

SCIENTIFIC INTERPRETATION OF THE CONCEPT OF "HOTEL BUSINESS" BY
FOREIGN SCHOLARS

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Abstract. This article presents a comparative analysis of scientific definitions of the concept of "hotel business" provided by foreign scholars. The study examines the scientific views on the essence of hotel business by leading foreign scholars such as S. Medlik, D. Rutherford, J. Walker, J. Kandampully, B. Brotherton, P. Jones, R. Wood, M. Olsen, C. Lashley, and A. Pizam. The article covers the evolution of the hotel business concept, its place in the hospitality industry system, and modern interpretations. As a result of the research, common features and differences in scholars' approaches have been identified, and a comprehensive description of the hotel business concept has been formulated.

Keywords: hotel business, hospitality industry, hotel management, service provision, tourist services, hospitality, hotel operations.

Hotel business occupies an important place in the global economy as one of the most dynamically developing sectors of the modern service industry. The rapid development of the tourism industry, the intensification of international labor migration, and the expansion of global business relations are constantly increasing the demand for hotel services. In this regard, a deep understanding of the essence of the concept of "hotel business" and the study of its theoretical foundations are of urgent scientific and practical importance.

In Western countries, the theory of hotel business has a long history and has been researched from various perspectives by many leading scholars. However, a single, universal definition of this concept has not yet been formed. Different scholars interpret hotel business differently: some view it only as accommodation services, while others analyze it in the broader context of the hospitality industry. Some researchers consider hotel business as a type of economic activity, while others evaluate it as a socio-cultural phenomenon.

This article provides a comparative analysis of the scientific views of foreign scholars on the concept of hotel business. The purpose of the research is to systematize the definitions given by representatives of various scientific schools, identify their common and distinctive features, and formulate a modern comprehensive description of the hotel business concept.

S. Medlik and H. Ingram define hotel business as "the activity of commercial enterprises engaged in providing guests with temporary accommodation, food, and additional services."¹ This definition highlights the main functions of hotel business - providing accommodation and food services. The scholars view hotels as commercial organizations, emphasizing their economic efficiency goals. However, this definition does not fully cover important aspects of hotel business such as service quality and guest satisfaction.

D. Rutherford takes a broader approach to hotel business and defines it as "the activity of organizations offering a comprehensive set of services to guests, aimed at satisfying all their needs."² According to Rutherford, a modern hotel is not just a place to stay, but a multifunctional institution offering recreation, business meetings, sports activities, and many other services. The scholar evaluates hotel business as a complex and multifaceted branch of the service sector.

J. Walker, in his work "Introduction to Hospitality," considers hotel business as a key component of the hospitality industry.³ He defines hotel business as "a type of activity aimed at providing high-quality service to guests, ensuring their comfort, and creating an unforgettable experience." Walker particularly emphasizes the importance of service quality and guest experience in hotel business. In his view, successful hotel business should provide not only material services but also emotional satisfaction.

J. Kandampully analyzes hotel business from a service marketing perspective and interprets it as "strategic activity aimed at establishing long-term relationships with guests and ensuring their loyalty."⁴ The scholar emphasizes the importance of customer relationship management (CRM) and brand loyalty in hotel business. In Kandampully's approach, hotel business is viewed not only as one-time service provision but as the formation and development of a regular customer base.

B. Brotherton is known as one of the scholars who deeply researched the hospitality concept. He defines hotel business as "a commercialized form of hospitality."⁵ According to Brotherton, hotel business combines traditional hospitality values (kindness, care, courtesy) with commercial objectives. He emphasizes that hotel business is essentially "a process of voluntary mutual material and spiritual exchange," where interpersonal relationships between the guest and service provider play an important role.

P. Jones analyzes hotel business from an operational management perspective. He defines hotel business as "a system for producing and delivering accommodation, food, and additional services."⁶ Jones pays special attention to the efficiency of hotel operations, service standardization, and quality control issues. In his approach, hotel business is an organization operating on the basis of clearly defined operational processes, standards, and procedures.

R. Wood studies hotel business from a sociological perspective. He describes hotel business as "a social space where social relationships and cultural value exchange take place."⁷ According to Wood, a hotel is not only a place for service provision but also a platform for communication and interaction between different cultures, social strata, and national representatives. This approach reveals the socio-cultural function of hotel business.

M. Olsen, as a leading expert in strategic management, defines hotel business as "a dynamic system that achieves long-term success through adapting to a constantly changing external environment and forming competitive advantages."⁸ Olsen emphasizes the importance of strategic planning, implementing innovations, and forecasting market trends in hotel business. In his view, modern hotel business should have a flexible organizational structure that can quickly adapt to changes in the external environment.

C. Lashley is considered a scholar who conducted in-depth research on hospitality philosophy. He defines hotel business as "professional hospitality carried out aimed at satisfying the guest's physical, emotional, and social needs."⁹ Lashley emphasizes that hotel employees should master hospitality culture, understand guest psychology, and apply an individual approach. In his concept, hotel business is not only a business but also an art.

A. Pizam, as a recognized expert in international tourism and hotel research, defines hotel business as "an integral part of the global tourism system and a sector that serves as a cultural bridge between different countries."¹⁰ Pizam emphasizes the international character of hotel business, the unique features of hotels in different countries, and global standards. He evaluates hotel business as an important link in the global tourism value chain.

Table 1. Comparative analysis of foreign scholars' approaches to the concept of "hotel business"

Scholar	Approach	Key features
S. Medlik, H. Ingram	Functional-operational	Accommodation, food services, commercial activity
D. Rutherford	Comprehensive service	Multifunctional services, comprehensive needs satisfaction
J. Walker	Service quality focused	Guest experience, emotional satisfaction
J. Kandampully	Marketing-strategic	Customer relationships, brand loyalty
B. Brotherton	Hospitality philosophy	Commercialized hospitality, interpersonal relationships
P. Jones	Operational management	Efficiency, standardization, quality control
R. Wood	Sociological	Social space, cultural exchange
M. Olsen	Strategic	Dynamic system, competitive advantages
C. Lashley	Hospitality culture	Professional hospitality, individual approach
A. Pizam	International	Global tourism system, cultural bridge

Analyzing the data presented in Table 1 above, the approaches of foreign scholars to the concept of hotel business can be divided into several groups. The first group (Medlik, Jones) analyzes hotel business mainly from an operational and functional perspective, focusing on the main functions of hotels - providing accommodation and food services. The second group (Walker, Kandampully, Brotherton, Lashley) considers hotel business in the context of service quality, guest experience, and hospitality culture. The third group (Olsen, Pizam) approaches from strategic and international perspectives, evaluating hotel business as a component of the global tourism system. The fourth group (Wood) applies a sociological approach, studying the hotel as a socio-cultural space.

As a result of the comparative analysis of foreign scholars' scientific views on the concept of hotel business, the following conclusions were reached. First, the concept of "hotel business" is multifaceted

and complex, making it difficult to express with just one definition. Each scholar interprets this concept from the perspective of their scientific field: economists as commercial activity, sociologists as social space, marketing specialists as a customer relationship system. Second, common features exist in all scholars' approaches: it is recognized that hotel business is essentially a type of activity aimed at providing services to guests and satisfying their needs. Third, in modern scientific literature, hotel business is increasingly being considered within the broader framework of the hospitality industry, which reflects the evolution of the field and its growing role in the economy. Fourth, in formulating a comprehensive description of the hotel business concept, it is advisable to integrate operational, marketing, strategic, and socio-cultural approaches. Thus, hotel business can be defined as "an important sector of the service industry that operates on the basis of providing guests with accommodation, food, and additional services, satisfying their physical, emotional, and social needs, establishing long-term relationships, and harmonizing hospitality values with commercial objectives."

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