

A NEW TREND IN TOURISM: HOCANCE

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Abstract: *This paper focuses on a new trend in tourism – hocance (tourism), a trend that has conquered countries such as South Korea and that could boast the Romanian tourist industry. The authors define the term hocance and its subtypes (kicance and petcance); differentiate it from terms such as agrocation, cottaging, farmstay, home-stay/homestay, near-home tourism or proximity tourism, residency/residential, second-home tourism, or stacation/staycation; provide examples of hocance spa packages and of marketing strategies for hocance development; focus on the reasons why people enjoy hocance; and provide examples of hocance arrangements.*

Key words: *hocance, tourism, hotel, vacance*

INTRODUCTION

Hocance (a Korean blend/portmanteau from English hotel “an establishment providing accommodation, meals, and other services for travellers and tourists” and French vacance “holiday”), defined as “a vacation spent in a hotel instead of traveling long-distances or abroad” [2,7,9] designates an “established and popular trending culture of spending vacations in hotels” [13,19] and “spending your vacation only in a (domestic) hotel” (Hotel marketing tips for trendy “hocance”, 2020). It usually includes “visiting a hotel for leisure”. The term hocance is “conceptually distinct [from the term (hotel) staycation] because a tourist destination is strictly limited to a hotel, and hotel services are more actively and purposely consumed”. In hocance, “the hotel itself is a travel or leisure destination” [1].

Hocance is, by definition, a holiday hotel-based tourism [10,15] opposed to agrocation (a blend/portmanteau from agro- < “agricultural” and vacation “an extended period of leisure and recreation, especially one spent away from home or in travelling; a holiday”) (English Oxford Living Dictionaries), cottaging, “a seasonal activity involving a prolonged stay at one or more cottages; similar to visiting, but typically for a longer duration and at a seasonal home that one owns or rents” [23], farmstay, “a working farm that also offers accommodation to paying guests”, home-stay/homestay “a holiday or other period abroad spent staying in the home of a local family; (Australian New Zealand) a private house offering accommodation to paying guests” [6,22], near-home tourism or proximity tourism “exploration and rediscovery of sites, landmarks, an other locations close to where one resides” [21,23], residency/residential tourism “tourism based on property or tourism investment aimed at providing residential/living accommodation on a permanent basis or for periods of fixed duration in areas of interest for tourism” (Law Insider); second-home tourism, “a form of travel ‘involving a visit whereby either (or both) the purpose of the trip or the type of accommodation involves visiting friends and/or relatives” [5, 12], or stacation/staycation (a blend/portmanteau of stay “period of living in a place” and vacation “an extended period of leisure and recreation, especially one spent away from home or in travelling; a holiday”) [8,11].

There are also other types of hocance: kicance (a Korean blend/portmanteau from English kid “a child or young person” and French vacance “holiday”) meaning “spending quality time in a hotel kids room equipped with amenities for kids” [18,20] and petcance (a

Korean blend/portmanteau from English pet “a domestic or tamed animal kept for companionship or pleasure” and French vacance “holiday”) meaning “enjoying time with one’s beloved pets” [16,17].

Though widely spreading in South Korea, in particular, hocance is rapidly expanding in Australia, Japan, Singapore, the UK, and the U.S.A. Rarely used before 2015, this term designated, in South Korea, during 2016-2017, vacations spent in hotels near beach or mountain resorts by people who could not travel abroad for whatever reason and, in 2019, vacations spent home by people because of the boycott of Japanese products. But this term gained popularity due “to the worldwide lockdowns/quarantines and the long rainy season [in Korea]” [7,14].

The COVID-19 pandemic made hotel managers create hocance spa packages such as: 2 nights with 1 night free, 26 hours stay from check in to check out, chimaek (chicken+beer) package, or hotel+restaurant free package. The best ways to market such hotel holiday packages are [3,12]:

- developing online shopping applications, i.e., local advertisements as perfect platforms to inform residents and sell tickets for staying at hotels or resorts;
- launching different marketing campaigns targeting both domestic and foreign tourists;
- promoting on a platform that suits the hotel influencer marketing platform, given that micro- and nano-influencer marketing is, often, more effective than regular mega-influencer marketing, though difficult to find.

By the end of December 2021, the Korean Luxury & Upper-Up-scale segment had recovered to 86% of 2019 level, while the Midscale & Economy segment recovered to 66% of the same level: “The demand for [hocance] was a major driver in the recovery of rates and occupancy for the Luxury & Upper-Up-scale segments, which is better equipped with amenities (i.e., gyms, pools, spa) and diverse [food & beverage] options to capture leisure demand. Economy & Midscale hotels, which relied more on business and group travel, were more severely impacted by COVID-19.” [4,9].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The materials on hocance used in this paper are extremely scarce – just a few articles of which most are online. The method used is content analysis with emphasis on semantics.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Literature barely includes articles/books on hocance, and customers’ behaviour and intention to visit hotels as tourist destinations per se have been, if not largely neglected, at least not examined in-depth: investigated the lifestyle profiles of staycation travellers to explore how hotels can create travel packages for the respective clusters. Also we show that “the existing conceptual frameworks can hardly explain the strong purpose of enjoying hotel life, because they are prone to focus on unspecified tourist-based activities which are undertaken without straying far from home.”

We identified hocance tourism motivations and developed a conceptual model of hocance involving seven dimensions: amotivation (“lack of reason/reasons for acting or behaving in a particular way”), curiosity (“a strong desire to know or learn something”), impregnability (“unable to be defeated or overcome”), ostentation (“the pretentious or showy display of wealth and luxury, designed to impress”), pleasure (“a feeling of happy satisfaction and enjoyment”), pragmatism (“a pragmatic [dealing with things sensibly and realistically in a way that is based on practical rather than theoretical considerations] attitude or policy”), and respite (“a short period of rest or relief from something difficult or

unpleasant”). Their survey results show that only five of these dimensions are reliable and valid—curiosity, impregnability, ostentation, pragmatism, and respite – and allow the identification of the reasons for the growth of the hocance market and of the needs of people who enjoy hocance. Nothing of this overlaps “push factors” stemming from anomie (“a condition of instability resulting from a breakdown of standards and values or from a lack of purpose or ideals”) and ego-enhancement (“a psychological device by which a person attributes all success to internal causes”) in the tourist himself, or psychosociological motivations for pleasure vacations (important in developing product and promotion strategies) – enhancement of kinship relationships, escape from a perceived mundane environment, exploration and evaluation of self, facilitation of social interaction, prestige, regression, and relaxation – or alternate cultural motivations for pleasure vacations – education and novelty.

Agoda picks special ‘hocance’-themed destinations recommended several hocance-themed/labelled destinations in South Korea:

- Busan – Ocean views with about 1,400 accommodation options: it offers Busan City Daily Trip tours and visits to the Gamcheon Culture Village, Haedong Yonggungsa Temple, and Taejongdae Resort Park;

- Gangneung and Sokcho – Relax in nature: they offer amazing views of the sea; an abundance of seafood; fresh air and nature; see fishing; soaking in a warm hot spring; spectacular views of Seoraksan; swimming in the ocean; and the sunrise over the sea;

- Incheon – Entertainment centre: it offers a beautiful sunset at Eurwangni Beach; climbing nearby mountains such as Cheongnyangsan, Wolmisan, and Manisan for a breath of fresh air; relaxation on Hanagae Beach on the peaceful Muuido Island; relaxing massage spas; and visits to theme parks with the family;

- Jeju Island – Fun for the family: it offers beach-based pursuits; horseback riding; theme parks; waterparks; and ziplines;

- Seoul – Foodie haven with about 5,000 accommodation options: it offers Beer Tours; city tours by bicycle; Korean, Japanese, and Western gourmet food experiences; strolls in the royal gardens; Traditional Seoul Gourmet Tours; and visits to the UNESCO Changdeokgung Palace.

The site synthesizes the essence of the hocance:

- Tourists spend their time in hotels near the beach or with indoor pool, spa, bar, and various other services;

- Tourists spend time near the beach, but hocance priority is the hotel not the beach;

- Tourists hardly spend money on beach-activities, but enjoy almost every service in the hotel;

- Tourists spend time not at a special holiday spot, but in the middle of the city where accessibility is high, which reduces the travel time;

- Tourists are less likely to get ripped-off at a popular spot.

CONCLUSIONS

The following can be said about hocance:

- The term hocance, distinct from the term staycation, has been defined in various ways by both English language dictionaries and tourism experts;

- There are at least two types of hocance – kicance and petcance;

- Hocance is rapidly spreading worldwide for various reasons, but especially after the COVID-19 pandemic;

- Hotels create special hocance spa packages;

- Hocance development requires specific marketing strategies;

- Hocance can play an important role in the recovery of the tourism industry worldwide;
- Hocance literature is still in its infancy partly because it is assimilated with staycation;
- Specialists have identified five reasons why people enjoy hocance – curiosity, impregnability, ostentation, pragmatism, and respite;
- South Korea provides the best examples of hocance arrangements.

The hocance trend could lead to breakthrough improvements in the Romanian hotel industry provided hocance package products be not a different version of price-bundling (a marketing strategy that combines two or more products/services to sell them at a lower price than if the same products/services were sold individually), which often fails to satisfy the needs of people pursuing hocance. To do so, tourism specialists should try and evaluate aspects such as:

- The COVID-19 and global recession impact on the demand for luxury goods;
- The expected future growth dynamics;
- The importance of tourism in evaluating demand for luxury hotels;
- The leading brands in luxury hotels;
- The market size of luxury hotels;
- The products distributed in luxury hotels;
- The rise of e-commerce changing the retail and competitive landscape.

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