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# Total Quality research of tourism services.

# Special case: "Albergo Diffuso"

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*1. Introduction*

The demand for tourism services has rapidly evolved in the recent years. A new generation of tourists has emerged. It has become more and more important to be able to propose original values, to offer personalized services, and to prove a maximum content of authenticity in all different areas. This way, tourists (temporary residents) can fully immerse themselves in the culture of the territory they are visiting.

The introduction of the total quality principles should be considered as the major innovation to implement in order to meet these specific needs. In this context, it is not one single specific service that constitutes the overall offer, but a collection of services combined together and operating towards the same goal. Each service is unique and has its own specific characteristics: to hold all these services in line a single officer shall direct all the activities.

The installation of an unified management system, facilitates the implementation of the principles of total quality (TQ). Being able to measure customer satisfaction by using customer feedback will contribute to continuous improvement. Within these measuring techniques, there are indicators for each process that will define the quality standard necessary for each service.

For these reasons, it is believed that the "Albergo diffuso[[1]](#footnote-1)" formula promotes the qualities that we have mentioned earlier. This formula is synthetically defined by accommodations in separate building that are grouped around each other, by local tourist services, all with intrinsic characteristics that allow the implementation of total quality.

In fulfilling these certain parameters, it is important to determine the quality indicators for each service. This paper proposes a model supporting the determination of standard values for the indicators utilised for the measurement of the quality performance of the *Albergo Diffuso* (AD).

After a review of the theory of the evaluation and measurement of total quality services, and after a presentation of this peculiar form of accommodation made in Italy, highlighting its features, we propose in Section 8 a support model using standard indicators for the AD. This model will then be applied to two case studies, in order to verify the adequacy of its implementation, and to be monitored. This model could then be reviewed in the course of future developments of the present research.

The paper is structured as follows. In paragraphs 2 and 3 the doctrinal proposals relating to the assessment and measurement of total quality for tourist services ar presented. In paragraphs 5, 6 and 7, the AD model and it's variables are discussed. The paragraph 8 identifies a support model for the determination of the standard indicators for the AD. In paragraph 9, the model isapplied to the two AD cases mentioned beforehand: namely Sextantio and Sauris.

*2. The Search for Total Quality of Tourist Services*

The globalization, and the subsequent loss of autonomy of the National States has produced a cultural evolution of the population which has influenced in particular the quality of the demand in the tourism sector. In effect the concept of sustainable development has more and more taken weight and importance. The population has become sensible to the need to adopt decisions and to make choices in line with the attainment of objectives of development consistent with the shared values in term of centrality of the human being, of respect for the environment and its preservation for future generations, which will have to satisfy, when it will be their turn, their own needs. This new sensibility of the people influences in particular the demand of tourism services: the classic forms of "Mass tourism" and of "Luxury travel" are now evolving towards new forms of responsible tourism oriented to the discovery of the original values and to the custom experience.

As a consequence, it becomes compulsory to consider the offer for touristic services as an integrated system, because this approach will allow to identify and analyze the interrelationships between the different components of the system and between the system itself and its neighborhood: only in this way the to the goal of a sustainable economic development for the tourism sector may be pursued. It also becomes compulsory that companies in this business sector operate under the principles of total quality.

In fact, when the management, the organization and the administration are imprinted by the total quality, the subsequent actions and behaviors go ahead and exceed the rules imposed by standard rules and regulations. Social responsibility, is thus the key for companies, whose business is tourism, to reach sustainable economic development.

Today the importance of total quality in tourism companies, is that it represent a value to all the stakeholders. Those who are part of the tourism supply chain, and not only the producer and the customer, are indicate as stakeholders.

To talk about the quality of tourism services, it is necessary to make two observations. First, it should be noted that a quality system consists of subsystems that are similar to the parent system. Every function of the subsystems must be considered as one main system. Secondly, the total quality system is in turn a specific corporate system interacting with the other systems of the company: it cannot operate properly if the its interrelationships with the other systems are weak or inadequate. Therefore it becomes necessary to have a single chief executive staff, who has the power to direct, coordinate, and control.

If the tourism industry is geared to total quality, it must be emphasized that every member must respect the quality principles determined for the whole organism.

In fact, when there is one or more negative features that become a common occurrence for a product or service provided by a company of the chain, then this results reduces the overall quality of the tourist services.

If the relations between the company members of the chain undergo changes in the negative direction, or if the foundation are not supported on solid bases, distortions can be created, with the final result of an unsatisfied customer. Moreover, the occurrence of negative elements, i.e. lack of quality in the delivered services and products, causes an increase of cost, a loss of image, lower competitiveness, and loss of legitimacy.

Only an effective governance can avoid the problems exposed here over. This requires to have a unique direction exercising a continuous control over all activities, defining the policy for the management of the human resources, and assuring the coherence between the adopted process of evaluation of the personnel and the kind of behavior that the company expects from its coworkers.

It is always good thing to remember, as stated by Checkland (1999), that the quality systems belong to the category of systems involving human activity. They are therefore one of the most complex system, since human activities are neither predictable nor representable as an exact natural system. The issue regarding the unique direction of the tourism services can be resolved by the *Albergo Diffuso* model. Moreover this model can respond to the requrements of those customers who care about sustainable development. Finally, this model can make it easier to implement policies of total quality.

It seems useful to recall that, in order to pursue a deliberate policy of quality it is essential to define the contents, the available means , the financial and human resources, and ultimately the responsibility of each operator in the supply chain.

A "quality policy" of tourist service services must be articulated in the following points:

1. define the quality objectives of the service, to maximize the value of the offer to the customer;
2. establish a system of service delivery that satisfies the needs and expectations of the users
3. promote, throughout the organization, customer-oriented attitudes and behaviors.

To maximize the value of the offer means to improve the performance, but it cannot be improved what cannot measured, and specifically when the total quality is concerned, improvement goals cannot be achieved if reference values are not established with which to compare the trend of quality.

It is therefore necessary to decide what tourism companies should measure, bearing always in mind the needs of the customer in order to prevent any risk of becoming self-referential.

3. *Evaluation and measurement of quality standards*

Staying on a level as general as possible, we can list the following possible ways of measurement modalities.

The individual measurement occurs when the single employee carries out verification of the quality of his work, rather than depending on others to carry out inspection activities. It is useful to remember that people usually possess the perception of which objectives are to be achieved, and often these objectives are not achieved because the individual is not properly motivated or encouraged.

The collective measurement appears when the supply chain avails a coherent set of standards useful for quality measurement. A set of indicators of quality apt to identify any symptom of malfunction shall be elaborated. These are the standard indicators of quality [Saita, 1991], and they should be communicated and shared by all operators in the chain.

For “quality standard”, it is meant here the level of quality attainable by each service composing the chain. The term "standard" designates the specific level of quality defined by the management for each service element. Only by this method the operators of the tourism industry will be able to improve the quality of the supply chain, because these indexes will allow to perform a comparison with the quality perceived by the customer [Baccarani 1997].

The measurement of perceived quality consists in the monitoring of the level of satisfaction of the user/client. The company should receive, listen, and manage the feedbacks from its users. If any problems arise, these should be addressed and resolved in a timely manner.

The measurement of the quality standard is achieved through the formulation of appropriate indices of the quality of the services. Since the level of service quality consists of all those elements that contribute to supply the service and to determine user satisfaction, a standard of quality for each of these elements shall be defined: this is a decision of strategic nature. It is then necessary to formulate a method for the measurement of the degree of the deviation of each element with respect to the standard quality and to build a procedure to calculate the global quality index starting from the said deviations [Orlandini, 1995].

Unlike what happens with the companies involved in the manufacture of goods, the management and quality control systems of the companies producing and providing services should not bound to the "core" concept of service, or kernel (i.e. the nucleus of the service),but they also have to consider the “peripherals”, that is the operational aspects of the service [Ramirez Norman R, 1995] . In fact, for the perception of quality of the user, it is relevant not only the technical aspects of the performance, but also a set of behaviors and human interactions which put the attention on the modalities with which the service is provided.

From that comes the necessity to separate the elements that constitute the service in fundamental elements discriminating elements.

The fundamental elements constitute the basis of the service and they coincide with the performance characteristics which define the service itself, i.e. the "core." The discriminating elements are all those factors not specifically connected to the performance and which inspire customers to formulate a judgment of satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Some of these discriminating elements can be:

* Features that are tangible characteristics of the building, facilities, equipments, personnel, communication tools
* Reliability, ability to perform the promised service
* Responsiveness: willingness to help customers and to provide a prompt service
* Competence: possession of skills and knowledge necessary to provide the service
* Courtesy: politeness, respect, consideration and friendliness of staff
* Credibility: trustworthiness, reliability, honesty of the service provider
* Safety: absence of danger and ease of access to the guest spaces
* Communication: keep the user informed by using plain language, transparency, and truthfulness
* Understanding the customer/ user: efforts to know the customers/users and their needs, and the ability to listen

The tourism industry must then define the quality standards of service, keeping in account all the elements that characterize it. Once these standards of quality are determined for each element which contributes to the quality of the service, a scoring system shall be identified, consisting in a set of indices penalizing the quality defects and highlighting the better performances. Each quality index will be designed so that, for instance, the value of 100 corresponds to the level of quality standards of the element in consideration. The synthetic quality index $\_{}$ then be determined by the following formula [Saita, 1991].



The summations are extended to the all the *n* considered elements of quality, and $\_{}$ represents a weight, expressed in an arbitrary scale of values, of *i*-th element; i.e. the intensity with which the element contributes to the aggregate level of quality.

In this paper we propose a model apt to facilitate the determination of the indices of standard quality the AD, based on the assumption that the AD is steered by single chief executive staff.

## 4. The Innovative form of Tourism: the Albergo Diffuso

The *Albergo Diffuso* (AD) is an original model of hospitality characterized by being deeply tied to the land and local culture at a such extent that the element s of the local culture and of the territory become a part of the offered services. The AD is presented as a model of sustainable development, aiming at the exploitation of local resources such as the cultural heritage, agriculture, hand crafts, and small businesses. Local traditions, history, and the social network are also factored in the model [Dall'Ara, 2005].

The AD is a model of hospitality, characterized by an unitary management, which offers hospitality to its "temporary residents" in several separated buildings, located in an area unknown by "mass tourism." (for example a small village).

This is a horizontal hotel, i.e. an integrated system of touristic offer linked to the local community that addresses the new generation of tourists eager to immerse themselves in the culture, share and participate in local traditions, tastes, trades, and other events [Colbert, 1994]. The model is based on the following requirements:

* Unitary Management;
* Private hotel accommodation professionally managed;
* Housing units located in several buildings close together near a town center, or in a small village; adding to the cultural perspective of the community;
* Presence of local crafts/services near the guests;
* Presence of a living community;
* Style and integrated professional management in the territory;
* Distance between living units and common areas are contained within 200 meters;
* Presence of an authentic environment;
* Recognition of services of offered.
* Integrated management; having the style of the territory and culture [Dall'Ara 2010].

The innovation lies in the involvement of different subjects which, under a single coordinated management, develop a form of hospitality intended to valorize the potentialities of the area in question, such as culture, history, traditions, food products, and the scenic beauty, which must be considered and implemented with little impact to the environment. Despite having different owners, the unified management must also promote an integrated service.

The distinctive features and differences between a traditional hotel and a *Albergo* *Diffuso* are obvious. The role of the hotelier in the *Albergo* *Diffuso* clearly overlap with his role in the traditional structures, as he is required to provide the same services to his guests, even though operating in accommodation units located in several buildings, but what is changing is the style of the management and the importance attributed to the qualifying performance. In fact, in the *Albergo Diffuso* instrumental benefits are not incidental to the main service, but become essential and distinctive elements of the reception system.

The common areas must be located in a central position relative to the structure of the village and the rooms. This way it is accessible to all. The inner lobby, a gathering area dedicated to reception and other technical aspects, should be aimed at informing customers about activities in the territory. There must be furnishings of local art and traditions near the site. Instead the outer lobby is represented by the local urban center. The urban center must be distinguished not only as a strong vocation, but also a lively welcoming community; promoting local events related to traditions, quality local products, the environment, and easily and accessible transport services. Ultimately, AD allow customers to feel part of the community.

The first experiments confirm the advantages to this *Albergo Diffuso* model. First of all to be a model of sustainable development that can revitalize deprived areas and to redevelop the area; it has the ability to be an innovative business model, consistent with the environment and cultural interest.

The AD is a tool for developing tourism that is sustainable. It has the careful touch for preserving artistic heritages using tangible and intangible resources in the area [Vignali, 2011].

## 5. The Origins of the Albergo Diffuso

The concept of a Albergo Diffuso came from Italy; as well as the early experiences and the regulatory system. The first idea of a AD originated in the late 70s. There was a need to restructure and redevelop for residential purposes the villages become uninhabited as a consequence of an earthquake happened in Carnia in 1976.

The term, AD, appears for the first time in 1982, within a project planned by Leonardo Zanier, "Comeglians Pilot Project." In the 80s, after the term " *Albergo Diffuso*" came out, it was followed by other attempts of conversion of buildings, such as in Friuli (Sauri in 1982) and in other parts of the country; in Emilia Romagna, in Cal d'Enza around 1984, and in the small town of Vitulano, in the province of Benevento in 1987.

In these first attempts to create "*Albergo Diffuso*," the main objective was to use empty buildings and abandoned homes, to animate city centers, and to enhance tourist sites with the marketing logic of an oriented product related to the spirit of the place.

Despite these early attempts, the AD was still no different than traditional hotels. Those efforts didn't match the level of hospitality or the immersion of the local culture.

These projects assumed in the 80s, were the most common. Hotels and housing projects were networked together were defined as being an "unbalanced bid;" the desire to recover stability rather than thinking about demand. It was necessary for services to intercept this and to consistently manage the situation.

It wasn't really until the 80s that the idea of the AD became clearly outlined. It began to be perceived not as a network of apartments, but as a business in tune with demand. A horizontal hotel, located in a charming old town, with rooms and services located in buildings close together.

And in 1989 there was a big step forward in defining AD. A feasibility plan connected to the "Tourism Project," in St Leo, which introduced for the first time the concept of a horizontal hotel. Designed as a facility unit that caters to people interested in staying an urban context of value, in contact with the residents, and having the luxury of normal hotel services. However, the project was confronted with legislative complications and difficulties encountered in identifying a number of owners that were sufficient enough to start the idea. The concept was developed in Montefeltro and completed in Sardinia; it was called, The Tourism Development Plan of the Mountain Community Marghine Planargia (Nuoro, 1995). This model was decisive enough to become the reference for *Albergo Diffuso*.

The delay happened because there was legal and conceptual confusion. This form of innovative tourism was interpreted as a developments system for apartments and houses instead of a unified management of hotel services deeply rooted in local tradition.

## 6. Italian, European and international framework about Albergo Diffuso model

The issue related to tourism is the residual powers of the regions after the constitutional reform of 2001[[2]](#footnote-2) [Franceschelli, 2008]. Therefore the individual local governments of the regions now have the ability to legislate independently with regard to the distinctive requirements and accommodations of AD.

Despite this autonomy, the discipline seems uniform with respect to factors such as the location and centralization of services and may have some differences about:

* the distance between the housing;
* the minimum number of beds needed;
* the minimum number of housing units;
* the minimum or maximum number of inhabitants located in the historic center.

These differences, however, does not denature the new form of hospitality, because it remains the fundamental element represented by a unitary management of services and the location in a place of artistic interest. The remaining elements also not generate inequality, but resulting in a more personalized, tourist- oriented service. This makes the service more distinctive, more authentic and more genuine when it comes from the village concerned.

However, in an increasingly competitive global market on these issues, there is a greater need for national legislation that can enhance the originality and protect the made in Italy concept.

As already mentioned, the first acceptance of the AD proposal was by the legislation of Sardinia regional law, no. 22, of 14/05/1984; and was later amended by Law in 12/08/1998, no. 27. It has renamed "Village Hotel" to "Albergo Diffuso".

In Italy today, there are approximately fifty structures considered to be *Albergo Diffuso*. In particular, there are 56 structures recognized by the National Association of *Albergo Diffuso*[[3]](#footnote-3). And there are 15 regions that have a law governing these structures, as well as the autonomous province of Trento[[4]](#footnote-4).

In relation to other European policies, tourism is the subject of much attention because it has high potential to generate growth and jobs. The tourism sector, however, is not regulated directly but through related issues such as the environment, transport and culture. Therefore, in the European legislative level, the tourism sector is regulated by other disciplines in these different sectors. One of the main objectives of the European Commission is the policy of sustainable tourism and the "Albergo Diffuso" model can be used as a sustainable development strategy [Vignali, 2010, Throsby 1995]. In fact, it satisfies several Community objectives such as: economic prosperity because oriented to the revitalization and recovery of existing assets; equity and social cohesion, because they improve the quality of life of the local communities, and offer visitors satisfying experiences while minimizing pollution and environmental degradation.

Just for different purposes, the tourism sector benefits from funding from the European Union in order to convert and enhance local traditions, artistic and rural heritage, and revitalize the their economy into the logic of sustainable development[[5]](#footnote-5) [Sapienza, 2004].

The *Albergo Diffuso* model seems to have been accepted at the international level[[6]](#footnote-6) with clear interests from Spain, Germany, Croatia, Serbia, Israel, Brazil, and Mexico.

Not only is the international media interested in this phenomenon, but also foreign investors. They are fascinated by the possibility of exporting a tourist formula of success with the intention of reviving the economy of its territory.

The *Albergo Diffuso* seems perfectly aligned with the "Millennium Development Goals," established by the United Nations in 2000. It also has the principles of the "Global Code of Ethics of Tourism," adopted in 1999 by World Tourism.

For example, the case of Brazil. It is an area rich in traditions which would fit with this concept of AD. Thanks to the collaboration between the Federal University of Piaui, the Association Arbave, NGO that promotes tourism projects, social responsibility, and SiSAD; an international school of specialization about the spread.

*7. The Strengths and Opportunities of the* Albergo Diffuso

A few years later, with the first experiences of AD, it is possible identify the strengths and weaknesses and prospects for developing this innovative form of hospitality.

One of the factors that has caused the success of Albergo Diffuso is its deep bond with the land and the possibility of promoting small villages or small towns designed to be abandoned and subject to depopulation, and to be able to recover the memory, the art, the ancient tastes as authentic witness of the resident community [Dall'Ara and Morandi, 2010].

But there are other strengths that make the *Albergo Diffuso* system very attractive for the present and future generations.

* The ability to meet the needs for expert and demanding tourists;
* The promotion of heritage, oriented to the recovery of cultural heritage of towns, respect for the identity, and reviving events related to the tradition
* The sustainable development; the AD model is eco-friendly and respectful of the area's history. It can prevent depopulation and abandonment of places rich in history and art. It also promotes the economic development of small towns, and aims to increase local employment, without impacting negatively on the environment or contamination of the culture or local identity.
* The authenticity, as it offers visitors the opportunity to be hosted in homes and to feel like an authentic residents within particular traditions and cultures.
* The originality of the proposal; it allows the tourist to experience the lifestyle of the place, thanks to lively and engaging community.
* The elasticity of the proposal, because the tourist has full availability of variety of options. Based on different price ranges, different accommodations, different complementary services, makes the experience unique personalized experience; offering a theme linked to local products, art, and traditions.
* The management style. The AD is distinguished from other models; for instance, the original atmosphere of hospitality, for the provision of services, and the original idea of being tied to the territory. Therefore the management style is original, professional, but at the same time adhering to the local culture.
* The relationship. The model of the *Albergo Diffuso* is designed to provide guests with one of the most valuable assets: the reports. In fact, it encourages contacts not only with tourists, but between them and the resident community, so as to become "temporary residents.

Despite the innovative spread of the AD model, it isn't without some weaknesses. Because of the AD's authentic architecture, it requires substantial initial investment and subsequent maintenance in strict compliance with existing architecture. Furthermore, with regard to the organization and management of the work, just the location of the housing units near the city center it generates some inefficiencies compared to traditional hotels which can centralize and standardize their services.

Management, also subjected to higher pressures, requires the manager of the AD to have more skills than a director of a traditional hotel. The manager will not only have to manage professional and technical factors related to marketing and administration, but also factors related to local events and animation of local traditions and cultures. Therefore a AD manager must have the capacity to establish relationships, deep knowledge of local culture, and a developed passion for it as well. Finally, the manager can not act alone, but most coordinate with other stakeholders and the community to stimulate the interests of the tourists and triggering the "word of mouth”.

*8. Support Model for the Determination of Standard Indicators for AD*

The Model of Albergo Diffuso can be defined as an integrated tourism service. This service includes all of the following activities: reservations, reception, accomodation, restaurant, local cooking classes, craft classes, swimming and more.

The integrated tourism service of Albergo Diffuso, becomes a strategic key to develop tourism demand of a specific area; for this reason is important that the service acts according to the principles of Total Quality.

The standard of quality in the tourism service of the AD model is given by standard of quality of each service included in the model; this standard of quality leads to the satisfaction of customers and stakeholders. For all these reasons the management of AD has to define the Standard of quality for each service: reservations, reception, accomodation, restaurant, local cooking classes, craft classes, swimming and more.

In this paper we introduce a generic model that will have to be adapted to each individual AD. In our generic model we have included the least number of service to define the AD offer.

 Of course each AD can improve the number of services offered in addition to the minimun standard than carries out to a diversification between different AD. The diversification of this service may increase the customer satisfaction which can also lead to a competitive advantage for AD.

The methodology that we are proposing is a detailed analysis of Total Quality for each service for each services and for the quality of each factors: Each quality factor is defined in a range in which it identifies the minimum and maximum quality.

 Within this range will be, the management of AD, which after careful analysis of available resources, define what is the standard of quality for each factor or parameter that will still offer to their clustomers.

Only in this way we could calculate the right standard for each factor and then the right sum, appropriately weighted, will provide the unique indicator of quality AD.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Services** | **Factors and Parameters for Quality** | **Range Quality Standards (range 1-5)** | **Standard** |
| **1)Direct Booking**  |  |  |  |
| **a. Telephone**  | Time to response | From to 0’minutes to 5’ minutes | E.g.: if 0’ minutes, STD=5; if 5’ minutes, STD =1 |
|  | Availability | 1 = low available5 = very helpful | E.g.: very helpfull, STD = 5 |
|  | Clarity | 1= not clear5 = the most clear | E.g.: not clear, STD = 0 ; the most clear, STD =5 |
|  | Transparency | 1 = low transparency5 = very transparent | E.g.: Low transparency, STD =0 ; very transparent, STD =5 |
|  | Competence | 1= not competent5 = very competent | E.g.: not competent, STD =1; very competent, STD=5 |
|  | Courtesy | 1 = not polite5 = very courteous | E.g.: not polite, STD =1; very courteous, STD=5 |
|  | Reliability | 1 = unreliable5 = very reliable | E.g.: not unreliable, STD =1; very reliable STD =5  |
| **b. On line**  | Image | 1= small image5 = clear image | E.g.: small image, STD =1; clear image STD =5 |
|  | Clarity | 1 = not clear5 = very clear | E.g.: not clear min 1, STD =1; very clear STD=5 |
|  | Transparency | 1 = not transparent5 = very transparent | E.g.: not trasparent , STD =1; very transparent, STD=5 |
|  | Time to response  | From to 0’minutes to 5’ minutes | E.g.: if 0’ minutes, STD=5; if 5’ minutes, STD =1 |
|  | Security | 1 = unsafe5 = very safe | E.g.: unsafe , STD =1; very safe, STD = 5 |
| **2)Reservations** | Travel agency image | 1 = small image5 = clear image | E.g.: small image , STD =1 |
|  | Availability | 1 = low available5 = very available | E.g: low available, STD =1; very available, STD =5 |
|  | Clarity | 1 = not very clear5 = very clear | E.g.: not very clear , STD =1; very clear , STD =5 |
|  | Transparency | 1 = low transparency5 = very transparent | E.g.: low trasparency, STD =1; very transparent, STD =5 |
|  | Expertise | 1 = if not competent5 = very competent | E.g.: if not competent , STD =1; very competent, STD =5  |
|  | Courtesy | 1 = not very polite5 = very polite | E.g.: not very polite, STD =1; very polite, STD =5 |
|  | Reliability | 1 = not very reliable5 = very reliable | E.g.: not very reliable, STD =1; very reliable, STD =5 |
|  | Response time | From 0’ minutes to 5’ minutes | E.g.: if 0’ minutes , STD=5; if 5’ minutes, STD =0 |
|  | Security | 1 = not very safe5 = very safe | E.g.: not very safe, STD =1; very safe STD 5 |
| **Reception :** | opening hours | From Minimum 4 hours to maximum 24 hours | E.g: 4 hours STD = 1; 24 hours STD = 5 |
|  | Furniture | Minimum 50 square meters |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  | Courtesy of staff | 1 = unkind5 = very nice | E.g.: unkind , STD =1; very nice, STD =5 |
|  | Efficiency of staff | 1 = not very efficient5 = very efficient | E.g.: not very efficient , STD =1; very efficient, STD=5 |
|  | Language skills of Staff | From minimum 2 languages to maximum 5 languages | E.g.: 5 languagesSTD =5 |
|  | Accessibility for the disable | Compliance with the regulations  | Compliance with the regulations with additional increases in the STD |
|  | Report guests/employees  | At least 6 units to maximum 48 units  |  E.g.: if only 6 units STD = 1; if 48 units STD =5 |
| **Accommodation** | Mini kitchen  | Essential or non essential |  E.g. : essential, STD =1;if super equipped STD =5 |
|  | Square meters for double room  | Min 0 – Max 5Compliance with regulations | E.g.: Compliant with regulationsSTD=1 |
|  | Number of beds per room  |  Min 1 bed in 15 square meters4 beds in 30 square meters | E.g.: 4 bed in 30 m2, STD=5 |
|  | Bathroom | Min with shower- Max with whirlpool | E.g.: with only shower, STD =1; with whirpool , STD =5 |
|  | Cleaning accommodation | 1 time a day, 2 times a day, at least 1 time | E.g.: 1 time a day, STD=5; at least 1 time STD =1 |
|  | Change of linens | 1 time a day | E.g.: 1 time a day , STD =5 |
|  | TV | Min with local channels, Max with sat | E.g.: TV with local channels STD =1 ; TV with sat ,STD = 5 |
|  | Wi-Fi | Min access 4 hours per dayMax 24  | E.g.: minimum 4 hs per day STD = 1 |
|  | Accessibility for the disable | Compliance with the regulations | Compliance with the regulations with additional increases in the STD |
| **Restorations** | Language skills of staff  | Minimum 2 languages to max 5 languages | E.g: 5 languages, STD =5 |
|  | Local and international cuisine  | Max local cuisinesMin local and international cuisines  | E.g: only international cuisines, STD =1; with local cuisines , STD =5 |
|  | Courtesy of staff | 1 = unpolite5= very polite | E.g: very polite, STD =5 |
|  | Efficiency of staff | 1= inefficient5= very efficient | E.g: inefficient , STD =1 |
|  | Quality | Hand crafts or industrial products  | E.g: with hand crafts STD =5; with industrial products STD =1 |
|  |  |  |  |
|  | Variety | From 20 differents types of products to 50 differents types of products  | E.g: with 50 differents types of products, STD =5 |
| **Indoor Swimming**  |  |  |  |
|  | MQ | 1 = 25 square meters5= 50 square meters | E.g: 25 mq STD = 150 mq STD =5 |
|  | Opening hours | From 4 hours to 12 hours | E.g: 4 hs STD = 1E.g: 12 hs STD = 5 |
|  | The possibility of covering  | Min: no possibility of coveringMax: coverage | E.g: if it’s impossible to covering the swimming , STD =1; |
|  | Equipped | 5= efficient1= not efficient | E.g: not efficient , STD =1  |
|  | Efficiency of Staff | 5= efficient1= not efficient | E.g: not efficient , STD =1 |
|  | Courtesy of Staff  | 1= unpolite5= very polite  | E.g: unpolite , STD =1; very polite , STD =5 |
|  | Cleaning | 1 time a day, 2 times a day,  | E.g: 1 time a day STD = 1;  |
|  | Accessibility for the disable |  | E.g: Compliance with the regulations with additional supplements STD |
| **Outdoor** |  |  |  |
|  | Opening hours | Minimum 4 hours – Maximum 12 hours | E.g: 4 hs STD = 1; 12 ore STD = 5 |
|  |  |  |  |
|  | Efficiency of Staff | 1= not very efficient5= very efficient | E.g: not very efficient , STD =1 |
|  | Courtesy of staff  | 1= unpolite 5= polite | E.g: unpolite , STD =1; very polite , STD =5 |
|  | cleaning | 1 time per week, 1 time a day | E.g: 1 time per week STD = 1;  |
|  | Accessibility for the disabled  |  | Compliance with the regulations with additional supplements STD |
| **Local Cooking classes** | Frequency | Min 1 time per week, Max 1 time a day | Only 1 time per week, STD =1  |
|  | Language skills of staff | Min 2 languages to max 3 languages | 2 languages , STD =1 |
|  |  |  |  |
|  | Accessibility for the disabled  |  | Compliance with the regulations with additional supplements STD |
|  | Courtesy | 1= unpolite5= very polite | E.g: unpolite , STD =1 |
| **Local Handcraft Courses** | Frequency | Min 1 time per week, Max 1 time per day | Only 1 time per week, STD =1 |
|  | Language skills of staff | Min 2 languages to max 3 languages | 2 languages , STD =1 |
|  |  |  |  |
|  | Accessibility for the disabled  |  | E.g: Compliance with the regulations with additional supplements STD |
|  | Courtesy | 1= unpolite5= very polite | E.g: unpolite , STD =1 |
| **Excursions** |  |  |  |
| **A. Landscape** | No. of guided tours | Min 1 time per week, max 1 time per day | E.g: 1 time per week , STD =1; 1 time per day, STD =5 |
|  | No. participants of guided tours | From 5 people to 15 people | E.g: with 5 people, STD =5; with 15 people, STD=1  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **B. Art**  | No. of guided tours | Min 1 time per week, max 1 time per day | E.g: 1 time per week , STD =1; 1 time per day, STD =5 |
|  | No. participants of guided tours | From 5 people to 15 people | E.g: with 5 people, STD =5; with 15 people, STD=1  |
| **C. Archaeological** | No. of guided tours | Min 1 time per week, max 1 time per day | E.g: 1 time per week , STD =1; 1 time per day, STD =5 |
|  | No. participants guided | From 5 people to 15 people | E.g: with 5 people, STD =5; with 15 people, STD=1  |

*9. The Italian Cases of Albergo Diffuso “AD”: Sextantio (Abruzzo) and Sauris (Friuli Venezia Giulia)*

The father of the formula “Albergo Diffuso” is bornin 1978 in Carnia, in Borgo Comeglians. This is the first example of eco-friendly hotel, and, based on this experience, in the same Region, in the Province of Udine, in 1989 was built the AD "Sauris" and in 2000 the AD the "Borgo Soandri di Sutrio": this is a project of integrated multi building accommodation and this respresents an unique brand of AD situated in Carnia, consisting in a circuit of six hotels with 90 buildings.

Other experiences later have spread in Abruzzo with the villages Maiella, the AD Sextantio is an example of recovery the medieval village in Gran Sasso National Park, the village of Acquaiura near Spoleto, down to the Lucanian Dolomites [Marongiu P. 2005].

,Heirenafter we propose two Italian examples of “integrated tourism management”and for each case, out individually, will be marked the services offered that determine the characteristics for tourist services. What has been outlined must meet the standard parameters to define the total quality.

Therefore, after a brief presentation of the two model AD and an observation about features and technical characteristics our analisys are focused on the implementation of the model, highlighting the quality standards for each service offered from each formula AD and the standards that have been obtained by consulting online, telephone and other documentation.

*9.1 Case of Region Abruzzo- Santo Stefano di Sessanio- AD Sextantio:*

Santo Stefano di Sessanio is a small medieval village 35 kilometers from L'Aquila. It is at 1250 meters in altitude in the heart of the National Park of Gran Sasso. It has an area of 3,500 square meters. An Italian-Swedish entrepreneur Daniel Kihlgren invested 5 million Euros into this area. After creating the company Sextantio ( from the Latin name of the village) he transformed the village in a most popular multi building accommodation, recovering an inhabited village by 70 people which became an important AD ..The ruined houses have been placed with vintage materials and traditional techniques and they have also survived the earthquake in 2009 without damage.

The AD Sextantio is unquestionably one of the most innovative and sophisticated examples of AD. Through careful research on local traditions, it has converted the buildings of the village according to the local style; it has been an excellent new approach for the Conservative Historical Restoration; mixing between the original value of simple architecture and ancient pieces, using advanced technology.

The village has been preserved intact as before and also your traditions becausehe knew the effects of the dramatic depopulation when the original population have migrated elsewhere to pursue a better condition of life, abandoning farming activities, for instance, in particular the trade and the manufacture of the wool "Carfagna" and the “transumanza”. And today it is an example of sustainable development. The village is an example of AD , capable of hearing the voice of the people and their needs, their culture and history. This model represent the same architectural characteristics of the past, and it would like identifying and developing those distinctive features that identified the village of Santo Stefano di Sessanio. The 28 rooms that characterize it are all different from each other both as the decor, the arrangement of the space and , of course, the kind of conversion adopted.

**Location**: Santo Stefano di Sessanio - L'Aquila – Abruzzo

**Position**: rooms located in different buildings in the center of the AD

**Accommodation**:-the 28 rooms are very large (up to 25 square meters),by 1 to 4 beds (total beds 61 in the hotel) The furniture is local, the rooms are equipped with fireplace and floor with heating system with distributed remote system .. In the Palazzo delle Logge, one of the most important building, were identified common areas.

**Rates:** from 90 to 150 € per person a day

**Treatment**: bed-and breakfast.

Half-and full board on request.

Tasting menu (4 courses with drinks included) - 40 € per person

**Reservations**: by telephone, online, on-site

**Services:** Restaurants: La locanda sotto gli archi - Il cantinone – La tisaneria, typical workshops, conference room, locations for food sale, wine and local crafts, massage treatment, ability to book the typicals events, hiking, mountain biking or horseback riding in the Park of Gran Sasso, organized tours in the villages located in the region Abruzzo, tours into the city of L'Aquila, craft courses, courses of local weaving, course of manufacturing local bread and cheese., rent a historical cars.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Services** | **Service Quality Factors and Parameters**  | **Quality Range (range 1-5)** | **Standard**  |
| **1)Direct booking a. by telephone** | Response time  | 0 - 5 minutes | STD=5 |
|  | Availability | 1= low5= high | STD = 5 |
|  | Clarity | 1= low5= high | STD =5 |
|  | Transparency  | 1=low5=high |  STD =4 |
|  | Expertise | 1= low5=high |  STD =5 |
|  | Courtesy | 1 = low5=high | STD =4 |
|  | Reliability | 1=low5=high | STD =4 |
| **b. On line**  | Image | 1=low5=high | STD =5 |
|  | Clarity | 1=low5=high | STD =3 |
|  | Transparency  | 1=low5=high |  STD =3 |
|  | Response time | 0 - 5 minutes |  STD=5 |
|  | Security  | 1=low5=high |  STD =5 |
| **2) Reservations** | Image | 1=low5=high |  STD =4 |
|  | Availability | 1=low5=high |  STD =4 |
|  | Clarity  | 1=low5=high |  STD =4  |
|  | Transparency | 1=low5=high | STD =4 |
|  | Expertise | 1=low5=high | STD = 5  |
|  | Courtesy | 1=low5=high |  STD =4 |
|  | Reliability | 1=low5=high | STD =4 |
|  | Response time | 0 - 5 minutes |  STD=3 |
|  | Security  | 1=low5=high | STD =4 |
| **Reception :** **an old barn at the entrance of the village** | Opening hours | 1= 4 hours 5= 24 hours | STD = 4 (20 ore) |
|  |  q.m Furniture Barn | Min 50 q.m. |  |
| **Amt of minimal distance from housing** | Distance from housing |  | Min 3500 |
| **Staff** | Courtesy  | 1=low5=high | STD =5 |
|  | Efficiency  | 1=low5=high | STD =5 |
|  | Language skills  | 1= 2 languages 5= 5 languages | STD =1 |
|  | Accessibility | Compliance with regulations  | Present |
| **Accommodations: rooms/apartments from 25 qm for BB**  | Double room | Min 0 – Max 5Compliance with regulations STD | normative STD=1 |
|  | Number of beds  |  Min 15 mq per room Min 1 to Max 4 beds 30 mq | STD= 1 |
|  | Bathroom | Min bathroom with shower – Max with whirlpool | STD = 2  |
|  | cleaning | 1 time per day2times a day | STD=1 |
|  | Linen change | 1 time a day | STD=1 |
|  | TV | Min : TV with local channelsMax: Sat | STD = 5 |
|  | Wi-Fi | 4 hours - 24 hours | STD = 5 |
|  | Accessibility | Compliance with regulations | Yes |
| **Plan:****Breakfast in a local antique store from 08.00 to 10.30 (use of local products)** | Language skills of staff | 1= 2 languages 5= 5 languages | 2 languages STD =2 |
| **Kitchen with products of the mountains La Locanda sotto gli archi e al Cantinone****(closed on Mondays)** | Local cuisine  | Min: international cuisineMax: with local dished  | STD =5  |
| **Staff** | Courtesy  | 1= low5= high | STD =5 |
|  | Efficiency  | 1= low5= high |  STD =5 |
| **Local handcraft** | Product quality | Local handcraftIndustrial handcraft  | STD =5 |
|  | variety | 20 different types50 different types | STD =2 |
| **Local Cooking Classes** | Frequency | 1 time a week 1 time a day | Min 1 time a day |
| **Staff** | Language skills  | 1= 2 languages 5= 5 languages | STD =2 |
|  | Adequacy of Skills | 1= low5= high | STD=5 |
|  | Accessibility | Compliance with regulations  | Yes |
|  | Courtesy | 1= low5= high | STD =5 |
| **Local Hand craft Courses** | Frequency | 1 time a week 1 time a day | Depends on requests |
| **Staff** | Language skills  | 1= 2 languages 5= 3 languages | STD =2 |
|  | Adequacy of Skills | 1= low5= high | STD=5 |
|  | Accessibility | Compliance with regulations | Yes |
|  | Courtesy | 1= low5= high | STD =5 |
| **Excursions:****A. Landscape** | No. guided tours | 1 time a day1 time a week | Depends on the period and requests |
|  | No of participants | 5 people15 people | Depends on the period and requests |
| **Services:****wellness****- Massage** **- Herbal Tea****- Weddings** | Adequacy of the service | 1= low5= high | STD=5 |

*9.2 The Case of Region Friuli Venezia Giulia – AD Sauris :*

Sauris, which in German dialect is pronounced "Zahre," is the highest multi building accommodation AD in Carnia. It is situated around 1000 to 1400meters above sea level. For centuries it has been isolated from other communities promoting an original culture that is still alive and shared: this turns out to be a winning mentality to accommodate those tourists looking for an authentic and unique holiday.

The Sauris AD is a model of hospitality where tourist accommodations were are reconverted from existing buildings, with a different characteristics. It's located amongst villages but each structure refers to a single reception.

The reception is welcome to guests, to give them the keys to the rooms and the all informations about the village, the territory and also manage each administrative report.

The apartments have fully equipped kitchens, heating, and linens.

For all food lovers, Sauris is well known for the good ham, beer, small fruits, and their historical great dairy production of cheeses.

**Location**: Sauris – Province of Udine – **Friuli Venezia Giulia**

**Position**: There is 27 self catering apartments, located in different areas of the village: The overall structure consists of a central body, which is the actual village, located in a hamlet of Sauris di Sopra; besides having a dozen apartments that over look the village square, it is a very popular reception area for the hotel. The other apartments are scattered throughout various hamlets of Sauris.

**Accommodation:**  various sizes: 2 to 8 beds per request( total beds 123 in the hotel), completed with a kitchenette, kitchenware, linens, towels, TV, hairdryer, heating, bathroom equipped with a shower and bath

**Rates:** from 19 to 40 Euros per person a day

**Room service:** No board ( breakfast on request into the village bars)

Cleaning of apartments: 2 times a week, weekly change of bed and linens.

**Reservations:** by telephone, online, on-site

**Services:** Conventions with restaurants, the sports center and spa, excursions and guided tours, rental equipment, showroom and tasted, typical hand crafts at shops, restaurants, ironing and laundry service, reading room and library for guests, video and DVD store, DVD player rentals, extended checkout, transfer from accommodation to accommodation, supply of firewood, babysitting, delivery of newspapers and magazines, organized weekly visits to the brewery and to the ham production, cooking classes, carded wool classes, wood workshops with local artisans, Nordic walking, canyoning.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Services** | **Parameters for Quality**  | **Quality Standards (range 1-5)** | **Standard**  |
| **1)Direct bookings: a. by telephone** | Response time  | 0- 5min | STD=5 |
|  | Availability | 1=low5= high | STD = 5 |
|  | Clarity | 1=low5= high | STD =4  |
|  | Transparency | 1=low5= high |  STD =4 |
|  | Competence | 1=low5= high |  STD =5 |
|  | Courtesy | 1=low5= high | STD =4 |
|  | Reliability  | 1=low5= high | STD =4 |
| **b. On line**  | Image | 1=low5= high | STD =5 |
|  | Clarity | 1=low5= high | STD =3 |
|  | Transparency | 1=low5= high |  STD =3 |
|  | Response time | 0 - 5 min |  2 min STD=2 |
|  | Security | 1=low5= high |  STD =4 |
| **2)Reservations** | Travel agency image | 1=low5= high |  STD =4 |
|  | Availability | 1=low5= high |  STD =4  |
|  | Clarity | 1=low5= high |  STD =3 |
|  | Transparency | 1=low5= high  | STD =3 |
|  | Competence | 1=low5= high |  STD = 4  |
|  | Courtesy | 1=low5= high |  STD =4 |
|  | Reliability | 1=low5= high | STD =4 |
|  | Response time | 0 - 5 min |  STD=3 |
|  | Security | 1=low5= high | STD =4 |
| **Reception :** **check out extended**  | Opening hours | 4 hours- 24 hours | STD = 5 (24 hr) |
|  | q.m.. | Min 50 q.m. | Std |
|  | Courtesy of Staff | 1=low5= high | STD =5 |
|  | Efficiency of Staff | 1=low5= high | STD =5 |
|  | Language skill of staff | 2 languages- 5 languages | STD =3 |
|  | Accessibility  | Compliance with regulations  | Present |
| **Accommodation:****apartments with fully equipped kitchen and indipendent heating** | Mini kitchen | Min: essential equipmentMax: fully equipped |  STD =4 |
|  | q.m. | Min 0 – Max 5Compliance with regulations STD | STD=1 |
|  | Number of beds per apartment | 1 bed in 15 sqm4 beds in 30sqm | STD= 3 |
|  | Bathroom | Min shower – Max whirlpool | STD = 2  |
|  | Cleaning | 1 time per week2 times a week | 2 times STD=2 |
| **Ironing and laundry** | Linen change | 1 time a week | 1 time STD=1 |
|  | Television | Min: local channelsMax : Sat | STD = 5 |
|  | Wi-Fi | 4 - 24 hours | Es: 24 ore STD = 5 |
|  | Accessibility | Compliance with regulations  | Yes |
| **restoration:****Breakfast (on demand from bar)****- local products typical to the area** | Language skills  | 2 - 5 languages | 3 languagesSTD =3 |
| **Half and full boarding from the restaurant** | Local cuisine  | Min: international cuisineMax: local cuisine  | STD =5  |
| **Staff** | Courtesy  | 1=low5= high | STD =5 |
|  | Efficiency  | 1=low5= high |  STD =5 |
|  | Quality of Products | Local handcraft or industrial  | Local handcraft STD =5 |
|  | variety  | 20 different types of products50 different types | STD =2 |
| **Local cooking classes** | Frequency  | 1 time a week1 time a day | 1 time a week depending on requests |
| **Staff** | Language skills  | 2-3 languages  | STD =3 |
|  | Adequacy of skills  | 1=low5= high | STD=5 |
|  | Accessibility | Compliance with regulations  | Yes |
|  | Courtesy | 1=low5= high | STD =5 |
| **Local Handcraft courses** | Frequency  | 1 time a week1 time a day | Min 1 time a week depending on requests |
| **Staff** | Language skills  | 2- 3 languages | STD =3 |
|  | Adequacy of skills | 1=low5= high | STD=5 |
|  | Accessibility | Compliance with regulations  | Yes |
|  | Courtesy | 1=low5= high | STD =5 |
| **Excursions:** **Landscape/naturalist** | Nr. guided tours | 1 time a day1 time a week | Depends on requests |
|  | Nr. of participants | 5 to 15 people | Depends on requests |
| **Services:****-wellness****-library/video library****-babysitting****-transfer from accommodation** | Adequacy of services | 1=low5= high | STD=5 |

## Conclusion

With our research we have proposed a model of support for the determination of the standard indicators of *Albergo Diffuso*, model that has been applied to two practical cases in order to verify the right implementation.

From a first practical application has been checked and found that the Total Quality model is applicable to the *Albergo Diffuso*, since the unified management.

The indicators than have been adjusted on the basis of specific cases that have revealed a good application of the model and thus, for *Albergo Diffuso* derive excellent management and quality service.

This work has the purpose of make a preliminary evaluation on two cases, but research must continue on a larger sample to determine the weights associated with each index of quality of each service of *Albergo Diffuso* in order to construct a single indicator quality.

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# Sitography

http://www.albergodiffuso.com/osservatorio.html

1. Integrated multi building accommodation. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Reform of Title V of the Italian Constitution, Law n. 3 of 2001. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. http://www.albergodiffuso.com/osservatorio.html [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. They are: Sardegna, Friuli, Marche, Umbria, Liguria, Autonomous Province of Trento, Emilia Romagna, Calabria, Piemonte, Lombardia, Lazio, Molise, Abruzzo, Basilicata, Sicilia, Campania. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The European Regional Development Fund (Fondo europeo per lo sviluppo regionale FESR), provides funding for projects that are intended to promote the socio-economic development in European regions. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See: <http://www.albergodiffuso.com/osservatorio.html>. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)