Article

Aspects Regarding Safety and Security in Hotels: Romanian Experience

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Abstract: This study investigates safety and security from the perspective of Romanian tourists by assessing the level of importance that tourists give to safety and security depending on the level of classification of the services they experienced and the generation to which they belong. We used a quantitative research method in the form of a questionnaire and analysed eight dimensions of safety and security: detectors, emergency preparedness, medical preparedness, staff security, guestroom security, pool and beach security, hotel access control, and cyber security. We identified the differences between tourists' perception of safety and security depending on the level of classification of accommodation services and on generation.

1. Introduction

The tourism industry is ever more exposed to various kinds of threats and risks (e.g., terrorist attacks, natural disasters, economic crises, epidemics, brand new viruses, etc.). According to Sausmarez [1], tourism safety and security can be affected by negative external events that can be classified, according to the degree of human factors that are involved, into nature-generated events (hurricanes, earthquakes, etc.) and human-generated ones (industrial accidents, plane crushes, terrorist attacks, etc.). Consequently, ensuring optimal conditions for travellers' safety and security represents an important factor for both tourists and tourism managers. In the new millennium, safety and security in the tourism industry have been identified as determinants of change in the tourism industry [2–5]. Tourists need to be protected against risks and dangers. The famous approach to human needs by Abraham Maslow [6] classifies them into five categories: physiological, safety, belongingness and love, esteem, and self-actualisation needs. He argues that there is a close connection and a natural hierarchy between them. According to Maslow, people tend to meet their needs starting with the basic ones—biological survival, safety, and physical security—before fulfilling the superior ones [7]. Many authors have argued that safety and security are fundamental needs, especially since it has been demonstrated that tourists tend to avoid destinations and accommodation structures with potentially higher risk to their safety and security [8,9]. Moreover, any event directly affecting tourists has a negative impact on the destination's income [10]. In order to make sure that tourism continues to grow and generate revenue, all stakeholders should pay great attention to customers' safety and security. Thus, managers in general and managers of tourist accommodation

units in particular need to assess safety and security needs by continuously monitoring the conditions and standards they provide.

The present study aims to analyse the way in which hotel safety and security are perceived by young Romanian customers depending on hotel classification and on the generation to which the respondents belong. The need for this approach stems from the fact that there are no studies that address this particular topic in Eastern European countries in general and in Romania in particular. The selection of these two variables under study unitarily correlates with the new research hypotheses that the authors of this article intend to approach in the future. The target group was designed to provide fundamental opinions from the respondents. The issues of safety and security related to hotel classification point out the ever growing importance of these two criteria in the decision to purchase tourist services. The tourist potential of an area should be complemented by the security that a hotel and the community as a whole provide to tourists, regardless of their age, that is, the generation to which they belong. Although the topic of safety and security in tourist accommodation units has already raised interest as a research topic, few studies have dealt with the concepts in a systematic and holistic way.

This paper intends to act as a benchmark for modern organizations when choosing the right instruments to properly adapt innovation strategies by anticipating the specific trends. So far, most of the research on tourist security and safety has been conducted considering the suppliers' perspective only [11–13]. The novelty of our research is that, here, the main subject is the customer, with their opinion on safety and security as part and parcel of their satisfaction with tourist services. Much of the literature deals with safety and security from a theoretical viewpoint [14–17]. That is why we aim to provide an integrative approach, with emphasis on the *empirical* dimension, which adds to the literature and may become an impetus for future research.

Beyond the theoretical framework, there is a constant and practical need to better understand the context in which hotels face the safety and security challenge in order to increase their attractiveness and competitiveness so that tourists can enjoy unforgettable experiences. As modern consumers are interested in safety and security in both accommodation units and tourist destinations as a whole, they prefer organizations that are able to implement reliable models that promote and ensure security and safety management. Competing for consumers' attention and trust, hotels rely on innovative security systems specially designed to make tourists feel safe. Therefore, tourist accommodation units in general and hotels in particular that are able to provide the needed safety and security, can more easily capitalize on local resources of any kind.

The paper is structured as follows: the literature on hotel safety and security, the foundations of the methodology and research methods, the results and discussions, the conclusions, and lastly an assessment of the limits and future research directions.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Safety and Security Conceptualization

Safety and security have always been a sine qua non of travel and tourism [18]. In the last two decades, safety and security have become overriding requirements for tourists' decision to travel and vital concepts for the tourism industry.

It is, therefore, important to conceptualize safety and security in order to achieve a valid overview on them [19]. Safety is defined as protection against unintentional incidents, while security is protection against deliberate incidents. Security is much more complex, and because of that, it is more difficult to control [20]. It is indeed necessary to study safety and security as they are very important and topical issues of hotel management. Stepchenkova et al. [21], dealing with cultural, environmental, and international aspects of tourism, argued that the threats to internal and external security are increasingly destructive and less predictable. Tourism activity is linked to either natural or man-made disasters, including environmental risks, road accidents and plane crashes, contamination, epidemics or pandemics, and other possible risks. Chan and Lam [22] showed that tourists correlate

hotel safety and security with the existence of fire prevention systems, an emergency plan, an emergency lighting system, guards who ensure constant surveillance, and regular testing of the hotel's security systems. For managers who ensure the operative management of hotels, safety and security means providing video security systems and alarms, emergency lighting systems, and cards instead of keys for opening the rooms and activating the elevators.

The concepts of safety and security are often taken together. Enz and Taylor [23] argued that safety involves protecting both staff and customers against minor or fatal injuries and against possible hazards. According to the Oxford Dictionary, safety means protection against any danger, injury, or risk, while security refers to the prevention of and protection against foreseeable dangers; unlawful activities; and protection of a country, a building, or a person against attack or danger [24]. For Convain and Galea [25], company security is a long-term investment. To be safe is to experience no injuries and to be out of danger. To be safe is to feel free from unnecessary worries, since there are people whose main concern is the guarding and protection of oneself and one's properties and values [26]. This is of particular psychological importance for both hotel staff and customers [27]. According to Baker, Bradley, and Huyton [28], hotels hire staff who are trained in ensuring the security of the unit, of employees, and of customer property. They have to secure the unit against break-ins and theft and must constantly check the areas under surveillance, including car parks.

Security also involves checking customers and their luggage for prohibited items. Pizam and Mansfeld [29] argue that tourists feel safer if law enforcement staff are present and consider that most crimes against tourists take place in areas with no surveillance. Hotels are supposed to protect both customers and employees. Cerpez and Johannesson [30] state that one of the main reasons why tourists return to a tourist destination is the feeling of security they enjoyed there. Allen and Iano [31] consider the building strength and safety to be essential and suggest that hotel rooms should be designed so that any danger or injury to the people inside can be avoided. Security refers to protection against intentional accidents or criminal intent, seen as real threats. Lagat, Kiarie, and Njiraini [32] indicate peace as one of the most important factors that motivate tourists to travel to a certain destination, enjoying a relaxing stay, free from unnecessary concern for their safety and security. International tourism organizations have no influence upon states' peace and security agenda, despite the fact that peace and security are very important for the tourism sector [33]. They are so vital in tourism that the success of tourist investments depends on being able to provide safe and secure destinations [34]. At the international level, hotels can receive an additional safety and security certification, which entails a higher degree of confidence from tourists and increases the location's attractiveness for event tourism [35].

Tourist accommodation units are increasingly facing various types of threats. External risks are both environmental and competitional in nature, the latter caused by information leakage. Internal risks are due to unqualified employees, high-wear installations, and poorly educated customers [36,37].

Terrorism is one of the highest risks for tourism [38]. Its incidence has constantly increased since 9 November 2001. Pizam and Mansfeld [29] studied the relationship between tourism and terrorism and argued that they have been interconnected for decades. There have been instances where tourists have become the victims of terrorism, usually not as the desired target but simply due to being in the wrong place at the wrong time. In the past, attacks on tourists have brought benefits to terrorists, that is, in the form of publicity or even through gaining the support of a local population. Atanasiu and Stăncilă [39] argue that terrorism, organized crime, and weapons of mass destruction are the most powerful threats to state security and consequently hotel security personnel should be well-prepared against this kind of danger.

Apart from terrorist attacks, security also refers to protection against fire and many other types of emergency. Solving security issues in hotels requires a systemic approach based on regular analysis of the hotel operation, identifying its most vulnerable areas, correcting malfunctions on the spot, identifying and removing suspicious or dangerous

objects, and designing anti-crime scenarios and contingency plans. Security has a wider scope than safety, and as stated by Reference [26], there is no safety without security.

Security, cyber security, and all aspects discussed above are vitally important to the tourism industry. Studies conducted in the field of hotel information technology on security practices for hotel networks have pointed out that attacks on computer networks are repeated on a regular basis. Many accommodation units use simple techniques to prevent them, such as network access control and anti-virus software, although more advanced methods are seldom used by hotels, such as vulnerability assessments or biometrics, yet these are highly recommended [40].

It is necessary that a hotel allocates IT funds whenever necessary so that it can install and update the security systems inside and outside the precinct [41]. Geetha et al. [42] and Saporna et al. [43] showed that the budget allocated to security is higher in luxury hotels, resulting in a higher level of security. Customers may say that they prefer hotels with high standards of safety and security; however, they may also be dissatisfied should the standards' implementation make them feel uncomfortable in any way. Enz [44] studied safety and security in 5487 hotels in the USA, and he pointed out important differences in the distribution of facilities based on various price segments. He noted that luxury hotels, new hotels, big hotels, and hotels located in urban areas or close to airports had the highest degrees of security and safety. The location of the hotel is not a decisive factor in ensuring the efficient management of safety and security.

For Hall [45], security is important not only in tourism but also in other fields. Tourism security became of paramount importance following several events that triggered serious crises which affected the tourism industry worldwide. After transportation, tourism is the industry most affected by threats and risks. Fundamentally, hospitality and tourism rely on human interaction; for this reason, safety and security are vital for all the stakeholders.

2.2. Dimensions of Safety and Security in Hotels

A determining factor for tourists when choosing an accommodation unit is security, which helps them to feel safe [14]. Security is a significant factor in a tourist's selection of a hotel. Indeed, they are willing to pay premium prices to ensure security and to enjoy their travels; this is particularly true for women and elderly persons [46]. Using the example of five European tourist cities (Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Paris, and London), Falk and Yang [47] argue that, in destinations where the rules are strict, the degree of safety is higher and tourists' average length of stay increases by 9%. According to Baker, Bradley, and Huyton [28], a mandatory requirement for hotels is the inclusion of a department that specializes in security issues. This should encompass technical duties and should operate in close cooperation with the other departments, ensuring customers' and personnel's safety and security. Enz and Taylor [23] argued that the continuous flow of people in a hotel is a long-term challenge for security and safety, as it is difficult to distinguish between legitimate visitors and people posing potential threats. However, security personnel should not be solely responsible for ensuring safety. They should have a dedicated and well-equipped office, and they need the cooperation of all employees, irrespective of their hierarchical level and the implementation of specific procedures [48]. Safety and security can also be ensured by modern security systems, equipment, and technologies installed inside the hotel. Contracting security companies is also possible. Chan and Lam [22] also consider that safety and security are relevant criteria for tourists when choosing a hotel. Hoteliers usually follow the national and local regulations on safety and security, but they still have to pay great attention to what exactly their customers expect. The abovementioned study reveals that customers are more interested in fire prevention systems, emergency plans, emergency lighting systems, 24-h security guards, and regular testing of hotel safety and security systems. On the other hand, hotel managers are more concerned with closed-circuit television systems, emergency lighting systems, and keys to activate the elevators to guest floors. Young tourists are interested in technical security, first aid boxes, and medically

trained personnel [49]. Therefore, it is vital that hotel managers become fully aware of what tourists expect in order to improve the quality of services provided [50].

Efendi [51] indicated that a hotel's security systems must be managed by the personnel in charge. Video systems, either visible or hidden, provide a sense of safety to customers and employees, and they are a priority for hotel managers [52,53]. The alarm systems installed inside and outside the hotel; in car parks; and in conference halls, offices, and rooms detect unauthorized access, locate the intruders, and alert both employees and authorities, thus protecting the hotel's customers, assets, and facilities [54]. Efendi [51] argued about the different types of internal and external sensors which detect movement and vibrations and which include technical systems [55] capable of sending signals to the hotel's employees and of alerting about any suspicious activity.

Security in the hotel's entrance hall is decisive for employees' and customers' safety. Access by unauthorized persons must be restricted. To this end, the use of cards or code systems and electronic keys is a wide spread solution; these systems provide access to only specific rooms and, possibly, other hotel areas [56]. Room security is an essential issue in tourists' choices. Moreover, Phisunt [57] indicated the importance of closing systems of doors and balconies, of proper cleaning of toilets, and of clear instructions in an international language. Also, rooms should have a good amount of natural daylight because sunlight helps body-healing and inhibits bacterial growth in the room. The room's acoustic insulation provides a pleasant environment and a higher degree of safety due to acoustic comfort. The windows must be provided with a privacy film. Insect nets or sensors are absolutely necessary for customers' rest and relaxation. Baker, Bradley, and Huyton [28] argued that a room safe for valuable goods makes customers feel safer. Also, a luggage area increases the feeling of safety, as the customers know that their assets will not be lost.

Room cleanliness, according to Amblee [58], is of highest importance, followed by hotel's location, service quality, security, and facilities. The author argues that women are more interested in hotels' security than men. Women are willing to pay more for a room because they feel that cleanliness is strongly correlated with security and together show good organization and safety. Other authors [59] also concluded that comfort and security come first when choosing accommodation, especially in low rated hotels. Comfort is provided by cleanliness and employees' behaviour. Moreover, Tanford et al. [60] considered that people travelling for business are less interested in room cleanliness, and the defining criterion is the quality of a hotel's public areas. The quality of public areas, personnel, and services are not first in the list of tourists travelling to relax; they are interested in price and cleanliness. Sandaruwani et al. [61] noticed the importance of accommodation services' quality, especially because tourists value cleanliness and food quality. Nunkoo et al. [62] concluded that safety, security, and room quality are determinants of satisfaction for three-star hotels, although they underperform with regard to safety and security, while in four- and five-star hotels, waiting time and customer interaction matter most. Cró and Martins [63] argued that tourists are willing to pay a higher price if an accommodation unit has higher levels of security, are clean, and has a good location. Given the "new normality", the hotel industry must redefine its services through additional measures related to safety and cleanliness to ensure that tourists have a greater sense of security [64]. Nagaj and Žuromskaité [65] showed, in turn, that the better rated a hotel is, the higher the degree of safety and security, and this is reflected in the prices of the accommodation services.

Warning signs are necessary inside the hotel, such as for wet floors (slipping risk), dangerous areas (e.g., electric shock risk), personnel only areas, and pools where depth and specific behaviour instructions must be visible. Customers must be safe in water, both inside the hotel and in outside areas belonging to the hotel.

The beach is one of the most dangerous areas intensely frequented by customers, on the sea or ocean shore, along with pools and spas. Here, too, specific conduct signs should be installed. Pools and beaches must be constantly supervised by lifeguards trained in first-aid techniques. According to Emir and Kuş [66], first-aid-trained employees represent

added value. Some of the hotels use nets to prevent marine life (sharks, sea urchins, and jellyfishes) from approaching too close to the beach [67].

Children safety is fundamental. Veleva and Yancheva [68] indicated that the animator is fully responsible for the children entrusted to him/her and that he/she must pay the same amount of attention to each of them.

Regarding contamination risk, Holmes et al. [69] indicated that, along time, humans confronted many epidemics: plague, smallpox, typhus, yellow fever, cholera, poliomyelitis, Spanish flu, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), and Ebola, resulting in the death of millions in a short period of time. Epidemics highly affect the economy and society, and the hotel industry must keep on ensuring customers' security. The risk associated with health can influence the decision to book hotels. The risk of illness in hotels is associated with a lack of cleanliness and food safety [70]. Health risk is, nowadays, tourists' primary and most important concern; for this reason, hotel managers must improve tourists' perception of security and safety in the hotel, for instance, by using technologies aimed at reducing the interaction with the hotel staff: check-in systems, kiosk check-in machines, robot cleaning systems, and the use of electrostatic and ultraviolet light in the cleaning process [71]. Oh et al. [72] highlighted that tourists enjoy self-service technologies due to their feeling of privacy, autonomy, and effectiveness.

Security is fundamental in ensuring the highest level of hotel management both for customers and for staff. Cheng, Sun, and Zhou [73] showed that fires caused by staff negligence, malfunctions of electric devices and cables [74], ignition of flammable substances, and fuel are major risks. Graham and Roberts [75] discussed the various functions of the fire prevention systems, and Celik [76] discussed the functions of fire detection sensors. Kosar [77] stated that hotels should be provided with fire-suppression systems based on water, gas, powder, and aerosols. Graham and Roberts [75] underlined the importance not only of evacuation plans being displayed in visible spots and of easy access to emergency lines but also of the employees' professionalism, promptness, and calm actions.

As information technologies evolve, the culture of hotel security has become a long-term approach which must ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of information. Every activity is governed by threats, vulnerabilities, and risks. Therefore, confidential information must be protected [78]: customers' arrival and departure dates, period of stay, daily routine, and visitors and his or her phone subscribers; professional or personal negotiations; information processed using personal or hotel equipment (personal computer, printer, and technical means used during meetings in conference halls); business talks; hotel trade secrets; information and data on financial indicators or on the system of trade relations with suppliers; information on customers; employees' and sponsors' personal data, and information on the organization of safety and security. Confidentiality is maintained by limiting staff access to information and by introducing legal and administrative liability for its disclosure. Panai [79] showed that hotels must provide complex electronic security because cyber attacks have disastrous effects. Protecting hotel data and ensuring tourists' privacy are essential to increase the hotel's competitiveness. Economic security is very important. Hotels must keep their trade secrets safe, and customer's data must be kept confidential. Information leakage is often due to employees and technical devices for receiving data: microphones, telephone and information interception devices, monitoring and video transmission systems, and day and night video surveillance devices [80].

Ghazi [81] showed that the tourism literature does not provide universal definitions on the safety and security concepts in the hotel industry. For that reason, the author created one of the most complex lists of security measures, divided into the following categories: detectors, emergency preparedness, medical preparedness, staff security, guestroom security, pool and beach, access control, and cyber security (Table 1).

Table 1. Literature review of the range of security measures used at accommodation facilities.

Detectors	Emergency Preparedness	Medical Preparedness	Staff Security	Guestroom Security	Pool and Beach	Access Control	Cyber Security
Walk-in metal detector at the hotel entrance	Emergency power generators (sources) in blackouts	A doctor on call 24 h	24-h uniformed security	A first-aid kit in each guestroom	Lifeguards on the pool and beach for supervision	Limiting hotel main access points as possible	Installing software anti-virus protection
Luggage and bags check by metal detector and X-ray machines	Emergency plans and evacuation sound warning system	A small clinic in the hotel	24-h non-uniformed security	In-room secure deposit boxes to keep valuables (laptop)	Security boat surveillance (low noise pollution engines)	Physical and hydraulically road barriers to prevent close access by bombs or high-speed vehicles	Blocking access to password computer
CCTV Cameras	Emergency master keys for duty and security managers	A pharmacy close to the hotel	Security guards periodically patrolling the hotel	Door chains to allow the doors opened slightly to view outside while still remaining locked	Secured fence and non-slip around the swimming pool	Key-activated elevators: elevators interfaced with a room electronic locking system	Securing guest information through programs (credit card number and information provided when booking)
Smoke, fire, heat, and carbon monoxide detectors in guestrooms and the entire complex	Clearly marked emergency exits and stairways	Defibrillation units: a life saving device in heart attacks	Security personnel with foreign language skills	Spy holes to allow residents to view clearly area of outside without opening the door	Safety signs as children should be supervised by an adult	Visitor management system: all visitor must be given a "visitor pass card"	
	Clearly marked fire sprinklers, extinguishers, or dampers	A face mask for each guest for smoke and disease	Staff knowledgeable about safety/security procedures	Electronic key card-locking system (smart card, optical, punch, biometrics, and magnetic) on guestroom doors		Passport or photo ID check, especially for walk-in guests at hotel check in	
	Emergency contact list for local authorities (police), including the hotel emergency phone number	An ambulance or bed ambulance carrier		Multilingual brochures to survive emergencies and recommended guest safety/security precautions		Proper lighting of corridors and stairs for prevention injury	
	Safe deposit boxes at the front desks			A flashlight in hotel rooms		Trash management system by preventing bad odour/diseases, hidden harmful/explosive substances, and unauthorized access to discarded paper records	
	Remote trouble and alarm stations at all points of entry						

Source: Ghazi [81].

According to the main dimensions of safety and security in hotels resulting from the literature, our formulated hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): *There are differences regarding the importance of safety and security dimensions among Romanian customers depending on hotel classifications.*

Hypothesis 2 (H2): *There are differences regarding the importance of safety and security dimensions among Romanian customers depending on the generation to which they belong.*

Regarding H1, there is very little research in the literature. Studies show that the criteria used by tourists when choosing an accommodation facility are the following mandatory attributes: security, reliability, service quality, comfort, and reputation [82]. As far as Romanian customers are concerned, there are no accurate studies carried out on relevant samples which would illustrate the importance of security for tourists, making this approach a valuable one for the specialized literature and practice. Uncertainty in global security can result in significant fluctuations in tourism, so the safety of residents and tourists becomes a global issue for sustainable tourism. A tourist destination can only be developed if it offers a high degree of safety [83].

Hypothesis 2 (H2) is also not supported in the literature by accurate studies, only by tangential ones, without identifying the criterion of safety and security as an important dimension depending on generation. The current analyses show that tourists use the Internet while staying at their destinations, but they do not refer to the need for network security [84]. Some authors argue that, unlike Romanian tourists, foreign tourists are educated into prioritizing safety when choosing a holiday destination [85]. Analysis of the importance of security in tourism according to the generation to which tourists belong can be really useful to any organization that wants to build its offer according to customers' preferences and according to the patterns of each generation [86]. Moreover, the demographic variable must be taken into account when presenting a tourist destination in order to shape satisfaction in accordance with all its particularities [87].

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Methods and Sample Size

An online questionnaire was chosen as the primary method of quantitative data collection to measure the perceptions of tourists regarding the *safety and security* dimensions. The questionnaire was developed and validated by Ghazi [81] and contains 44 measures representing 8 dimensions. These dimensions are the following: detectors, emergency preparedness, medical preparedness, staff security, guestroom security, pool and beach, access control, and cyber security. The target population of this study was represented by students, graduates, and alumni of "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași, Specialization in Economics of Tourism, Commerce, and Services and of "1 Decembrie 1918" University of Alba Iulia, Specializations in Business Administration in Commerce, Tourism, and Services and in Economics of Commerce, Tourism, and Services.

We chose to study the perception of young people primarily because there is a gap in the literature and because more and more young Europeans travel outside their country for higher education, with student mobility being considered as a form of tourism (i.e., international academic tourism) [88,89]. Young tourists are very interested in the level of safety in both accommodation units and tourist destinations as a whole, so that their decision to travel depends greatly on how they perceive safety [90]. The population of the study was selected by random sampling. For the selected population, a Google Forms link was provided in order to complete the questionnaire. A total of 314 valid questionnaires were returned. The respondents were advised that the data collected would be used solely for the purpose to address the research topic. Data collected from the questionnaire was entered into Stata, and a statistical analysis was performed. Study objectives and hypotheses were achieved by analysing descriptive statistics and by performing an analysis of variance (ANOVA). We focused on how differently Romanian tourists perceive the importance of safety and security in hotels based on two criteria: the generation to which tourists belong and the level of hotel

classification. To measure perceptions and the differences between them, we relied on the analysis of descriptive statistics and the analysis of variance as relevant and sufficient. We tested two hypotheses: H1—There are differences regarding the importance of *safety and security* dimensions among Romanian customers depending on hotel classification—and H2—There are differences regarding the importance of *safety and security* dimensions among Romanian customers depending on the generation to which they belong. The respondents stayed at hotels classified from 2 stars to 5 stars. They belonged to three generations: Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980), Generation Y or Millennials (born between 1980 and 1995), and Generation Z (born between 1996 and 2010).

Although there is no general method for determining the optimal sample size, recommendations and guidelines on appropriate sample sizes when performing a statistical analysis have been proposed. Comrey and Lee [91] provided the following recommendations: 100 = poor, 200 = ok, 300 = good, 500 = very good, and 1000 or more = excellent. The studied population included 314 respondents. The population was randomly selected. All participants had the opportunity to ask questions or to express concerns about the questionnaire.

3.2. Selection and Description of Variables

In this study, descriptive statistics and an analysis of variance were used. The one-way analysis of variance was employed to determine whether there are any statistically significant differences between the means of two or more groups. Another definition of ANOVA could be that it examined the effect of one or more categorical independent variables, known as "factors", on a dependent variable. An example of factors is age (young vs. old) [92]. We used a one-way ANOVA. A one-way ANOVA only involves one factor or independent variable, whereas there are two independent variables in a two-way ANOVA. We considered one-way ANOVA to be the appropriate choice for our research.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of the respondents. Descriptive statistics show that 28.66% of respondents were men and 71.34% were women. Regarding the generation to which they belong, 56.05% of the respondents were from Generation Z, 27.07% were from Generation Y (Millennials), while the rest (16.87%) were from Generation X. Descriptive statistics of the length of stay show that 11.46% of the respondents prefer to stay one night in a hotel, 63.06% prefer between 2 and 5 nights, 20.38% prefer between 6 and 9 nights, and 5.10% prefer more than 10 nights. Regarding the hotel classification, 3 respondents (0.96%) declared that, in their last vacation, they stayed at a one-star hotel, 2.87% stayed in a two-star hotel, 49.36% stayed in a three-star hotel, 40.13% stayed in a four-star hotel, and 6.69% stayed in a five-star hotel.

Table 3 indicates the safety and security measures' perceived importance (mean). The means scores of the measures varied from 4.86 (the highest) to 3.21 (the lowest), with 1.0 indicating least important and 5.0 indicating most important. However, there was a distinction between the 50 measures, and a priority of importance was evident.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics.

		Number	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	90	28.66
	Female	224	71.34
Generation	Generation Z	176	56.05
	Generation Y (Millennials)	85	27.07
	Generation X	53	16.88
Length of stay	One night	36	11.46
	2–5 nights	198	63.06
	6–9 nights	64	20.38
	>10 nights	16	5.10
Hotel classification	2 stars (or equivalent)	12	3.83
	3 stars (or equivalent)	155	49.36
	4 stars (or equivalent)	126	40.13
	5 stars (or equivalent)	21	6.69

Source: authors' calculations based on Stata statistical analysis software.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics by the classification of the accommodation unit.

	Mean/Groups			
Security Measures	**2 Star Hotels**	**3 Star Hotels**	**4 Star Hotels**	**5 Star Hotels**
Detectors	**4.041**	**4.099**	**4.043**	**4.309**
Walk-in metal detector at the hotel entrance	3.416	3.516	3.484	3.619
Luggage and bags check by metal detector and X-ray machines	3.583	3.580	3.492	3.809
CCTV Cameras	4.333	4.477	4.428	4.904
Smoke, fire, heat, and carbon monoxide detectors in guestrooms and the entire complex	4.833	4.825	4.769	4.904
Emergency Preparedness	**4.457**	**4.420**	**4.510**	**4.469**
Emergency power generators (sources) in blackouts	4.750	4.619	4.619	4.857
Emergency plans and evacuation sound warning system	4.666	4.664	4.777	4.809
Emergency master keys for duty and security managers	4.583	4.509	4.642	4.523
Clearly marked emergency exits and stairways	4.833	4.735	4.857	4.857
Clearly marked fire sprinklers, extinguishers, or dampers	4.583	4.716	4.849	4.857
Emergency contact list for local authorities (police), including the hotel emergency phone number	4.416	4.419	4.626	4.571
Safe deposit boxes at the front desks	3.916	3.761	3.753	3.666
Remote trouble and alarm stations at all points of entry	3.916	3.941	3.960	3.619
Medical Preparedness	**4.208**	**4.029**	**4.067**	**4.166**
A doctor on call 24 h	4.083	4.045	4.103	4.380
A small clinic in the hotel	4.000	3.619	3.531	3.666
A pharmacy close to the hotel	4.500	4.174	4.222	4.333
Defibrillation units: a life saving device in heart attacks	4.416	4.187	4.317	4.380
A face mask for each guest for smoke and disease	4.333	4.277	4.333	4.238
An ambulance or bed ambulance carrier	3.916	3.877	3.896	4.000
Staff Security	**3.699**	**3.679**	**3.463**	**3.351**
24-h uniformed security	3.750	3.690	3.428	3.380
24-h non-uniformed security	3.500	3.716	3.412	3.476
Security guards periodically patrolling the hotel	3.916	3.600	3.396	3.285
Security personnel with foreign language skills	3.500	3.722	3.579	3.285
Staff knowledgeable about safety/security procedures	3.833	3.670	3.500	3.333

Table 3. *Cont.*

Security Measures	Mean/Groups			
	2 Star Hotels	3 Star Hotels	4 Star Hotels	5 Star Hotels
Guestroom Security	**4.178**	**4.161**	**4.263**	**4.516**
A first-aid kit in each guestroom	4.416	4.496	4.634	4.571
In-room secure deposit boxes to keep valuables (laptop)	3.833	3.625	3.857	4.523
Door chains to allow the doors opened slightly to view outside while still remaining locked	3.833	3.793	3.833	4.238
Spy holes to allow residents to view clearly area of outside without opening the door	4.166	4.393	4.253	4.523
Electronic key card-locking system (smart card, optical, punch, biometrics, and magnetic) on guestroom doors	4.166	4.419	4.539	4.809
Multilingual brochures to survive emergencies and recommended guest safety/security precautions	4.500	4.406	4.523	4.714
A flashlight in hotel rooms	4.333	4.000	4.206	4.238
Lifeguards on the pool and beach for supervision	4.250	4.283	4.285	4.619
Security boat surveillance (low noise pollution engines)	4.666	4.483	4.436	4.809
Secured fence and non-slip around the swimming pool	4.500	4.380	4.468	4.761
Safety signs as children should be supervised by an adult	4.333	4.258	4.285	4.142
Access Control	**4.285**	**4.312**	**4.333**	**4.577**
Limiting hotel main access points as possible	4.166	4.212	4.095	4.380
Physical and hydraulically road barriers to prevent close access by bombs or high-speed vehicles	4.083	4.187	4.158	4.428
Key-activated elevators: elevators interfaced with a room electronic locking system	4.000	4.006	4.063	4.238
Visitor management system: all visitor must be given a "visitor pass card"	4.000	4.109	4.269	4.523
Passport or photo ID check, especially for walk-in guests at hotel check in	4.333	4.496	4.523	4.904
Proper lighting of corridors and stairs for prevention injury	4.666	4.600	4.587	4.904
Trash management system by preventing bad odour/diseases, hidden harmful/explosive substances, and unauthorized access to discarded paper records	4.750	4.574	4.642	4.666
Cyber Security	**4.388**	**4.272**	**4.423**	**4.555**
Installing software anti-virus protection	4.333	4.232	4.412	4.571
Blocking access to password computer	4.333	4.096	4.246	4.380
Securing information guests through programs special (credit card number and information provided when booking)	4.500	4.490	4.611	4.714

Source: authors' calculations based on Stata statistical analysis software.

For the *detector* dimension, the mean value is 4.041 for two-star hotels, 4.099 for three-star hotels, 4.440 for four-star hotels, and 4.309 for five-star hotels, showing that this dimension becomes increasingly important as the hotel classification goes up from two stars to three stars. For the *emergency preparedness* dimension, the mean value is 4.457 for two-star hotels, 4.420 for three-star hotels, 4.510 for four-star hotels, and 4.469 for five-star hotels, showing that the perception of this dimension slightly depends on the hotel classification. For the *medical preparedness* dimension, the mean value is 4.208 for two-star hotels, 4.029 for three-star hotels, 4.067 for four-star hotels, and 4.166 for five-star hotels, showing that this dimension is the most important for customers of two-star hotels and less important for customers of three-star hotels. For the *personal security* dimension, the mean value is 3.699 for two-star hotels, 3.679 for three-star hotels, 3.463 for four-star hotels, and 3.351 for five-star hotels, showing that this dimension is more important for the customers of the two-star and three-star hotels and that its importance decreases for customers of four-star and five-star hotels. For the *guestroom security* dimension, the mean

value is 4.178 for two-star hotels, 4.161 for three-star hotels, 4.263 for four-star hotels, and 4.516 for five-star hotels, showing that this dimension becomes increasingly important as the hotel classification goes up from two stars to five stars. For the *pool and beach* dimension, the mean value is 4.437 for two-star hotels, 4.351 for three-star hotels, 4.368 for four-star hotels, and 4.582 for five-star hotels, thus indicating that this dimension is most important for customers of the five-star hotels. For the *control access* dimension, the mean value is 4.285 for two-star hotels, 4.312 for three-star hotels, 4.333 for four-star hotels, and 4.577 for five-star hotels, thus indicating that this dimension becomes increasingly important as the hotel classification goes up from two stars to five stars. For the *cyber security* dimension, the mean value is 4.388 for two-star hotels, 4.272 for three-star hotels, 4.423 for four-star hotels, and 4.555 for five-star hotels, thus indicating that this dimension becomes increasingly important as the hotel classification goes up from two stars to five stars.

Table 4 indicates the safety and security measures' perceived importance (mean). The means scores of the measures varied from 4.86 (the highest) to 3.21 (the lowest), with 1.0 indicating least important and 5.0 indicating most important. However, there was a distinction between the 50 measures, and a priority of importance was evident.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics by the generation of the respondent.

	Mean/Groups		
Security Measures	**Generation Z**	**Generation Y (Millennials)**	**Generation X**
Detectors	**4.109**	**4.067**	**4.056**
Walk-in metal detector at the hotel entrance	3.551	3.458	3.433
Luggage and bags check by metal detector and X-ray machines	3.607	3.482	3.528
CCTV Cameras	4.460	4.541	4.452
Smoke, fire, heat, and carbon monoxide detectors in guestrooms and the entire complex	4.818	4.788	4.811
Emergency Preparedness	**4.481**	**4.405**	**4.483**
Emergency power generators (sources) in blackouts	4.613	4.682	4.660
Emergency plans and evacuation sound warning system	4.727	4.705	4.716
Emergency master keys for duty and security managers	4.590	4.505	4.584
Clearly marked emergency exits and stairways	4.767	4.823	4.849
Clearly marked fire sprinklers, extinguishers, or dampers	4.744	4.776	4.867
Emergency contact list for local authorities (police), including the hotel emergency phone number	4.539	4.447	4.528
Safe deposit boxes at the front desks	3.857	3.529	3.792
Remote trouble and alarm stations at all points of entry	4.017	3.776	3.867
Medical Preparedness	**4.169**	**3.942**	**3.889**
A doctor on call 24 h	4.136	4.023	4.056
A small clinic in the hotel	3.755	3.364	3.471
A pharmacy close to the hotel	4.227	4.129	4.320
Defibrillation units: a life saving device in heart attacks	4.375	4.176	4.018
A face mask for each guest for smoke and disease	4.420	4.258	3.962
An ambulance or bed ambulance carrier	4.102	3.705	3.509
Staff Security	**3.762**	**3.357**	**3.282**
24-h uniformed security	3.806	3.211	3.339
24-h non-uniformed security	3.818	3.352	3.094
Security guards periodically patrolling the hotel	3.619	3.447	3.245
Security personnel with foreign language skills	3.761	3.470	3.433
Staff knowledgeable about safety/security procedures	3.806	3.305	3.301

Table 4. *Cont.*

	Mean/Groups		
Security Measures	**Generation Z**	**Generation Y (Millennials)**	**Generation X**
Guestroom Security	**3.897**	**4.189**	**4.199**
A first-aid kit in each guestroom	4.625	4.494	4.415
In-room secure deposit boxes to keep valuables (laptop)	3.750	3.847	3.811
Door chains to allow the doors opened slightly to view outside while still remaining locked	3.897	3.717	3.849
Spy holes to allow residents to view clearly area of outside without opening the door	4.460	4.200	4.150
Electronic key card-locking system (smart card, optical, punch, biometrics, and magnetic) on guestroom doors	4.443	4.541	4.528
Multilingual brochures to survive emergencies and recommended guest safety/security precautions	4.477	4.470	4.490
A flashlight in hotel rooms	4.125	4.058	4.150
Pool and Beach	**4.253**	**4.352**	**4.348**
Lifeguards on the pool and beach for supervision	4.443	4.094	4.188
Security boat surveillance (low noise pollution engines)	4.397	4.588	4.660
Secured fence and non-slip around the swimming pool	4.431	4.505	4.396
Safety signs as children should be supervised by an adult	4.318	4.223	4.150
Access Control	**4.264**	**4.387**	**4.500**
Limiting hotel main access points as possible	4.090	4.129	4.528
Physical and hydraulically road barriers to prevent close access by bombs or high-speed vehicles	4.176	4.058	4.433
Key-activated elevators: elevators interfaced with a room electronic locking system	3.994	4.105	4.113
Visitor management system: all visitor must be given a "visitor pass card"	4.073	4.352	4.358
Passport or photo ID check, especially for walk-in guests at hotel check in	4.471	4.658	4.509
Proper lighting of corridors and stairs for prevention injury	4.511	4.717	4.811
Trash management system by preventing bad odour/diseases, hidden harmful/explosive substances, and unauthorized access to discarded paper records	4.534	4.694	4.754
Cyber Security	**4.306**	**4.407**	**4.440**
Installing software anti-virus protection	4.272	4.400	4.415
Blocking access to password computer	4.125	4.270	4.245
Securing information guests through programs special (credit card number and information provided when booking)	4.522	4.552	4.660

Source: authors' calculations based on Stata statistical analysis software.

For the *detectors* dimension, the mean value is 4.109 for Generation Z, 4.067 for Generation Y, and 4.056 for Generation X, thus indicating that this dimension is more important for younger tourists. For the *emergency preparedness* dimension, the mean value is 4.481 for Generation Z, 4.405 for Generation Y, and 4.483 for Generation X, thus indicating that this dimension is slightly more important for Generation Z and Generation X tourists than for those from generation Y. For the *medical preparedness* dimension, the mean value is 4.169 for Generation Z, 3.942 for Generation Y, and 3.889 for Generation X, thus indicating that this dimension is more important for younger tourists. For the *personal security* dimension, the mean value is 3.762 for Generation Z, 3.357 for Generation Y, and 3.282 for Generation X, thus indicating that this dimension is more important for younger tourists. For the *guestroom security* dimension, the mean value is 3.897 for Generation Z, 4.189 for Generation Y, and 4.199 for Generation X, thus indicating that this dimension is less important for younger tourists. For the *pool and beach* dimension, the mean value is 4.253 for Generation Z, 4.352 for Generation Y, and 4.348 for Generation X, thus indicating that this dimension

is less important for younger tourists. For the *control access* dimension, the mean value is 4.264 for Generation Z, 4.387 for Generation Y, and 4.500 for Generation X, thus indicating that this dimension is less important for younger tourists. For the *cyber security* dimension, the mean value is 4.306 for Generation Z, 4.407 for Generation Y, and 4.440 for Generation X, thus indicating that this dimension is less important for younger tourists.

4.2. ANOVA Results

Table 5 shows the ANOVA results for differences in variation for security measures as perceived by hotel customers for various star ratings. For *detectors*, there is no statistically significant difference between the means of the groups, with F = 1.31, *p* = 0.2705.

Table 5. ANOVA results by classification of the accommodation unit.

Security Measure	Source	SS	df	MS	F	Prob > F
Detectors	Between groups	1.823	2	0.607		
	Within groups	143.666	311	0.463	1.31	0.2705
	Total	145.490	313	0.464		
	Bartlett's test for equal variances: chi2(2) = 6.3108					Prob > chi2 = 0.097
Emergency Preparedness	Between groups	0.626	2	0.208		
	Within groups	98.341	311	0.317	0.66	0.5780
	Total	98.968	313	0.316		
	Bartlett's test for equal variances: chi2(2) = 5.4955					Prob > chi2 = 0.139
Medical Preparedness	Between groups	1.428	2	0.476		
	Within groups	202.775	311	0.654	0.73	0.5360
	Total	204.203	313	0.652		
	Bartlett's test for equal variances: chi2(2) = 0.8757					Prob > chi2 = 0.831
Staff Security	Between groups	3.767	2	1.255		
	Within groups	435.356	311	1.404	0.89	0.4444
	Total	439.124	313	1.402		
	Bartlett's test for equal variances: chi2(2) = 3.6515					Prob > chi2 = 0.302
Guestroom Security	Between groups	3.469	2	1.156		
	Within groups	144.495	311	0.466	2.48	0.0610
	Total	147.964	313	0.472		
	Bartlett's test for equal variances: chi2(2) = 3.2099					Prob > chi2 = 0.360
Pool and Beach	Between groups	2.617	2	0.872		
	Within groups	131.322	311	0.423	2.06	0.1056
	Total	133.939	313	0.427		
	Bartlett's test for equal variances: chi2(2) = 0.5000					Prob > chi2 = 0.919
Access Control	Between groups	1.791	2	0.597		
	Within groups	118.670	311	0.382	1.56	0.1991
	Total	120.461	313	0.384		
	Bartlett's test for equal variances: chi2(2) = 1.9398					Prob > chi2 = 0.585
Cyber Security	Between groups	3.552	2	1.184		
	Within groups	190.281	311	0.613	1.93	0.1247
	Total	193.834	313	0.619		
	Bartlett's test for equal variances: chi2(2) = 1.9364					Prob > chi2 = 0.380

Source: authors' calculations based on Stata statistical analysis software.

For *emergency preparedness*, there is no statistically significant difference between the means of the groups (*p* = 0.5780). Also, there is no statistically significant difference between how respondents from different generations perceive the security measures: *medical preparedness* (*p* = 0.5360), *staff security* (*p* = 0.4444), *guestroom security* (*p* = 0.0610), *pool and beach* (*p* = 0.1056), *access control* (*p* = 0.1991), and *cyber security* (*p* = 0.1247).

SS, also called the sum of squares, represents the sum of squared differences from the mean. df stands for the degrees of freedom, while MS stands for the mean squares. Each

mean square value is computed by dividing a sum-of-squares value by the corresponding degrees of freedom. The F test is also shown. Each F ratio is computed by dividing the MS value by another MS value. The Bartlett's test for equal variances is a test which determines whether the variances of a dependent variable are equal across two or more groupings of the data by a categorical (independent) variable. In this case, when a p value for the Bartlett's test for equal variances is over 0.05, it means that the variances are equal, as in this case.

Table 6 shows the ANOVA results for differences in variation for security measures as perceived by respondents from different generations. For *detectors*, there is no statistically significant difference between the means of the three groups, i.e., Generation Z, Generation Y, and Generation X, with F = 0.04, p = 0.9605. For *emergency preparedness*, there is no statistically significant difference between the means of the three groups, i.e., Generation Z, Generation Y, and Generation X. Also, there is no statistically significant difference between how respondents from different generations perceive the security measures: *guestroom security* (p = 0.3460), *pool and beach* (p = 0.6854), *access control* (p = 0.1095), and *cyber security* (p = 0.2630). However, for *medical preparedness*, there is significant difference between the means of the three groups, i.e., Generation Z, Generation Y, and Generation X, with F = 0.04, Prob > F = 0.9605. Similar results and a statistically significant difference between the respondents from three generations are revealed by the perception of *staff security*, with the p value = 0.0018.

Table 6. ANOVA results by classification of the accommodation unit by the generation of the respondent.

Security Measure	Source	SS	df	MS	F	Prob > F
Detectors	Between groups	0.377	2	0.018		
	Within groups	145.452	311	0.467	0.04	0.9605
	Total	145.490	313	0.464		
	Bartlett's test for equal variances: chi2(2) = 2.2956				Prob > chi2 = 0.317	
Emergency Preparedness	Between groups	1.2418	2	0.620		
	Within groups	97.726	311	0.314	1.98	0.1404
	Total	98.968	313	0.934		
	Bartlett's test for equal variances: chi2(2) = 0.6262				Prob > chi2 = 0.731	
Medical Preparedness	Between groups	8.403	2	4.201		
	Within groups	195.800	311	0.629	6.67	0.0015
	Total	204.203	313	0.652		
	Bartlett's test for equal variances: chi2(2) = 4.1922				Prob > chi2 = 0.123	
Staff Security	Between groups	17.433	2	8.716		
	Within groups	421.690	311	1.355	6.43	0.0018
	Total	439.124	313	1.402		
	Bartlett's test for equal variances: chi2(2) = 0.2213				Prob > chi2 = 0.895	
Guestroom Security	Between groups	1.006	2	0.503		
	Within groups	146.958	311	0.472	1.06	0.3460
	Total	147.964	313	0.472		
	Bartlett's test for equal variances: chi2(2) = 3.8477				Prob > chi2 = 0.146	
Pool and Beach	Between groups	0.324	2	0.162		
	Within groups	133.614	311	0.429	0.38	0.6854
	Total	133.939	313	0.427		
	Bartlett's test for equal variances: chi2(2) = 1.9432				Prob > chi2 = 0.378	
Access Control	Between groups	1.701	2	0.850		
	Within groups	118.760	311	0.381	2.23	0.1095
	Total	120.461	313	0.384		
	Bartlett's test for equal variances: chi2(2) = 4.2642				Prob > chi2 = 0.119	
Cyber Security	Between groups	1.6579	2	0.828		
	Within groups	192.176	311	0.617	1.34	0.2630
	Total	193.834	313	0.619		
	Bartlett's test for equal variances: chi2(2) = 1.9364				Prob > chi2 = 0.380	

Source: authors' calculations based on Stata statistical analysis software.

The *p* value for the Bartlett's test for equal variances shows that variances between groups for the dependent variable are equal, meaning that this sample avoids heteroscedasticity.

Theoretical and empirical approaches investigate the tourists' perception of the *safety and security* dimensions of hotels. This study addressed an important and topical issue and tested the following hypotheses:

Hotel classification (Hypothesis 1 (H1)) is directly related to the importance given to security and safety, proportionally with the perception of these dimensions among tourists [93]. In Romania, high security standards are a mandatory element that must be introduced without delay in accommodation facilities that want to provide quality services. In terms of hotel classification, tourists link higher comfort to the safety and security dimension [28]. The results following the analysis of descriptive statistics show that there is a difference between the perception of the importance of different dimensions of safety and security among Romanian customers depending on hotel classification. However, the ANOVA results show that the difference in perceptions is not statistically significant for any of the safety and security measures analysed. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 (H1) is only partially confirmed. Therefore, more research needs to be done.

The results (Hypothesis 2 (H2)) following the analysis of descriptive statistics showed that there is a difference between the perception of the importance of different dimensions of safety and security among Romanian customers depending on the generation to which they belong. However, the ANOVA results show that the difference in perceptions is not statistically significant, except for two security measures, medical preparedness and staff security. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 (H2) is only partially confirmed. The security policy differs from one tourist accommodation facility to another and from one country to another. Externally, the key issues are generally related to the balance between ensuring hospitality and security, the degree of security perceived by tourists, and the contribution of staff to the success of the activity [94]. The highest scores received for the security policy were obtained by luxury hotels, new hotels, and those located in urban areas or near airports [44]. In Romania, the concern for security and safety was very low in the post-communist period, which is why Romanian tourists were not educated to be concerned about this aspect [95]. The next generations of Romanian tourists perceived the importance of safety and security in terms of an evolution of quality standards in the field and an evolution of the hospitality industry in our country [96]. We currently have a generation concerned with safety and security issues, as essential attributes of tourism services [97].

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Many countries depend on tourism to generate a significant share of their income and employment [98]. That is why tourist destinations cannot afford to let the safety and security of their tourists be compromised by unfortunate events that could have been prevented. To that end, hotels must implement appropriate safety and security measures. Studies have confirmed that there is a connection between the level of services provided to customers depending on hotel rating and the number of safety and security measures implemented. Thus, the better a hotel is classified, the greater the number of safety and security measures implemented [65].

Therefore, this article assesses whether security measures are perceived differently by tourists due to the classification of the accommodation they stayed in or due to the demographic group (generation) to which they belong. A critical analysis of the literature indicated that safety and security are among the factors that tourists take into account when deciding on the choice of an accommodation facility.

The World Tourism Organization has been concerned with standardising hotel classification systems in terms of both accommodation operations and quality assurance by adopting common standards [99,100]. Judging by the reviews available online on specialised sites, classifying hotels by categories is very important for tourists [101]. Both the chosen sample and the target population are relevant for our study because the classification level is homogeneous in Romania; internationally, however, our hypotheses cannot

be fully validated because the classification criteria are different from one state to another. Therefore, extending the analysis is possible with caution as to the veracity of the results.

Until the emergence of internationally valid standards and rules in tourism, most researchers carry out studies focused on certain geographical areas and, subsequently, comparative studies will identify similarities and differences.

According to Jeong and Mindy [102], hotel chains provide better services as compared to independent hotels because they comply more with the standard operating procedures and tourists benefit from similar services in each location. The authors argue that the superior quality of services and security standards is directly proportional to the hotel class. The same hypothesis was validated by our study.

As a general conclusion of this paper, our research is motivated by the ever growing interest for the safety and security concepts, in accordance with the tourists' requirements changing worldwide. Future research should examine the generalizability of these results. As technology improves and security features are expanded, additional research may be necessary to further validate these findings. This study serves as an impetus for additional studies in other nations and locations that will enhance the understanding of hotel safety and security measures and their effectiveness.

The present study makes a rather important contribution to the literature on safety and security in tourism due to its innovative perspective and confirmed hypotheses; therefore, it can provide a solid base for future research on the topic. In addition, the interest of tourists in safety and security measures is directly proportional to the level of hotel classification. Certain measures taken by hotels for the safety of tourists also have a positive impact on the communities where the hotels are located; therefore, tourists can enjoy pleasant experiences when visiting the area. If the measures for the safety and security of tourists taken by hoteliers are strengthened by similar measures taken by local authorities, this will increase tourists' confidence. Consequently, increased safety both in hotels and throughout the area could become an important element for local branding. The authors intend to develop both the results and the research directions suggested in this article for the benefit of tourists, hoteliers, and the community in future research.

The results and conclusions obtained in this article could also help the owners of accommodation units to improve the quality of their services. They are informed about how many safety measures and which of them they should install in their accommodation units if they want to remain competitive in the market by basing their decisions on customer demands. There is therefore space for further research on this topic.

6. Study Limitations

The first limitation of the study is that it only considered respondents from Romania, mostly young people with a different perception of safety and security. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized beyond this target population or to a broader population. The targeted population had both theoretical and practical training in tourism, hotel services included. Therefore, we wanted to test to what extent the perception of young people coincides with that of adults. The perceptions were both theoretical and practical, that is, grounded on knowledge acquired during studies and through travel experiences. Respondents' competences and qualifications are an important criterion [103], and this is what determined the selection of the sample. There are studies on adult perceptions of safety and security in hotels, but there are few on the perception of young people. Since most of the young respondents are expected to work in the tourism sector as either employees or employers, the present research is all the more relevant for the sustainability of safe and quality tourist services. The sample consists of young Romanians, which raises the question of whether the results are sustainable; however, this limitation is relative because the perceptions of young Romanians are not fundamentally different from those of the youth from other countries with similar cultures [104]. Another limitation is that the safety and security measures used in this study do not represent all possible measures that can be taken. In addition, because of the wide variety in the types, sizes, and locations of

hotels, not all suggested measures will be relevant or applicable. Another limitation refers to the unequal sample sizes and the fact that it could affect the ANOVA results. However, the Bartlett's test for homogeneity of variances showed that this is not a major issue, as the test indicated that the samples have equal variances. All in all, we believe that our research is just the first step in the pursuit of understanding the perceptions of tourists on safety and security measures and that further studies should be completed.

Safety and security are determinants of competitiveness of the tourism sector, and therefore, they have to be measured and carefully considered [105]. According to a 2014 study on tourism competitiveness indicators among the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Romania was positioned in the lower half of the ranking in terms of competitiveness, with major improvements needed. The tourism sector must become a priority, and this should be reflected in the budget structure, the number of projects for tourism development, and the value of government investment in tourism. If tourism decision-makers pay more attention to safety and security, it will be obviously more likely for tourists to choose the respective destinations.

The coronavirus pandemic involves additional demands from tourists and much higher safety measures from hoteliers because people now base their decision to travel mainly on the level of compliance with safety and security regulations [106].

The results of previous studies do not find correspondence in the current context of the tourism industry. Tourism service providers desperately need to be able to anticipate and ensure those safety and security measures that customers expect, for tourists' comfort and for the recovery of this sector. The "new normal" of ensuring safety and security includes, along with other decision-making criteria (sense of security, age, and family situation), the new criterion of compliance with today's regulations, social distancing included [107]. In Europe, the COVID-19 pandemic can be considered the one unfortunate event that changed the game in tourism [108,109]. Further research, carried out after a period of recovery and stabilization of the tourism market, will reflect new preferences and changes in the perception of safety and security in hotels as well as the perception of tourists according to the generation to which they belong.

All these limitations open up future research opportunities to fill the study gaps and to complete its results. This article clarifies the concepts of safety and security in hotels, completes the literature, and helps hoteliers choose the safety and security strategy for young customers as well.

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