the quality of services and the perception of how the service was delivered to them. The authors used a modified version of SERVQUAL model. The results of their research managed to prove that hotel guests' perceptions of quality of services was lower in relation to their expectations. The lowest expectations and perceptions were expressed from the Bangladeshi guests towards the services in Bangladeshi hotels. Also, an unsatisfactory level of satisfaction with the overall stay was expressed by both domestic and foreign guests. Álvarez-García et al. [6] analysed the influence of dimensions that enable rating of service quality which is perceived by visitors who use services in sport and health centres in the sense of satisfaction with the services received. The results of the empirical research indicated a strong correlation between perceived quality and satisfaction with the service that was provided to them. The focus of Zhang and Bunchapattanasakda's research [48] was on determining if tourists' experiences during their stay in a destination had any influence of perceived quality of tourist offer as an antecedent and the moderating effect of motivation of tourists on the relationship between tourists' experience and perceived quality within historical and cultural tourism contexts. The results indicated that tourists' experiences have a significant influence on perceived quality, and that motivation of tourists has a significant moderating role on the relationship between tourist's experience and perceived quality. Ranjbarian and Pool's research [36] tested the dependency of destination's marketing and management on tourists' perceptions of quality and value of the observed destination, and how this influences their satisfaction and future revisit intention. The results have shown that tourists' perception of quality and value of the observed destination has an influence on their level of satisfaction, and future intention of revisiting. Wang et al. [46] were focused on examining the effects of gender and visit frequency on the relationships among destination perceived quality, tourist satisfaction and word-of-mouth. The findings indicated a significant and positive direct effect of destination's perceived quality on tourist's level of satisfaction. Research has shown that when observing the impact of the moderating variables like gender and frequency of tourist's visits to the destination, the impacts of destination perceived quality on word of mouth were different among genders, respectively a stronger impact was determined for female tourists in relation to the male ones. Also, the effect of destination perceived quality on tourist satisfaction has proven to be stronger for tourists who visit the destination for the first time in relation to those who chose to revisit.

Previously presented theoretical background represents the most significant findings in measuring tourist's perceived quality in tourism. Presented results of the empirical research have shown clearly the importance as well as the necessity of determining the tourist's attitudes towards the tourist offer, with particular accent on perceived quality of tourist products and services. Findings like these are of exceptional use when improving current elements of tourist offer, as well as when rethinking introduction of new ones, all with a goal of providing tourists maximum satisfaction, and at the same time achieving an increase of tourist turnover and competitive advantages on the tourist market. All previously mentioned was the reason why the authors decided to undertake this research. In the following chapters the research methodology will be presented, and the empirical findings. Based on the findings the authors will propose potential improvements of tourist offer.

### 3 Methodology

#### 3.1 Questionnaire design and sampling

An empirical research was conducted in the period January-August 2019 in the destinations of Opatija Riviera. The authors used a 5-point Likert Scale questionnaire with closed questions, divided into several sections. The respondents were foreign and domestic visitors staying in

Opatija Riviera. All the participants participated willingly in the research. A total of 155 questionnaires were filled properly and as such used for the statistical analysis. Following the results of the empirical research will be presented.

As visible from the Table 1, most of the respondents were male (51%), and 49% were female. In terms of age group, 33,37% were the age 36-40, followed by the group up to 35 (31,17%), +46 (18,18%) and 41-45 (16,89%). The majority has a university degree, respectively master's degree (42,2%), bachelor's degree (26%) and PhD (11%), 9,7% have finished a 2-year university program, and 11% have a high school diploma. Over half of the respondents were married (54,2%), 23,9% in a domestic partnership, followed by unmarried/single (18,7%) and widowers (1,3%). The respondents possess a high purchasing power, respectively 32,3% of them has a monthly income ranging between 1.001,00-1.500,00 Euro, followed by the respondents with the monthly income 501,00-1.000 Euro and 1.501,00-2.000,00 (19,4%), 2.001,00-2.500,00 euro (11,6%), up to 500 euro (10,3%), 2.001,00-2.500,00 (11,6%) and over 2.500,00 euro (7,10%). Within the sample and according to the country of origin, they were mainly from Austria (18.60%), followed by Croatia (16.80%, Germany (16.80%), Slovenia (16.10%), Germany (13.50%), Croatia (15.60%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (11.60%), Italy (7.70%), Serbia (7.70%), Republic of Northern Macedonia (3.90%) and Spain (0.60%).

**Table 1** Overview of basic characteristics of the sample

|  | Characteristics                            | Frequency | Percent |
|--|--|-----------|---------|
| Gender                                   | Male                                       | 78        | 51.0    |
|  | Female                                     | 75        | 49.0    |
| Age                                      | Up to 35                                   | 48        | 31.17   |
|  | 36-40                                      | 52        | 33.77   |
|  | 41-45                                      | 26        | 16.89   |
|  | 46 +                                       | 28        | 18.18   |
| The highest level of completed education | Secondary school, 3-year program           | 3         | 1.9     |
|  | Secondary school, 4-year program           | 14        | 9.1     |
|  | Junior college (2-year university program) | 15        | 9.7     |
|  | University education, bachelor             | 40        | 26.0    |
|  | University education, master's degree      | 65        | 42.2    |
|  | University education, PhD                  | 17        | 11.0    |
| Marital status                           | Unmarried/single                           | 29        | 18.7    |
|  | Married                                    | 84        | 54.2    |
|  | Widowed/Widower                            | 2         | 1.3     |
|  | Separated/Divorced                         | 3         | 1.9     |
|  | Domestic partnership                       | 37        | 23.9    |
| Monthly income (in Euros)                | Up to 500,00                               | 16        | 10.3    |
|  | 501,00-1.000,00                            | 30        | 19.4    |
|  | 1.001,00-1.500,00                          | 50        | 32.3    |
|  | 1.501,00-2.000,00                          | 30        | 19.4    |
|  | 2.001,00-2.500,00                          | 18        | 11.6    |
|  | 2.500,00+                                  | 11        | 7.10    |

Source: Authors' research



### 3.2 Variables

For the purpose of this research the authors used the following variables: traffic infrastructure, accommodation capacities, organization of a destination, gastronomic offer, natural resources, destination's cultural resources, attractions, and sports activities. The questionnaire was used according to the methodology of Alkier et al. [4] prepared by adapting the methodology of Uran Maravić et al. [42], Omerzel Gomzelj et al. [31], Ghose and Johann [17], TOMAS studies conducted and published by the Institute of Tourism [20,21] and Blažević and Peršić [8].

The results from the Table 2 present the Arithmetic Mean and Standard Deviation for the variables used in this research. The respondents have expressed the lowest level of satisfaction with the destination's traffic infrastructure, respectively, the highest mark was given to the price competitiveness of air accessibility ( $\bar{x}$  2,21 and SD 1,06), followed by accessibility by air ( $\bar{x}$  2,00 and SD 0,99), number of air carriers ( $\bar{x}$  1,94 and SD 0,99) and number of airports and their facilities ( $\bar{x}$  1,92 and SD 1,04). Accommodation capacities represent an important factor of Opatija Riviera's tourist offer, and efforts have been made in improving it over the years. The results indicate that tourists are satisfied with the offer. The highest mark was appointed to the quality of accommodation services ( $\bar{x}$  4,29 and SD 0,60), followed by the Quality/Price Ratio for Accommodation Services ( $\bar{x}$  4,26 and SD 0,66) and price of accommodation services ( $\bar{x}$  4,19 and SD 0,69). However, in relation to its potential, further improvements are necessary. When discussing how the destination is organized, the visitors also showed a relatively satisfactory results; the highest mark was appointed to the maintenance of parks and green surfaces ( $\bar{x}$  4,32 and SD 0,58), board walks ( $\bar{x}$  4,27 and SD 0,62), sense of urban harmony ( $\bar{x}$  4,17 and SD 0,72), beach tidiness and cleanliness ( $\bar{x}$  4,12 and SD 0,74), and tidiness of a place ( $\bar{x}$  4,06 and SD 0,81), while the lowest mark was given to the beach attendance ( $\bar{x}$  3,83 and SD 0,84) which implicates on beaches being overcrowded. Gastronomic offer of Opatija Riviera was marked with relatively satisfactory results, the highest mark being given to the offer of food and beverages ( $\bar{x}$  4,30 and SD 0,62), followed by quality of food services ( $\bar{x}$  4,21 and SD 0,70), restaurants and taverns ( $\bar{x}$  4,17 and SD 0,72), quality/price ratio of food services ( $\bar{x}$  4,15 and SD 0,69) and price of food service ( $\bar{x}$  4,07 and SD 0,74). Natural resources were marked with higher marks, highest being the climate ( $\bar{x}$  4,71 and SD 0,51), followed by beautiful landscape ( $\bar{x}$  4,63 and SD 0,55), flora and fauna ( $\bar{x}$  4,55 and SD 0,57), sea cleanliness ( $\bar{x}$  4,50 and SD 0,78) and preservation of the environment and sea ( $\bar{x}$  4,50 and SD 0,73). Satisfaction of tourists with the Opatija Riviera's cultural resources was marked with a relatively satisfactory mark: architecture ( $\bar{x}$  4,43 and SD 0,63), people and traditions ( $\bar{x}$  4,42 and SD 0,59), historical sites ( $\bar{x}$  4,34 and SD 0,64) and cultural heritage ( $\bar{x}$  4,34 and SD 0,62). The satisfaction results for attractions in Opatija Riviera are not satisfactory considering that the respondents ex-

**Table 2** Scales used, variables, respondent means, and standard deviations

| Item  | Mean | SD   |
|---|------|------|
| Number of airports and their facilities                           | 1.92 | 1.04 |
| Number of Air Carriers  | 1.94 | 0.99 |
| Accessibility by air  | 2.00 | 0.99 |
| Price competitiveness of air accessibility                        | 2.21 | 1.06 |
| The Quality of Accommodation Services                             | 4.29 | 0.60 |
| Price of Accommodation Services                                   | 4.19 | 0.69 |
| Quality/Price Ratio for Accommodation Services                    | 4.26 | 0.66 |
| Tidiness of a place   | 4.06 | 0.81 |
| Urban harmony   | 4.17 | 0.72 |
| Board walks   | 4.27 | 0.62 |
| Parks and green surfaces  | 4.32 | 0.58 |
| Beach Tidiness and cleanliness                                    | 4.12 | 0.74 |
| Beach attendance  | 3.83 | 0.84 |
| Food and Drink  | 4.30 | 0.62 |
| Restaurants and Taverns   | 4.17 | 0.72 |
| Quality of Food Services  | 4.21 | 0.70 |
| The Price of Food Service   | 4.07 | 0.74 |
| Quality / Price Ratio of Food Services                            | 4.15 | 0.69 |
| Climate   | 4.71 | 0.51 |
| Preservation of the environment                                   | 4.50 | 0.73 |
| Flora and Fauna   | 4.55 | 0.57 |
| Beauty of the landscape   | 4.63 | 0.55 |
| Sea cleanliness   | 4.50 | 0.78 |
| People and traditions   | 4.42 | 0.59 |
| Architecture  | 4.43 | 0.63 |
| Historic Sites  | 4.34 | 0.64 |
| Cultural Heritage   | 4.34 | 0.62 |
| Fees for Visits to Natural and Cultural Attractions               | 3.56 | 0.90 |
| Quality/Price Ratio for Visiting Natural and Cultural Attractions | 3.69 | 0.71 |
| Amusement Parks   | 3.10 | 1.16 |
| Fees for visiting Attractions                                     | 3.17 | 0.97 |
| Water Sports (Swimming, Surfing, Sailing, ...)                    | 4.30 | 0.95 |
| Outdoor Activities (Camping, Hiking, Mountaineering, ...)         | 3.66 | 0.82 |
| Recreational Activities (Hiking, Horseback Riding, ...)           | 3.34 | 1.02 |
| Sports Activities (Golf, Tennis, ...)                             | 3.72 | 0.69 |

Source: Authors' research

pressed a moderate level of satisfaction: quality/price ratio for visiting natural and cultural attractions ( $\bar{x}$  3,69 and SD 0,71), followed by fees for visits to natural and cultural attractions ( $\bar{x}$  3,56 and SD 0,90), fees for visiting attractions ( $\bar{x}$  3,17 and SD 0,97) and amusement parks ( $\bar{x}$  3,10 and SD 1,16). The satisfaction for Opatija Riviera's sports tourist offer could be considered as most definitely dissat-

isfactory considering that only Water Sports (Swimming, Surfing, Sailing...) were marked with a relatively satisfactory mark ( $\bar{x}$  4,30 and SD 0,95), while the other elements were marked with an average mark: Sports Activities (Golf, Tennis, ...) ( $\bar{x}$  3,72 and SD 0,69), followed by Outdoor Activities (Camping, Hiking, Mountaineering...) ( $\bar{x}$  3,66 and SD 0,82), and finally Recreational Activities (Hiking, Horseback Riding...) ( $\bar{x}$  3,34 and SD 1,02).

### 3.3 Methods

To gain better understanding of relationship between selected variables, we, primarily, use exploratory factor analysis.

### 3.4 Empirical results

Exploratory factor analysis was conducted in order to confirm the existence of expected factors. This analysis was performed on variables related to satisfaction with tourists' satisfaction with a destination using principal component analysis (Varimax rotation). Initially, the factorability of the 35 items, presented in Table 2, was examined. In that respect, we used a few well-known criteria of anti-image correlation matrix. The diagonals of the anti-image correlation matrix were all over .5. Given these overall results, factor analysis was deemed to be suitable with all 35 items. The results show two factors accounting for 77.44% of the variance. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling ad-

**Table 3** EFA results

| Item  | Rotated Component Matrix <sup>a</sup> |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|---|---------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
|   | F1                                    | F2   | F3   | F4   | F5   | F6   | F7   | F8   |
| Number of airports and their facilities                           |                                       |      |      | ,947 |      |      |      |      |
| Number of Air Carriers  |                                       |      |      | ,966 |      |      |      |      |
| Accessibility by air  |                                       |      |      | ,964 |      |      |      |      |
| Price competitiveness of air accessibility                        |                                       |      |      | ,925 |      |      |      |      |
| The Quality of Accommodation Services                             |                                       |      |      |      |      | ,833 |      |      |
| Price of Accommodation Services                                   |                                       |      |      |      |      | ,865 |      |      |
| Quality/Price Ratio for Accommodation Services                    |                                       |      |      |      |      | ,867 |      |      |
| Tidiness of a place   | ,702                                  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Urban harmony   | ,824                                  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Board walks   | ,885                                  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Parks and green surfaces  | ,893                                  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Beach Tidiness and cleanliness                                    | ,716                                  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Beach attendance  | ,543                                  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Food and Drink  |                                       | ,804 |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Restaurants and Taverns   |                                       | ,771 |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Quality of Food Services  |                                       | ,782 |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| The Price of Food Service   |                                       | ,822 |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Quality / Price Ratio of Food Services                            |                                       | ,813 |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Climate   |                                       |      | ,732 |      |      |      |      |      |
| Preservation of the environment                                   |                                       |      | ,787 |      |      |      |      |      |
| Flora and Fauna   |                                       |      | ,799 |      |      |      |      |      |
| Beauty of the landscape   |                                       |      | ,798 |      |      |      |      |      |
| Sea cleanliness   |                                       |      | ,807 |      |      |      |      |      |
| People and traditions   |                                       |      |      |      | ,807 |      |      |      |
| Architecture  |                                       |      |      |      | ,856 |      |      |      |
| Historic Sites  |                                       |      |      |      | ,862 |      |      |      |
| Cultural Heritage   |                                       |      |      |      | ,865 |      |      |      |
| Fees for Visits to Natural and Cultural Attractions               |                                       |      |      |      |      |      | ,771 |      |
| Quality/Price Ratio for Visiting Natural and Cultural Attractions |                                       |      |      |      |      |      | ,664 |      |
| Amusement Parks   |                                       |      |      |      |      |      | ,769 |      |
| Fees for visiting Attractions                                     |                                       |      |      |      |      |      | ,859 |      |
| Water Sports  |                                       |      |      |      |      |      |      | ,559 |
| Outdoor Activities  |                                       |      |      |      |      |      |      | ,817 |
| Recreational Activities   |                                       |      |      |      |      |      |      | ,619 |
| Sports Activities   |                                       |      |      |      |      |      |      | ,765 |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

Source: Authors' research

**Table 4** Scale statistics

| Measure                          | Number of items | Mean  | Standard deviation | Cronbach's Alpha |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|-------|--------------------|------------------|
| Organization of a destination    | 6               | 24.81 | 3.68               | 0.921            |
| Gastronomic offer                | 5               | 20.91 | 3.03               | 0.922            |
| Natural resources                | 5               | 22.88 | 2.74               | 0.914            |
| Traffic infrastructure           | 4               | 8.15  | 3.93               | 0.974            |
| Destination's cultural resources | 4               | 17.53 | 2.22               | 0.916            |
| Accommodation capacities         | 3               | 12.74 | 1.82               | 0.924            |
| Attractions                      | 4               | 13.58 | 2.90               | 0.804            |
| Sports activities                | 4               | 15.04 | 2.46               | 0.672            |

Source: Authors' research

equacy was .845, above the commonly recommended value of .6, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ( $\chi^2 = 2,555.79, p < .05$ ). Table 3 shows the factor analysis results.

Based on the items presented in Table 3, extracted factors associated with perceived quality of maritime tourist destination's offer can be interpreted as follows:

- organization of a destination (F1),
- gastronomic offer (F2),
- natural resources (F3),
- traffic infrastructure (F4),
- destination's cultural resources (F5),
- accommodation capacities (F6),
- attractions (F7) and
- sports activities (F8).

Next, we tested internal consistency of the identified factors (Table 4).

Cronbach's Alpha is a measure of reliability that ranges from 0 to 1, with values of 0.60 to 0.70 deemed the lower limit of acceptability [19]. Having that in mind it may be concluded that all scales had an acceptable level of reliability.

### 3.4.1 Organization of a destination as a factor of perceived quality of maritime tourist destination's offer

Organization of a tourist destination represents an important part of a destination's product [5, 8], considering that it influences significantly on the tourist's perception of a destination. Visitors of Opatija Riviera showed a relatively satisfactory results, however, considering that the results have shown a level of satisfaction below 4,5, it is evident that further improvements need to be made regarding maintenance of parks and green surfaces, board walks, beach tidiness and cleanliness, sense of urban harmony, and beach attendance.

### 3.4.2 Gastronomic offer as a factor of perceived quality of maritime tourist destination's offer

Gastronomy is an important part of Croatian cultural heritage [10, 27, 44, 47] and as such represents an important part of Opatija Riviera's tourist product which

has been recognized on the international tourist market. Tourists have marked it with a relatively satisfactory mark (none of the marks is over 4,5) which implicates need for expansion and development of gastronomic offer, preferably through introduction of traditional dishes of Mediterranean cuisine possibly unknown until then for the tourists. It is necessary to aim towards offering something new, different, and high quality.

### 3.4.3 Natural resources as a factor of perceived quality of maritime tourist destination's offer

Preservation of natural resources is something with which Opatija Riviera is boosting justifiably, considering that significant efforts are being made on preserving them through application of sustainable development principles [9, 25, 45, 49]. This is in accordance with the findings of this paper which indicate that tourists perceive natural resources of Opatija Riviera as ones of higher quality.

### 3.4.4 Traffic infrastructure as a factor of perceived quality of maritime tourist destination's offer

The building of the traffic infrastructure in the tourist destination itself and, even more so, the traffic ways till the tourist destination, together with a mutual connection between the tourist destinations, are of the utmost importance for the development of tourism [37]. Mrnjavac et al. [29] emphasized in their research that the crucial influence on development of Opatija's tourism is significantly connected with the development of traffic and traffic connection with the emitting markets. The problem of traffic infrastructure was stated as one of the main obstacles in developing a qualitative development of Opatija's tourism. The problem hasn't been resolved until today considering that traffic infrastructure was marked with the lowest level of satisfaction (all marks below 3) which clearly implies the need of further quality improvement.

### 3.4.5 Destination's cultural resources as a factor of perceived quality of maritime tourist destination's offer

Culture has proven to be having a direct impact on tourism development and vice versa which resulted in it

becoming an important motive for tourist travel. In the past cultural tourism offer implied visiting cultural and historical monuments, museums, and galleries. Today this offer is expanded with attending and possibility of participating in diverse social, cultural and entertainment events [16]. Opatija Riviera is rich in cultural resources and has a potential for significant improvement of its cultural tourist offer which would certainly improve the tourist's satisfaction. It is advisable to continue to invest in the preservation of cultural heritage (old buildings, etc.), introduce cultural events and undertake proper marketing activities in order to increase the satisfaction of visitors (all marks were below 4,5), which will result in them perceiving Opatija Riviera as a high-quality cultural destination.

#### 3.4.6 Accommodation capacities as a factor of perceived quality of maritime tourist destination's offer

The accommodation services belong among the basic services within a contemporary tourist offer and need to be improved in terms of quality and diversity to be able to satisfy tourist's specific needs [23]. When observing the state of Opatija Riviera, it is evident that positive movements were made, however the structure of accommodation capacities needs to be additionally improved on all levels (growth of 5\* hotels, private accommodation capacities, etc.) as well as quality of products and services (all marks were graded below 4,5), which will contribute towards higher perception of quality of services.

#### 3.4.7 Attractions as a factor of perceived quality of maritime tourist destination's offer

Attractions are one of key pre-conditions of developing a competitive tourist offer, so adequate attention needs to be given to them (i.e. cultural heritage, impressiveness of the Adriatic coast, picturesque villages with colourful history, etc.) [18]. Tourists expressed a medium level of satisfaction with them (all marks below 4) which indicates need for improvement of its offer and undertaking appropriate marketing activities. Their proper use can contribute to increasing the perception of destination of greater quality.

#### 3.4.8 Sports activities as a factor of perceived quality of maritime tourist destination's offer

Sports tourism is also one of the specific forms of tourism which is registering a significant growth on world level, and more and more tourists choose to undertake a journey and visit a destination due to it, whether it is simply for exercise or participating in a sport event. Successful development of Sports tourism will enable for tourists to enjoy their stay in a destination to the full since they will be able to satisfy their needs for sports recreation and health improvement. Its successful development can be a significant trigger when considering a holiday destination [22]. Visitors have expressed a medium level of sat-

isfaction (only one element was marked above 4, while the other were below 4). It is mandatory to improve the quality and diversity of sports activities within the Opatija Riviera's tourist offer and promote it adequately, to stimulate tourists to start perceiving it as a high-quality sports destination.

Based on the findings the authors have proposed the necessary improvements of tourist offer of Opatija Riviera that need to be conducted to increase the tourist's level of satisfaction, based on which they will be able to perceive this destination as a high quality one.

## 4 Conclusion

The main goal of this paper was to determine underlying dimensions of perceived quality of maritime tourist destination's offer. The results of satisfaction with the elements of tourist offer clearly indicate that significant improvements need to be made within all elements of tourist offer, and in particular for traffic infrastructure, sports activities and attractions. Furthermore, with the use of Exploratory Factor Analysis the authors managed to extract the following factors that were associated with perceived quality of maritime tourist destination's offer: organization of a destination, gastronomic offer, natural resources, traffic infrastructure, destination's cultural resources, accommodation capacities, attractions, and sports activities. It is evident that Opatija Riviera is moving towards success in developing its tourist offer, however, further improvements need to be done (and in particular for the elements of the tourist offer that were marked with marks below 4, in order for tourists to start perceiving Opatija Riviera as a destination of greater quality. Based on the findings the authors presented the further developmental directions.

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