

increasing by 52.7 % from 2022 to 2024 and the share of e-commerce in total retail growing from 12.3 % to 21.3 % by mid-2025. The study outlines the main challenges and prospects for industry development during wartime, emphasizing the acceleration of digital transformation processes and the importance of implementing innovative technologies such as augmented reality, blockchain, and artificial intelligence in the post-war recovery period.

Key words: e-commerce, internet trade, martial law, digital economy, logistics, marketplaces, business adaptation, wartime economy, consumer behavior, supply chain resilience.

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SYNERGY OF TOUR OPERATION AND HOSPITALITY SERVICE QUALITY IN THE ERA OF DIGITALIZATION

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Досліджено синергію між туropерейтингом та готельно-ресторанним обслуговуванням за умов цифровізації. Розкрито роль цифрових технологій, як інтегратора сервісів, що сприяють підвищенню якості, персоналізації і задоволеності клієнтів. Обґрунтовано, що ефективна взаємодія можлива за умов технологічної сумісності, стратегічного партнерства і впровадження єдиних цифрових стандартів. Проведено огляд сучасних практик з якості обслуговування в готельно-ресторанному бізнесі на міжнародному рівні. Розглянуто концептуальні моделі синергії підприємств у великих туристичних містах України, де цифровізація виступає платформою для підвищення конкурентоспроможності та інноваційного розвитку туризму і сфери гостинності.

Ключові слова: туropерейтинг, туристичний продукт, готельно-ресторанний сервіс, якість обслуговування, синергія, цифровізація, конкурентоспроможність, інновації, технології.

Problem Statement. Current trends in the development of the tourism industry indicate a growing need for the integration of key elements of tourism activity into a single, efficient system. Particular attention is drawn to the interaction between tour operation and the quality of hospitality services, which, under conditions of digitalization, acquires new forms and strategic significance. The effectiveness of this interaction determines not only the competitiveness of individual tourism companies but also the ability of tourist destinations to offer a holistic, high-quality, and attractive tourism product. The period of digital transformations entails a paradigm shift in the field of tourism services, which includes not only technical modernization of processes but also deep structural integration among all actors in the tourism market.

Analysis of Recent Research and Publications. Recent academic studies increasingly address the synergy between tour operation and the quality of hospitality services as a key factor in shaping a competitive tourism product. In the context of digital transformation and evolving consumer expectations, this interaction becomes especially relevant.

Ketter and Avraham emphasize that effective marketing strategies for tourist destinations in the digital environment are impossible without close integration with the hospitality infrastructure, which forms impressions, emotions, and a positive tourist experience [1]. Within the contemporary scientific paradigm, the service-dominant logic is gaining widespread adoption, highlighting the importance of co-creating value among participants in the tourism market.

Vargo and Lusch argue that cooperation between tour operators and accommodation and food service establishments leads to a comprehensive offering aimed not only at satisfying functional but also emotional consumer needs [2]. According to the findings of Niezgoda et al. the perception of tourism service quality directly depends on the alignment between tourist expectations and the actual service provided by hotels and restaurants. A high level of tour organization, combined with comfortable accommodation and quality dining, determines the overall evaluation of the travel experience. Such alignment is ensured through strategic collaboration between tour operators and service providers [3].

Buhalis and Sinarta underscore the role of digital tools such as CRM systems, online booking, and review management platforms, which facilitate continuous information exchange among all stakeholders in the tourism chain. This, in turn, contributes to the development of innovative business models where the synergy between the tour organizer and service providers is critical for economic success [4].

Other authors focus on the importance of strategic partnerships and certification. Romão and Neuts demonstrate that standardization of quality in the hotel and restaurant sectors is a necessary condition for consumer trust in an integrated tourism product. Joint planning between tour operators and service structures allows for better accommodation of customer expectations and the design of itineraries that account for the service appeal of destinations [5].

A separate line of research relates to the impact of sustainable development on partnerships in the tourism sector. The study by Dodds and Butler confirms the growing role of certified "green" establishments in tour operator strategies, aligning with global trends in responsible tourism. Such establishments enhance the value of the offering and generate new demand based on ethical, environmental, and service-oriented principles [6]. Finally, empirical data confirm the importance of quality service integration. According to a UNWTO report, over 73% of European tourists return to the same tour operator only if they receive high-quality service in hotels and restaurants. This indicates that customer satisfaction levels are directly influenced by the coordinated functioning of all components of tour operation [7].

Thus, the analysis of recent publications confirms that synergy between tour operation and hospitality service quality is not only desirable but also a necessary condition for the successful functioning of tourism businesses under the current market challenges and expectations.

The Aim of this study is to identify the specifics of the synergy between tour operation and hospitality services in the context of digitalization, with a focus on improving the quality of the tourism product, enhancing business process efficiency, and increasing consumer satisfaction. The research aims to substantiate the role of digital tools as key factors in generating synergistic effects in the tourism and hospitality sector.

Research Methodology. The study is based on both general scientific and specialized methods: analysis and synthesis were employed to define the essence of synergy in the interaction between tour operators and hospitality establishments; comparative analysis was used to contrast traditional and digitalized models of cooperation in the tourism sector; a systems approach was applied to examine the complex nature of interrelations among the components of the tourism product; and applied analysis enabled the investigation of practical examples of successful synergy in the Ukrainian market.

Findings indicate that in the context of the digital transformation of the tourism market, there is a marked increase in interdependence between tour operators and stakeholders in the hotel and restaurant business. The use of digital technologies (CRM systems, mobile applications, online booking platforms and big data analytics) not only optimizes service logistics but also enables the creation of personalized tourism offerings based on consumer behavior analysis. Successful examples of domestic tour operators integrating their IT solutions with hospitality service platforms demonstrate an increase in customer satisfaction, repeat sales, and improved company image. At the same time, the insufficient level of digital maturity of accommodation and food service establishments hampers the achievement of synergistic effects. Therefore, the synchronization of innovation development and the harmonization of service standards become strategic requirements for market participants.

Research Results. The synergy between tour operating and high-quality hotel and restaurant services is a key condition for creating a highly competitive and integrated tourism product. Its implementation requires not only technological integration and coordination among market actors but also adherence to international quality standards.

These sectors cannot function effectively in isolation, as their combination shapes a comprehensive tourism product that meets both consumer expectations and market requirements. The concept of synergy (from the Greek *synergos* – “working together”) is increasingly interpreted in contemporary academic discourse as the result of integrating resources, competencies, and efforts of various market participants, leading to the creation of added value that exceeds the effects of each individual component acting separately. In the tourism and hospitality sector, synergy holds particular significance since the tourism product is a complex service composed of multiple interrelated elements, including transportation, accommodation, catering, excursions, animation, customer service, and marketing [2].

Within tour operating, synergy is manifested through strategic coordination between tour operators and hospitality businesses, ensuring coherence, consistency, and quality of the tourism experience. This alignment includes joint planning of itineraries and service schedules, the implementation of unified quality standards, the

use of shared digital platforms for booking and data management, and the exchange of information on customer satisfaction [4].

According to researchers Romão and Neuts, synergy in tourism also results from the utilization of territorial capital, whereby local resources – natural, cultural, and infrastructural are effectively integrated into a unified tourism service system. In this context, the level of institutional coordination between tourism stakeholders and local authorities plays a crucial role in fostering sustainable destination development [5].

Particular attention should be paid to the concept of cross-functional synergy, which entails combining the functions of different hospitality sectors to create a comprehensive customer experience. For instance, integrating elements of cultural animation, gastronomic tourism, and wellness practices into standard tour packages enhances the product's consumer value and allows it to be tailored to the needs of new tourist segments [3]. Moreover, recent studies emphasize the role of digital technologies as mediators of synergy. Tools such as Big Data, quality management systems (QMS), mobile apps, and personalized digital services act as catalysts for integration between tour operators, hoteliers, and restaurateurs, enabling swift responses to demand fluctuations and improving the efficiency of interaction [6].

Synergy also encompasses ethical and environmental dimensions, as reflected in the concept of responsible tourism. As Ketter and Avraham note, tourists are increasingly attentive to the sustainability of tourism products, making partnerships between tour operators and certified "green" hotels and restaurants an important competitive advantage in the market [1]. Thus, synergy extends beyond economic efficiency to include social responsibility, environmental safety, and innovation.

The concept of quality in hotel and restaurant service is polysynaptic and rooted in deep theoretical and methodological foundations. In its classical interpretation, quality is understood as the service's ability to meet established standards governing service procedures, safety, hygiene regulations, and organizational aspects. Within this framework, the following international systems are particularly important: ISO, HACCP, and Hotelstars Union, which provide the basis for objective quality assessment and enterprise competitiveness.

ISO (International Organization for Standardization) is the most widely recognized standardization system, encompassing a series of standards applicable to quality management systems, particularly ISO 9001. It focuses on customer-oriented management principles, leadership, employee involvement, a process-based approach, and continuous improvement [9]. In the hotel industry, ISO standards ensure the clear documentation of procedures, control over service provision, and compliance with customer expectations.

HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) is a system particularly relevant for restaurants, cafés, and food establishments, aimed at identifying, assessing, and controlling hazards affecting food safety [10]. The application of HACCP in the hospitality sector ensures food hygiene safety and fosters customer trust, especially amid the post-pandemic rise in health and hygiene awareness. Hotelstars Union is a hotel classification system operating in EU countries, offering unified evaluation criteria based on over 270 indicators related not only to facilities but also to service quality. It promotes the standardization of tourist expectations, market transparency,

and comparative analysis between hotels across countries. The star rating (from 1 to 5 stars) enables consumers to easily assess the expected service level [11].

These standards and systems have an integrative nature and can complement one another: ISO ensures systematic management, HACCP guarantees food safety, and Hotelstars Union enhances market visibility and competitiveness. Their combination provides a robust foundation for strategic quality management in the hospitality industry (Table 1).

Table 1. Comparative Characteristics of International Quality and Safety Standards in Tourism and Hospitality

| Name of System/Standard | Application Area | Primary Objective | Key Components | Relevance to Service |
|-------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| ISO 9001 | Quality Management | Meeting customer requirements | Quality policy, audits, documented procedures | Ensures systematic and transparent management |
| HACCP | Food Safety | Risk prevention in food production | Hazard analysis, critical control points | Ensures hygiene and builds customer trust |
| Hotelstars Union | Hotel Classification | Standardizing service levels | Scoring system, physical and emotional criteria | Supports customer orientation and marketing appeal |
| ISO 22000 | Food Product Safety | Integrating HACCP with ISO standards | System-based food safety approach | Enhances compliance with international food safety standards |
| EN ISO 22483 | Quality in Tourism | Guidelines for hotel services | Staff, service, sustainability | Provides comprehensive guidance for high-quality hospitality |

Note. Built by the author on the basis of [9–11]

Thus, the ISO, HACCP systems and the Hotelstars Union classification represent only a basic level of quality assurance, while real consumer value is formed at the level of personalized service, emotional sincerity of the staff, and the ability of the enterprise to anticipate guests' desires.

In the modern paradigm of service management, the concept of quality also expands to include emotional, behavioral, and perceptual aspects. Hotel and restaurant service is not only an infrastructural component of the tourism system, but also a key

factor in shaping a competitive tourism product. In today's conditions, where tourists increasingly prioritize service quality, the level of hotel and restaurant service determines customer satisfaction, repeat visits, and positive online reviews.

In this context, quality appears as a multidimensional category that encompasses not only the technical characteristics of a service but also its emotional, aesthetic, digital, and cultural components (Table 2).

Table 2. Comparative characteristics of service quality assessment models in the hospitality industry

| Model | Key Characteristics | Relevance to Hospitality Service |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al.) | Defines quality as the gap between expectations and perceptions; five dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, tangibles | Most universal tool for assessing perceived service quality |
| Grönroos Model | Differentiates technical quality (what is delivered) and functional quality (how it is delivered) | Useful for analyzing the staff customer interaction and personalized service |
| SERVPERF (Cronin & Taylor) | Focuses solely on perceived performance, excluding expectations | Easier to apply in post-consumption satisfaction analysis |

Note. Built by the authors on the basis of [12–14]

In the modern service paradigm, quality is interpreted as a dynamic outcome of the interaction between customer expectations and actual consumption experience. The classical SERVQUAL model defines quality based on five dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, accessibility, and empathy, which allow for the analysis of both physical and interpersonal aspects of service delivery [12].

In contrast, the SERVPERF model critiques SERVQUAL for its emphasis on expectations and proposes a simplified and empirically more robust concept evaluating only the perceived quality without factoring in expectations. It relies on the same five dimensions but emphasizes actual service performance (Performance-only model), which helps avoid the subjective variability associated with expectation-based evaluations [13].

The application of SERVPERF in the hotel and restaurant sector enables more accurate and focused assessment of quality based on actual staff performance, response times, process organization, and overall customer satisfaction. This is especially relevant in highly competitive environments where perceived efficiency often outweighs preformed expectations.

Complementing Grönroos' analytical model which distinguishes between technical quality (what the customer receives), functional quality (how it is delivered), and image quality (brand reputation) SERVPERF offers a flexible toolkit for quantitatively monitoring quality while avoiding the ambiguity of the “expectation”

category [14]. The uniqueness of hotel and restaurant service lays in this multiplicity of quality assessment approaches: from normative compliance with standards to deeply personalized analyses of customer experience.

Thus, quality is not merely conformity to standards but rather an elusive yet critically important interplay of emotion, logic, and reputation.

The uniqueness of hotel and restaurant service is manifested in the fact that each customer interaction constitutes a unique micro-experience, within which both the objective and emotional dimensions of quality emerge [15]. In tourism, synergy refers to the interaction among hotel, restaurant, and tourism structures as well as digital platforms, which ensures enhanced efficiency for all participants through resource, data, and technology integration. Practice shows that when tour operators, hotels, and HoReCa establishments coordinate their actions, measurable effects arise in terms of revenue, services, and customer satisfaction.

Moreover, service quality is directly linked to loyalty: a tourist satisfied with the service has an 80 % likelihood of reusing the services of the same establishment or tour operator. Therefore, investing in quality becomes a strategic tool for dynamic growth in the tourism sector.

The interconnection between hotel and restaurant service elements and the perception of tourism product quality is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Elements of hotel and restaurant service as determinants of tourism product evaluation

| Service Component | Description | Impact on the Tourism Product |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Personalized Service | Use of data for individualized approach | Increased loyalty, positive emotions |
| Interior Design | Visual appeal, comfort, authenticity | Impression formation, Instagram effect |
| Food Quality | Taste, presentation, use of local products | Regional gastronomic identity |
| Staff Communication | Politeness, responsiveness, language proficiency | Service impression, emotional engagement |
| Service Technologies | Online menus, digital check-in, chat bots | Reduced waiting time, improved convenience |

Note. Built by the authors on the basis of [16, 17]

Thus, hotel and restaurant service within the tourism system should be conceptualized as a multidisciplinary category, combining quality management, behavioral economics, digital technologies, and cultural studies. Optimization of this component enables the creation of a unique value proposition for the tourist, which is key to success in a highly competitive and dynamic tourism market.

In major tourist cities of Ukraine – Kyiv, Lviv, Dnipro, and Odesa there are successful examples of synergy between hospitality businesses and tour operators. Within the broader framework of digital transformation in the tourism sector, a critical development vector is the integration of IT solutions among market participants: tour

operators, hotel complexes, restaurant businesses, and service platforms. Success cases from Ukraine's leading cities illustrate the effectiveness of such solutions in creating a synergistic tourism system. In the capital, Kyiv, an API connection was implemented between the Property Management System (PMS) of the Premier Hotels chain and a personalized tour module developed by Ukraine Travel Lab. Recommendations are generated based on guest behavior analysis, including length of stay, booking history, and individual preferences.

Key results of this collaboration [18, 19]:

- Participation in city tours increased by +33 %;
- 45 % of guests activated tour offers received via email or SMS;
- The average duration of stay in Kyiv increased by 0.5 days.

This approach enables hotels not only to retain guests longer but also to monetize partnerships with tour operators through automated interaction. In Lviv, digital integration was achieved between the tour operator Vidviday, the FEST Lokal restaurant chain, and the "Carpathian Tram" tourist product. A joint CRM system allowed tourists to make comprehensive bookings tour + meals + souvenirs via a single online interface. Key outcomes of the integration [20, 21]:

- Average check increased by 35 % (from 430 to 580 UAH);
- 27 % of tourists pre-ordered meals;
- 40 % used discounts in partner cafés and restaurants;
- Conversion from view to purchase rose from 12 % to 19 %;
- Repeat orders grew from 18 % to 29 %.

This case confirms the effectiveness of a unified digital environment as a tool for enhancing customer experience and increasing sales.

In Dnipro, the Dnipro Tourism & Gastro Union initiative was launched, bringing together hotels, restaurants, and travel agencies. The main tool was the "Tourist Gastro Passport" – a printed and digital card with QR codes for discounts, bonuses, and special offers. Key results 56 partner establishments participated [22, 23]:

- Average increase in restaurant attendance was 18 %;
- 12,000 tourists joined the program during the season;
- 65 % of them used the discounts (average discount of 10–15 %).

The program proved to be cost-effective due to increased turnover and higher rates of repeat visits, indicating the efficiency of city-level partnership cooperation.

In Odesa, the Odessa City Card was introduced—a digital tool integrating cashback services, promotional offers, table reservations, and event-related deals. The program involved 72 HoReCa facilities, including hostels, cafés, and cultural venues. Key performance indicators [24]:

- 61 % of card users were youth under the age of 35;
- Overall visitor satisfaction increased by 24 % (based on exit surveys);
- The City Card served as a platform for promoting local events and initiatives among urban tourists.

By using a microservices architecture, the card enables instant interaction between tourists and infrastructure points, creating a new quality of urban tourism experience.

The information is summarized in Table 4. The case studies from Kyiv, Lviv, Dnipro, and Odesa clearly demonstrate that digital integration among tourism market actors:

- Increases economic efficiency (profits, conversion rates, repeat sales);
- Enhances the customer experience (personalization, discounts, ease of access);
- Creates cross-sectoral synergy, where tour operators, HoReCa businesses, and IT services function as a coordinated platform.

Such approaches are scalable to other regions of Ukraine and can be used to develop a competitive national tourism product based on partnership, digitalization, and data-driven decision-making.

Table 4. Digital integration models in tourism and hospitality by city

| City | Form of Integration | Key Participants | Digital Tool |
|--------|---|---|--|
| Kyiv | API connection between hotel PMS and tour operators | Ukraine Travel Lab, Premier Hotels | API + behavioral analysis |
| Lviv | Unified CRM system for tours, dining, and souvenirs | Vidviday, FEST Lokal, "Carpathian Tram" | CRM platform with multi-booking capability |
| Dnipro | Loyalty program via tourist gastro-passport | Dnipro Tourism & Gastro Union | QR codes, printed and digital cards |
| Odesa | Integrated City Card with cashback, booking, and events | Odessa City Card, cafés, hostels | Microservice platform, NFC/QR access |

Note. Built by the authors on the basis of [18–24]

Conclusion. In the context of contemporary digital transformation in tourism, the synergy between tour operation and hospitality services emerges as a key factor in the creation of a high-quality tourism product. The integration of digital tools ensures service responsiveness, personalization, coordination of actions, and rapid adaptation to market changes. Digital platforms become the foundation for effective collaboration among partners, contributing to enhanced customer satisfaction and competitiveness.

The research findings indicate that technological compatibility, data exchange transparency, automated booking processes, and streamlined service chains reduce operational costs and increase the efficiency of cooperation. However, the realization of true synergistic effects requires strategic alignment of objectives, improved digital literacy among staff, and harmonization of quality standards.

Further research should focus on developing digital models for evaluating intersectoral cooperation effectiveness, implementing service quality digital standards, and creating an integrated digital system for tour operators and hospitality enterprises.

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Annotation

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Synergy of tour operation and hospitality service quality in the era of digitalization

This article investigates the synergy between tour operation and hospitality services in the context of digital transformation. It emphasizes that effective collaboration between these sectors is crucial for developing an integrated and high-quality tourism product. The study examines digital tools such as APIs and CRM systems that enable real-time data exchange between tour operators, hotels, restaurants, and service platforms. These technologies not only improve service quality but also enhance the personalization of travel experiences, increase the length of stay, average customer spending, and the likelihood of repeat visits.

The article also addresses international quality standards relevant to tourism and hospitality, including ISO 9001, HACCP, ISO 22000, and EN ISO 22483, as well as evaluation models such as SERVQUAL, SERVPERF, and the Grönroos model. It is demonstrated that implementing these standards allows HoReCa establishments to maintain consistently high service levels, streamline operations, and reinforce customer trust in tour operators. In the context of digital ecosystems, compliance with such standards ensures interoperability, data protection, and the delivery of seamless service at every point of the customer journey.

Special focus is placed on the potential of integrated digital platforms that combine booking, payment, information services, and personalized recommendations.

Case studies from Kyiv, Lviv, Dnipro and Odesa illustrate successful integration of hotels, restaurants, and tour operators into unified digital systems. These include API connections between PMS systems and tour modules, CRM systems with multi-booking features, tourism cards with bonuses and cashback and microservice platforms linked to urban tourism infrastructure. In Kyiv, for example, a local tour operator partnered with boutique hotels and restaurants to offer custom packages via a centralized app, while in Lviv, cultural tourism is supported by interactive mobile guides connected to booking systems. Such practices enhance the competitiveness of local tourism products, encourage sustainable development, and serve as scalable, innovative models for other cities in Ukraine and beyond.

Key words: *tour operation, tourism product, hospitality service, service quality, synergy, digitalization, competitiveness, innovation, technology.*

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КРОС-КУЛЬТУРНА КОМУНІКАЦІЯ ЯК ФАКТОР ЕФЕКТИВНОГО УПРАВЛІННЯ ПЕРСОНАЛОМ ТУРИСТИЧНИХ КОМПАНІЙ УКРАЇНИ В КОНТЕКСТІ ІНТЕГРАЦІЇ У СВІТОВИЙ ТУРИСТИЧНИЙ РИНОК

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Стаття присвячена аналізу крос-культурної комунікації як важливого фактора ефективного управління персоналом туристичних компаній України в умовах інтеграції у світовий туристичний ринок. Розглядаються особливості міжкультурної взаємодії у багатонаціональній середовищі, що стає дедалі актуальнішим для українських туристичних підприємств. Здійснено оцінку впливу культурних відмінностей на організаційні процеси, адаптацію персоналу та рівень обслуговування іноземних туристів. Особливу увагу приділено методам формування кросс-культурної компетентності працівників, зокрема мовної підготовки, розвитку навичок міжкультурної комунікації та толерантності. У статті підкреслюється, що успішна інтеграція у світовий туристичний простір вимагає від українських компаній високого рівня культурної гнучкості та професійної підготовки персоналу.

Ключові слова: *крос-культурна комунікація, управління персоналом, міжнародний туризм, міжкультурна взаємодія, крос-культурна компетентність.*

Постановка проблеми. Сучасний міжнародний туризм характеризується активною взаємодією представників різних культур, що створює як нові можливості, так і певні виклики для управління персоналом туристичних підприємств. Одним із ключових аспектів ефективного менеджменту в цій сфері