Organization of bleisure-tourists service as a factor of sustainable development of the tourism sector of the Rostov region

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Abstract. This study is aimed at analyzing the features of the functioning of the hotel services market in the city of Rostov-on-Don and the Rostov region, identifying the factors of its sustainable development due to the organization of services for bleisure tourists. The paper presents a new format of travel in the tourism sector, convenient for the consumer of a certain business status. The article examines the features and trends in the development of bleisure tourism, assesses the total number of rooms of accommodation facilities in the city of Rostov-on-Don of a business nature and the range of additional hotel services they provide in order to identify opportunities in the field of serving bleisure tourists. The popularity of the new format is due to the large concentration in the labor market of a new type of people who prefer to combine work and personal life, as well as their desire to explore new places. The paper identifies the distinctive features of a bleisure trip, as well as identifies the main amenities and services that bleisure tourists are looking for in accommodation facilities. The intensive development of bleisure tourism contributes to the need to develop technologies for serving bleisure tourists in business hotels. The development of congress hotels and the intensification of the offer of business additional services is the main prerequisite for the active and successful promotion of bleisure tourism. The organization of services for bleisure tourists can become a highly profitable area for business hotels. Keywords: bleisure tourist, bleisure tourism, hotel, hotel service, additional hotel service, service, business hotel, business tourism, Rostov region.

1 Introduction

«Bleisure» is a mixture of the words «business» and «leisure», meaning respectively: «business» and «leisure». The term «bleisure travel» describes a business trip followed by rest days at the destination. A Bleisure trip differs from a regular business trip in that after reaching a business goal, the tourist extends the time of his stay at the place of temporary stay not as a business person, but as an ordinary traveler.

Bleisure travel is a modern, fast-growing trend for business travel that has a positive impact on the employee sent on a business trip and on the company's management. The combination of work and leisure can be a stimulating and rewarding «lever» for managing a

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team. Coming from such a business trip, an employee of the organization feels rested, but it directly affects the increase in the effectiveness of his future work. On the other hand, the organization of services for bleisure tourists in accommodation facilities can act as a factor in the sustainable development of business hotels, through the implementation of additional services that are no longer of a business nature, the length of time guests stay and an increase in hotel room stock on weekends.

The hotel business is primarily associated with the provision of hotel services and is mainly focused on meeting the needs of tourists, including vacationers arriving for business purposes. When organizing of service for bleisure tourists, the range of additional services provided is expanding and, in addition to business services, hotels will be able to implement a number of additional services, such as: catering services, entertainment, health improvement, excursion, household and other services.

Additional hotel services allow you to get additional benefits along with the benefits from the sale of the main product, and also help to distinguish the main product from competing products. The system of additional services, unlike other parts of the hotel business, requires non-standard approaches to solving many issues. Proper organization of the process of implementation and provision of additional services makes it possible to expand the list of offers for hotel customers and attract additional categories of consumers.

The list and quality of the provision of paid additional services must comply with the requirements of the category assigned to the hotel. The list of services is constantly supplemented, modified and differentiated depending on the size of the hotel, its location, level of comfort and other reasons.

Bleisure tourists are becoming a rapidly growing and profitable segment for hospitality businesses, so hotel managers need to focus on attracting and serving this category of tourists.

Hotels that can attract bleisure tourists potentially benefit by generating income not only from the sale of business services, but also from the sale of additional services of a catering, wellness and entertainment nature, as well as from the sale of the main accommodation service with an increase in the duration of the tour. For this reason, many hoteliers are looking to reach out to this growing business and leisure based demographic.

The purpose of the work is to analyze the specifics of the organization of services for bleisure tourists in accommodation facilities and to study the significance of this sector in the activities of business hotels in the Rostov region and the city of Rostov-on-Don.

Given the increased popularity of bleisure tourism, it is necessary to study the prospects for its development in the Rostov region, with these goals it is important to generalize the experience of foreign countries in which projects to serve bleisure tourists are most successfully implemented. The organization of servicing bleisure tourists can become a highly profitable line of business hotels, for this it is necessary to increase the range of providing not only business services, but also entertainment and recreational services; develop comprehensive programs for bleisure tourists in a business hotel and programs for events in the Rostov region.

2 Materials and methods

In the modern world, it is necessary to study the global trends of the industry, because sooner or later they will have to be taken into account in strategies and practical steps. That is why it is extremely important to study the experience of European countries and closely follow global trends both in practice and in research and analytical work.

The intensive development of a new type of business tourism, such as bleisure tourism, contributes to the need to develop technologies for serving bleisure tourists in business hotels, as well as identifying the features of servicing business tourists in general. Important
in this sense are the works of such authors as: Orit Unger, Natan Uriely [1], Bongkosh Rittichainuwait, Eric Laws, Rengson Maunchontham, Suphapor Rattanaphinanchai, Sanvicha Muttamara, Kris Mouton, Yueling Lin, Chanatip Suksa [2], Lloyd C. Harris, Andrew Pressey [3].

Since the expansion of the bleisure-tourist segment and work with it directly affects the performance of business hotels, it is also very important to study the trends and features of the development of the hotel business in the world and in Russia. The works of the following authors are devoted to these issues: S.N. Moreva, E.V. Zobova, L.A. Yakovleva, 2017 [4], N.Y. Goryushkina, D.V. Shkurkin, A.S. Petrenko, S.Y. Demin, N.S. Yarovaya, 2016 [5], A. O. Nabil, Channouf Asma-Al-Zaidi, 2016 [6], Mehmet Ali Köseoglu, Mehmet Altin Eric Chan, Omer Faruk Aladag, 2020 [7], L.N. Kazmina, V.S. Makarenko, V.V. Provotorina, G.E. Ekinil [8,9,10], Ekinil, G., Provotorina, V., Petrenko, A. [11]. Among the authors who reveal in their works the issues of organizing the provision of additional services in hotel enterprises, one can distinguish: Özgür Davras, Meltem Caber 2019 [12], Asunción Beerrli-Palacio, Josefa D. Martín-Santana, Crisanto Román-Montoya 2020 [13], Shan Liu, Baojun Gao, Michael Gallivan, Yeming Gong 2020 [14], Seongsoo Jang, Luiz Moutinho 2019 [15].

The methodology of tourism research in the context of regional specifics is devoted to the works of such authors as: S. Karampela, D. Kavroudakis, T. Kizos, 2019 (Greek experience) [16], H.A.M. Shaffirl, A. Hamzah, S. Md. Yassin, B.A. Samah, J.L. D'Silva, N. Tiraieyari, M. Muhammad [17], Ekinil, G., Gorgadze, L., Provotorina, V., Petrenko, A [18] and others.

The research methodology used in the preparation of the work is based on the application of the method of comparative analysis, which made it possible to compare the accommodation facilities of the city of Rostov-on-Don in order to objectively assess their infrastructure and the specifics of the provision of basic and additional services. The typification method made it possible to consider existing accommodation facilities from the point of view of the specifics of the organization of servicing business tourists. The forward planning method was used to develop recommendations for attracting and servicing bleisure tourists in business hotels in the Rostov region, in order to attract business tourists, increase the volume of sales of additional business and entertainment services and, as a result, sustainable development of business hotels in the Rostov region, which can directly influence the development of business tourism in the Don region. The scientific provisions, conclusions and recommendations contained in the article are based on the use of the logical analysis method and the economic-statistical method.

3 Results

The popularity of Bleisure tourism rose about five years after its introduction, in 2016. Changes in society associated with an active lifestyle of society and the travel policy of large corporations have given rise to a new type of tourism in Russia - bleisure. The Bleisure phenomenon began to gain momentum at the same time that millennials, that is, people born in the late 80-s and nineties, who grew up in the digital age, began to play an increasingly important role in the global economy. It is the representatives of this category that are now the most massive group in the overall distribution of the labor force in the world. Millennials took the lead in the mid-2010s and that's when the Bleisure trend was born. They are used to actively using the Internet, solving problems using convenient online tools, and monitoring the quality of the services they receive. Millennials also tend to explore new places and expand their horizons, and also tend to combine work with personal life, experts say.
Bleisure tourism is a growing segment of hotels around the world that combines business travel and tourism. Bleisure travelers combine business obligations with non-work activities in one trip. Bleisure tourists fall into two main categories: corporate, group or conference guests who use a few vacation days on their business trips, and business travelers who bring along travel companions such as friends or family members.

A typical Bleisure trip implies that the employee is given the opportunity to combine a business trip with a mini-vacation trip. In practice, this may look like permission to stay in a new city for the weekend, take children or a spouse with you for the trip.

According to statistics, up to 75 % of all seconded employees go on trips of this type. One of the main characteristics of such trips is the extension of the hotel or apartment booking with the capture of the weekend - that is, the period when work activities are minimal.

According to various studies, the bleisure business is growing at a rapid rate of 20 % per year. Over the past 5 years, the number of bleisure trips in Russia has grown by 43 % and there are all prerequisites for its share to reach 60 % in the near future. Among the cities where bleisure tourists prefer to stay, Moscow and St. Petersburg are in the lead. According to statistics, Vladivostok, Khabarovsk, Omsk, Krasnoyarsk, Nizhny Novgorod, Almaty are popular among bleisure tourists.

There are not so many studies on bleisure tourism in Russia. The analytics of such trips is not so simple. The main sign of an extended working trip is considered to be a return ticket on a weekend or Monday, but not all business travelers buy round-trip tickets at the same time.

According to a survey conducted in May 2021 among 1211 Tutu.ru users, 27,2 % of those surveyed extended their business trip to relax and see the sights. Moscow, St. Petersburg and Sochi were in the top cities. Among the respondents, the majority (36,8 %) were millennials (25-40 years old), another 11,8 % - respondents under 25 years old and 8,8 % - people over 41 years old.

According to OneTwoTripforBusiness, Russian bleisure tourists are actively involved in the trend. At the same time, seasonality has a strong influence on how and where they go on such trips. So in winter, January became the most active month in this regard – 93 % of all business trips abroad took weekends, in summer the number of business trips with the capture of days off reached 82 %.

There are a number of reasons for this development. First, bleisure is a great employee motivation tool. According to statistics, up to 64 % of employees say that after even a short vacation they feel better and want to return to work. About 61 % of employees who combined business trips with personal travel experienced an increase in productivity upon returning to the office.

In Russia, at the moment, not all companies have appreciated the benefits of bleisure, but they often tend to focus on risks. The introduction of the regulation of organizing such combined trips and clear rules for reimbursement into the travel policy will not only increase the loyalty of current employees, but also attract new team members who are eager to learn about the world and are looking for employers who share their values. Bleisure tourism in Russian companies is most popular in the following industries:

–24 % of bleisure travelers work in tech/IT/software;
–13 % of bleisure travelers work in manufacturing;
–12 % of bleisure travelers work in the financial industry;
–8 % of bleisure travelers work in healthcare;
–6 % of bleisure travelers work in education.

Typical initial purposes for bleisure trips include:
– trips to the conference;
– attending an external meeting;
– sales;
– internal meetings;
– travel for «other» reasons.

Bleisure tourists make overnight business trips from once a week to once a year.

The Don region attracts tourists with its rich history, charming nature, hospitable people, original Cossack culture. The region is favorably distinguished by a favorable investment climate, a developed transport network, and high activity of private business. The unique nature of the South of Russia, the great river Don, villages, nature reserves and national parks, rich history - all this is national pride. Such types of tourism as business, health-improving, recreational, historical and cultural, sports, water and event tourism are developed in the Rostov region. In addition, new promising areas began to actively develop - for example, rural (farm) or enogastronomic tourism. The cultural and entertainment program here is also very diverse. The city has activities for people of almost all ages and areas of interest.

The hospitality industry in modern market conditions is knocked out in a leading position in terms of the degree of attractiveness for business development in the Rostov region. This area turned out to be one of the few industries that can quickly adapt to changing conditions. Due to the opportunities for profit maximization and the efficient operation of hotel enterprises, the hospitality segment can be considered with a high level of profitability and adaptability.

In Rostov-on-Don today there are more than 150 accommodation facilities with 4,750 rooms and a total capacity of about 10,000 guests. The city of Rostov-on-Don ranks 4-th in terms of the coefficient of availability of hotel rooms and the average cost of living, among million-plus cities (Figure 1).

![Fig. 1. Collective accommodation facilities in Rostov-on-Don.](image)

Hotel enterprises operating in the category «without stars» account for 48 % of the total structure of the hotel market. At the peak of the season, the occupancy of accommodation facilities in this category ranges from 85 % to 90 %, at other times 50-55 %. The occupancy of hotels of the category two and three stars in the season reaches 75-80 % (in the off-season – 40-45 %). Four-star hotels in the season are filled by 65-70%, and in the passive period - 35%. The occupancy of five-star hotels in the season is about 65%, in the off-season period – 30-35%. The structure of visitors to collective accommodation facilities in Rostov-on-Don by purpose of stay in 2021 is shown in Figure 2.
The hotel business in Rostov-on-Don is developing rapidly, the hospitality sector is expanding with new facilities, the quality of service is improving and more and more new services for guests are being introduced. In the coming years, Rostov will be in demand for hotels with a good location, new or renovated rooms, ample opportunities for conferences and a high level of service. In 2021, 549,4 thousand people were registered in collective accommodation facilities in Rostov-on-Don (of which 23,7 thousand people are foreign citizens). The lion's share of the tourist flow that travels to the Rostov region falls on representatives of business tourism. Basically, the average length of stay of tourists is from 1 to 4 nights.

Currently, the business segment, according to various estimates, provides about 70 % of hotel occupancy. The Rostov region annually hosts up to 500 congresses and conferences, as well as over 100 specialized exhibitions, mainly at the moment events are held at the sites of hotel companies positioning themselves as congress hotels (table 1).

**Table 1. Congress hotels in Rostov-on-Don.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>№</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Number of stars</th>
<th>Number of rooms</th>
<th>Number of conference rooms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Premium hotel</td>
<td>Grand Rostov Hyatt Regency</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Congress Hotel</td>
<td>Marins Park Hotel Rostov</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hotel</td>
<td>Topos Congress Hotel</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hotel</td>
<td>Congress Hotel Don-Plaza</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Hotel</td>
<td>AMAKS Congress Hotel</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Congress hotels are a suitable option for both a short business trip and a longer stay in the city. Convenient location opens up opportunities not only for organizing cultural events, but also for fruitful business negotiations and presentations.

In addition to the above, conference services are also offered by more than 20 hotel companies in the city.

Hotels highly value the business travel industry as a source of high income, considering it a prerequisite for an active and successful expansion of the boundaries of hotel activities.
Currently, the conference services market is dominated by hotel companies with a wide range of business services, positioning themselves as congress hotels. This specialization implies close attention to the needs of corporate clients, the hotel's orientation to the business tourism segment as its main component, raising the quality of all hotel services to a higher level.

Comfort, efficiency and flexibility are what bleisure travelers want. Hotel chains around the world recognize this need and quickly adapt to it. Accommodation facilities are ready to offer business tourists new formats of rooms, which can be represented by either a bedroom or an office, instead of being both at the same time. The idea is to help guests separate their work and personal time. Some business hotels are trying to launch the latest apartment division to meet the growing demand for business and leisure travel.

Among the main amenities and services that bleisure tourists are looking for are:

– a suitable workplace – for bleisure tourists, their work is the main priority, and they need to have the necessary amenities for efficient and comfortable work (Wi-Fi, Internet access, long-distance telephone communication, a desk with an ergonomic chair in the room, many easily accessible sockets, etc.);

– child care and facilities for children. Many bleisure tourists bring their families with them, including partners and children. These travelers are looking for rooms with enough space for the whole family, such as a separate bedroom with a door that closes for better sleep and work. Family members also want amenities and entertainment to enjoy while the business traveler is at work, such as a private pool, playground, beach, or babysitting services;

- concierge services. Bleisure tourists spend less time planning their holiday trips than planning a traditional vacation. They will be delighted if they find a hotel that provides good local recommendations or helps them purchase tickets for attractions, shows, or transportation.

The accelerated development of the hotel industry, the desire of hotel enterprises to obtain the highest profits and the growing solvency of business consumers contribute to the expansion and diversity of hotel activities. The range of services provided by hotel companies today is significant. Additional services are an obligatory component in the activity of any hotel enterprise. The market for the hospitality industry in Rostov-on-Don is open and competitive, putting significant pressure on the industry, forcing it to constantly improve the quality of its services. The development of congress hotels and the intensification of the offer of business additional services is the main prerequisite for the active and successful promotion of business tourism and the expansion of the boundaries of hotel activities. Bleisure tourism may seem like a sustainable trend for the development of the hospitality industry, including the development of business hotels in Rostov-on-Don. All indications are that combining bleisure travel with leisure will become a significant and distinct segment of tourism for years to come. Now that business travel is back to normal and digital nomads and telecommuters still have to pay to work, now is the perfect time to make sure hospitality businesses are ready to increase business traveler stays and generate additional revenue from business travelers who want to disconnect from work and enjoy all the sights of the Rostov region.

4 Discussion

Capturing new trends and preferences of business travelers, many hotels around the world have begun to implement appropriate loyalty programs. For example, three nights for the price of two, special rates for 3 days before or after the planned travel date, early check-in or late check-out, unlimited Internet access, high-quality media equipment in rooms and conference rooms. As well as all kinds of massages and spa treatments included in the
price, additional discounts in the city's themed restaurants and the organization of a cultural program. They began to pay special attention not only to the guest himself, but also to his family, creating unique offers even for the smallest guests or including sightseeing tours in the cost of living.

The total volume of business trips in the Rostov region is increasing from year to year. That said: 10 percent of all business travel is leisure travel, and 16 percent of all business travel hotel bookings now include stays on a Saturday, indicating the possibility of a holiday or trip extension. Leisure travel – a mix of business and leisure travel – is on the rise and this has led to increased interest from the hotel industry itself as hotels seek to attract leisure travelers. The favorable development of bleisure tourism and the organization of services for tourists traveling both for business and leisure purposes is impossible without a successful combination of external and internal conditions, available resources that have a direct impact on the daily work of the hotel, and competent management of this area of work.

Strategies for Attracting Bleisure Travelers by Hospitality Businesses:

1. Hotel technologies.
2. Fast and reliable Internet in workplaces.
3. Expansion of distribution channels for hotel services.
4. Improved personalization.
5. Demonstration of hotel business and leisure facilities.
6. Advertising the tourist attraction of the area.
7. Development and promotion of specific Bleasure offerings.

In order to attract bleisure tourists, it is necessary to:

– incorporate technology into hotels to facilitate travel, as according to the National Car Rental 2019 State of Business Travel Survey, 93 percent of frequent business travelers prefer brands that use such technology, ranging from IoT devices in hotel rooms, such as smart speakers, to use of smartphone applications that enable contactless check-in, check-out and restaurant payments;

– provide guests with comfortable workplaces with reliable Internet;

– partner with the right distribution channels, as working with corporate travel agents can be one way to increase the number of travelers, since these travel agents specialize in organizing business trips and planning business events for their clients;

– improve personalization, which has a greater appeal to bleisure travelers as it often results in processes or services becoming more efficient and more accurate. From smart recommendations based on customer data to the ability to personalize hotel room conditions such as smart heating controls, greater personalization can save time and enhance comfort, allowing business travelers to get work done quickly and free up leisure time;

– to demonstrate their business and entertainment services. The typical tourist will certainly be interested in corporate offerings such as private conference rooms, laptop or phone charging ports, and any 24-hour services a hotel has to offer. However, apart from this, they may also be attracted by leisure facilities such as spas, saunas, gyms or fitness centers, yoga areas, bars and bike rentals;

– advertise sights and surrounding infrastructure of nearby territories (museums, exhibition centers, theaters, river embankment, restaurants);

– promotion of package offers for bleisure tourists that include a set of business services and providing business travelers with discounts on extra nights to encourage them to extend their trip, discounts on additional services and tickets to local museums or events;

– developing a section for bleisure travelers on the hotel website, promoting bleisure offers in pre-stay emails, and including customer reviews from bleisure travelers on social media platforms.
5 Conclusions

Summing up, it should be noted that such concepts of the hotel industry and tourism are closely interrelated, and the development of each of them is not possible without each other. Thus, the expansion of the number of rooms in the hotel industry and the improvement of the quality of service creates the necessary infrastructure for accommodating business tourists. On the other hand, the organization and holding of various types of business events, both national and international, will ensure the loading of the number of congress hotels.

For business travelers, bleisure offers a number of benefits, including boosting morale and enhancing the overall enjoyment of business travel. They also provide an opportunity to save on travel expenses, as the business travel element is paid for by the business. It can give people the opportunity to rest who otherwise cannot take it.

Businesses can also benefit from bleisure travel because happier employees are more productive, and being able to enjoy leisure time may mean that employees who might not otherwise want to travel for the company will want to do so. The worker pays for the extension of the trip and the leisure activities in which he participates, so bleisure usually does not cost more. It also allows business travelers to better understand the places they are going to.

Meanwhile, for the travel industry, the rise of bleisure presents an opportunity for business travelers to extend their hotel stays and therefore spend more money during their trip. The increase in the number of business accommodation facilities and the expansion of the range of additional services will provide jobs, improve the standard of living due to the growth in income of the population and increase the income of local budgets, will contribute to the development of small business, which will affect the solution of important socio-economic problems of the Don region.

Thus, it can be assumed that the bleisure phenomenon is a potentially lucrative market that is growing and is likely to become more attractive to those in the hospitality industry in the coming months and years.

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