

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR OF TOURIST SERVICES

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***Abstract:** Every day tourism plays an increasingly important role in the economy of every country. That is why special importance must be given to tourist services, their general characteristics must be analyzed but especially the specific ones, their typology so that depending on these aspects the providers of tourist services (travel agencies, hotel staff, transport companies) can offer tourist services that satisfy the consumption needs of the population. We set as our main objectives the identification of the degree of satisfaction obtained after consuming the tourist service, the factors that influence the purchase behavior, an analysis of tourist activities from the aspect of service quality and a short study of the motivation and purchasing behavior of the service consumer tourist.*

***Key words:** consumer of services, purchase behavior, degree of satisfaction, tourism services*

INTRODUCTION

In the age of speed, of information, everyone tries to overcome the limits imposed by the price and the procurement of resources, creating ever more efficient services and products. We talk about the quality of services more than their quantity. It tends towards the purchase of fewer, smaller, but increasingly performing services or products. At the level of organizations and companies, both private and state, the tendency is to find solutions for the constant improvement of the quality of services in order to prevent the achievement of a higher level of customer expectations, a level that changes frequently, depending on the appearance of some factors objective or subjective [5,8,12,14].

The quality of services is, for today's consumer, more than ever, the essential criterion for preferring a certain company that has established itself on the market in terms of quality. Under the conditions of competition specific to the market economy, the products and services produced and marketed by all economic agents must simultaneously fulfill two basic conditions: to be useful and profitable. The extent to which enterprise managers manage to harmonize as best as possible the degree of usefulness (quality) for the beneficiary, with the size of the expenses incurred in production, in trade and in use (in the case of medium and long-lasting products) determines the competitiveness of the goods on the market, respectively the success or failure [2,4,5,7,8].

Quality was established as a competitive strategy, originally applied to industrial processes and, more recently, to services [1,3,6,11]. The services related to the hotel network encountered some problems regarding the implementation of strategies in the field of quality, until the rethinking of the role of quality and, of course, the management mechanisms was reached. Thus, there is an increasing attempt to adapt and introduce the means and tools of quality management in the service sector, especially those in the hotel sector, by simple copying or by appropriate adjustments, based on the characteristics and particularities identified for this sector [4,9,10,13,15].

This new attitude implies an advance and thereby recognizes the need to communicate with the client on the one hand, and on the other hand with the other companies in the field, in order to adapt to the constantly changing economic, social and cultural conditions [6,10,15].

Nowadays, one can meet saturated markets and increasingly demanding consumers. It is no longer enough to produce well, but to facilitate what consumers expect, to adapt products to their needs and expectations.

At this point new terms appear, the explanation of which is necessary to gain a greater understanding [5,8,12,13].

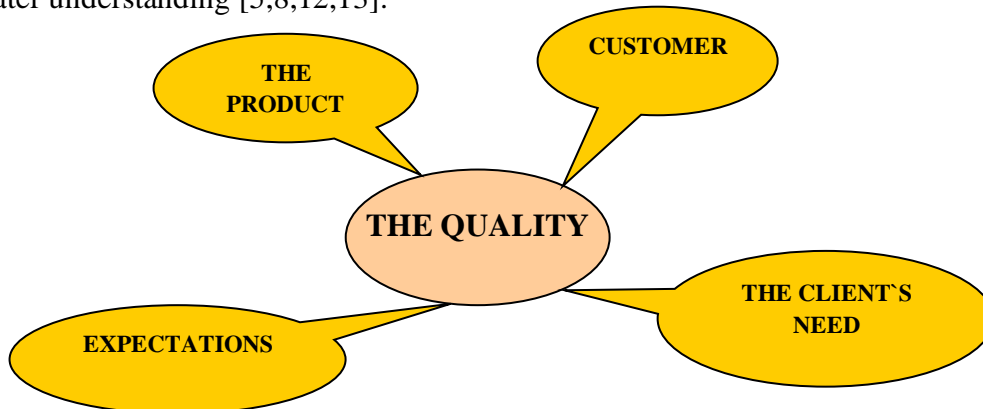


Figure 1. New terms related to quality

Source: own creation

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Descriptive research was used, the method used being the questionnaire-based investigation, which captures reality as it presents itself at a given moment. The questionnaire was personally administered by the sample operators in the research area, this research area being the Municipality of Timișoara. The sample size was 500 people, their selection was made randomly and the period of data collection: April 21-28, 2023.

Each sampling unit was surveyed during the aforementioned period and this action took place in four important areas of the municipality.

RESEARCH RESULTS

In the sample subjected to the research, the female persons predominated (60%), also predominating as age persons between 18-24 years, coming from the urban environment, coming from various fields of activity.

All the people interviewed declared that they had consumed tourist services even just once. With this question we wanted to highlight people's interest in tourism and tourist services.

The main source of information regarding the consumption of tourist services is represented by the opinions and reports of acquaintances or relatives, in a percentage of 36%. Information based on internet consultation is about equal, which I noticed tends to gain ground in the information process. Then decisions are made through information at travel agencies, through catalogs or through tourist guides.

The service preferred by consumers/respondents is accommodation, in a proportion of 70%. We attribute this aspect to the age of those who answered our questions, mostly young people, eager to practice tourism in order to discover as many places as possible and have an adventure. We also noticed that leisure services are not given a lot of importance because young people believe that once they arrive at their destination they can manage on their own and they do not want to pay extra for certain services that they can get without intermediaries.

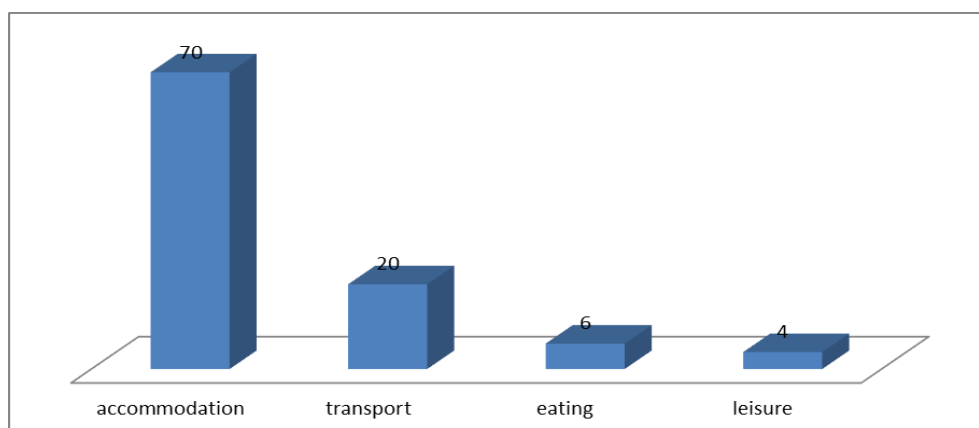


Figure 2. Preferred basic tourist services

Source: data obtained from the processing of the questionnaire

We noticed that, in the choice of additional tourist services, a special interest is given to treatment, 46%, but in an approximately equal proportion there are people who do not want to answer this question or who probably did not think that they could use such services additional tourism. From here we concluded that the youth do not particularly consider the purchase of additional services. It is important to mention that many people consider using the services of a tourist guide.

28% of the people who responded to our survey consider the ratio between the rates of tourist services and their quality to be fair. Not surprising from our point of view was the number, the share of those who believe that the high rates are justified in the quality of the services, namely a percentage of 48% and those who consider the rates unjustified in relation to the quality of the services offered were in one percent of 24%. The answer to this question indicates a relative state of complacency considering that at higher standards spending would increase significantly. However, tourism products can be improved.

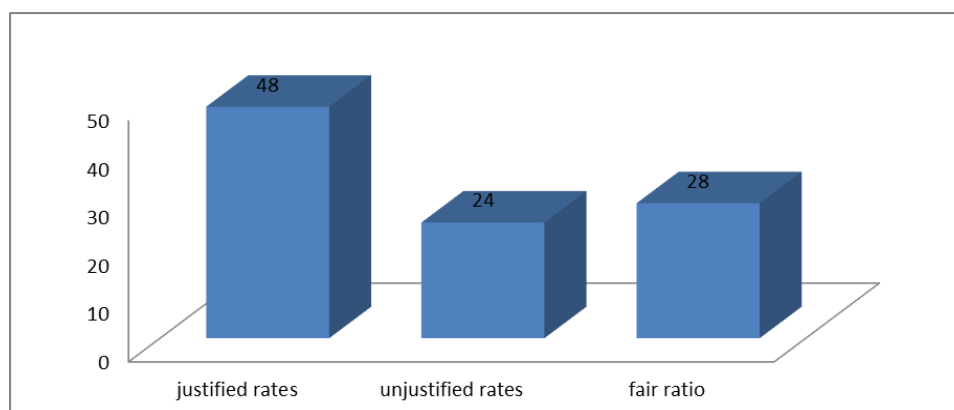


Figure 3. Justification of the price/quality relationship

Source: data obtained from the processing of the questionnaire

The majority of those interviewed travel for tourist purposes only once a year and the duration of the vacation is around ten days (48%). 40% stated that, for tourist purposes, they travel twice a year and only 12% travel more than twice a year for tourist purposes. Tourist activities are mainly carried out during the holidays and, in particular, in the warm season.

66% of the people surveyed are influenced in making the decision to consume the tourist service by the price of the respective service compared to a fairly large percentage, of 34% who choose the tourist services they will purchase and consume taking into

account quality, considering this aspect the most more important in the decision to purchase the service.

48% of those interviewed chose the domestic destination as their top preference answer and 52% declared that they choose external destinations for their holidays, due to the clearly superior quality offered by external providers of truistic services, the prices they charge but, advertising made by travel agencies is also important in the purchase decision.

Orientation towards mountain resorts is the main preference in the choice of services in terms of domestic tourism. In second place is the coast of our country. We noticed, after analyzing the answers received, that agritourism is starting to gain more and more ground, starting to become an increasingly attractive destination for young people due to the opportunities it offers.

As far as external tourism is concerned, multiple destinations are chosen for it, with circuits being especially preferred, followed by single destination stays and cultural tourism.

64% of the interviewees are willing to allocate quite large sums for holiday pay, sums that come from savings made during the year from salaries, for which reason they expect a higher quality in terms of the services purchased. 22% allocate medium amounts for spending the holiday and 14% allocate small amounts. Analyzing the answers to this question, we can conclude that the willingness to spend large sums for vacation, which also implies a high quality of services.

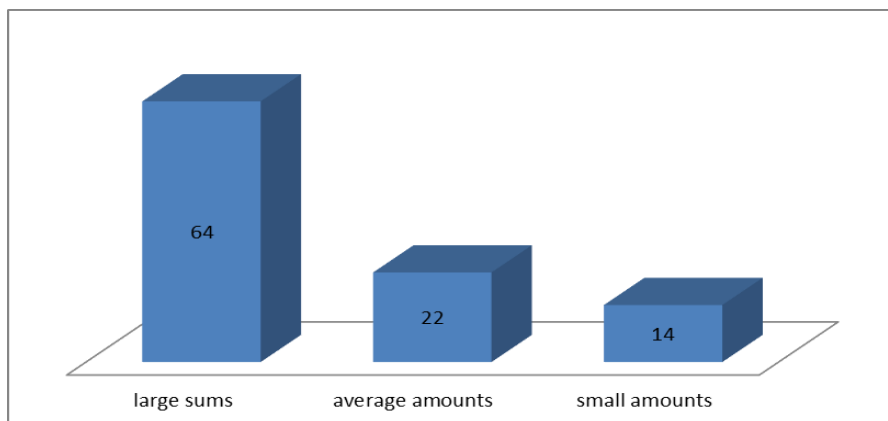


Figure 4. The level of amounts allocated for the purchase of tourist services

Source: data obtained from the processing of the questionnaire

The quality of tourist services represents a very important aspect in making the purchase decision and is one of the aspects that the interviewees consider extremely important.

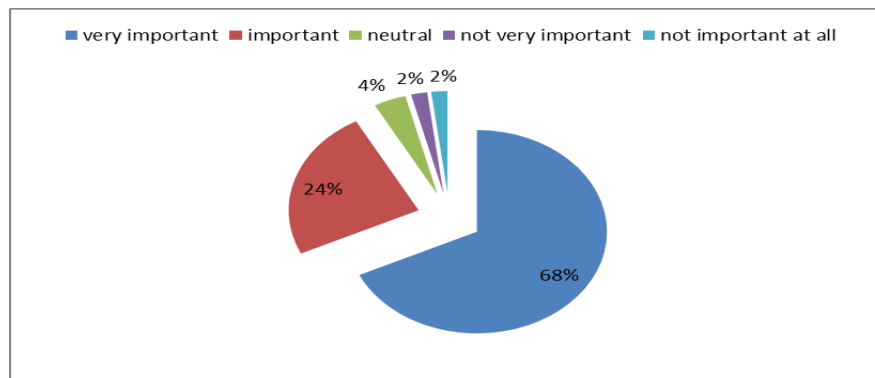


Figure 5. The importance of quality in the purchase decision

Source: data obtained from the processing of the questionnaire

Hotel accommodation is preferred, 40%, followed by those who increasingly choose private accommodation, respectively 38% because here a high degree of freedom is offered, in most cases the entire location is available, with all the necessary facilities. Accommodation in cabins is preferred by 8% of people.

Road transport is one of the most used means of transport, predominating the journey with one's own car followed by the bus. Next is traveling by train, the preferred means of transport for young people due to the low fares. Air transport is used sparingly although it is the fastest but requires quite high costs.

They generally opt for accommodation with breakfast included, in proportion to 58%, then all-inclusive accommodation, 20%, followed by half-board, 16%.

58% of the respondents stated that they prefer traveling with a specialized operator (travel agency), but, as we noted, a significant part of the respondents travel on their own, 42%. Most of those who organize their tourist trip through a travel agency belong to the 30-49 age group, 27%, and those between the ages of 18-29 choose to organize their stay on their own. In the situation of calling on specialized travel agencies, it is worth noting that they opt for all services included in the largest proportion. 94% of those interviewed mentioned that they used the services offered by the travel agency at least once, and a very small percentage, 6%, never used the agencies to purchase the service.

The criteria that are taken into account when using the services of the travel agency are: in the prices charged, 34%, then the offer, 24% and not least the reputation of the agency. Important are the recommendations, the opinions of relatives, the diversity of the offer, the staff from the agency and the manner of behavior. Very few people randomly choose the agency by chance.

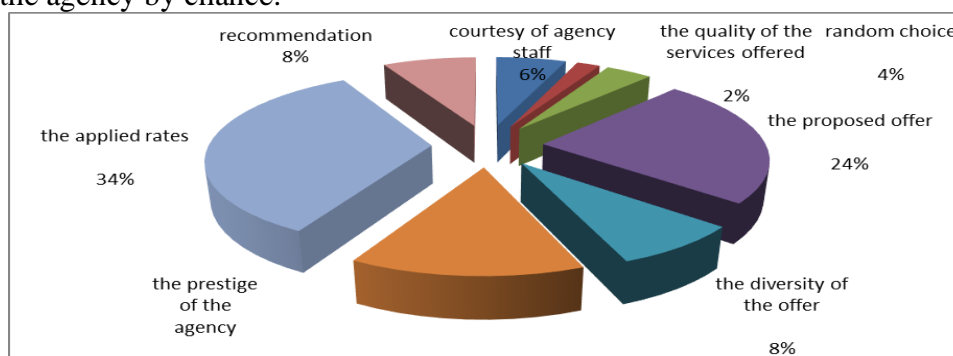


Figure 6. Criteria for choosing an agency

Source: data obtained from the processing of the questionnaire

The services of travel agencies are used primarily for convenience, as these people do not have the free time needed to look for accommodation. Another important criterion is the attractiveness of the agencies' offers.

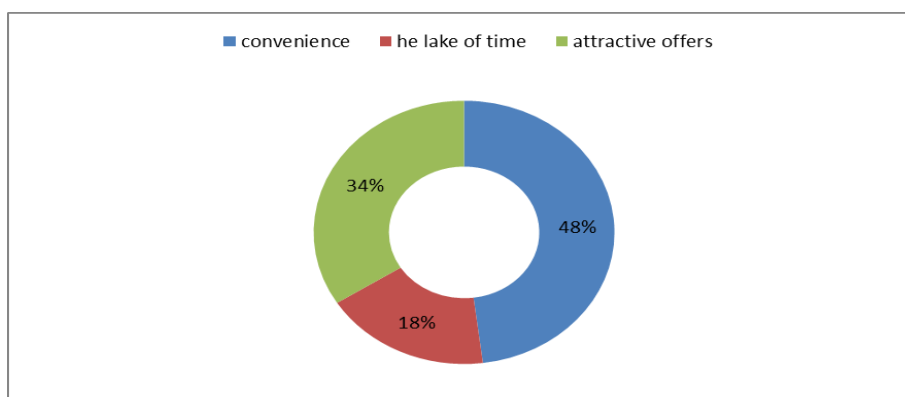


Figure 7. Reasons for using agency services

Source: data obtained from the processing of the questionnaire

The majority of those who completed the survey by answering the questions in the questionnaire were satisfied with the attitude of the employees of the agency to which they turned., only a few considered that they were not treated properly or that they were not given much attention. Regarding the quality of the services offered by the chosen travel agencies, a percentage of 50% of those surveyed were satisfied with the quality of the services offered. As for the agency's offer, we can mention that it lived up to expectations.

In the sample that we have submitted to our research, we observe that the female gender predominates, the male gender being in a percentage of 40%. In the case of tourist services, the sex of the interviewees is not an extremely important criterion for market segmentation.

CONCLUSIONS

In the present research we aimed to identify the way in which the purchase decision can be adopted, respectively:

- to identify the most important influencing factors in decision-making and how they influence - positively or negatively;
- for the identification of the most appropriate commercialization methods/actions that will be used to influence the decision in order to adopt it and achieve a favorable purchase;
- in order to identify the types and important sources of information that can be used and must be used;
- finding the appropriate criteria in determining the optimal decision options.

The study carried out led us to the following results:

- people aged 30-49 predominate among those who use a travel agency to organize a tourist trip, a percentage of 27%, while people who organize their stay by themselves are part of the category of young people, under 29 years – between 18-29 years;
- regarding the way of organizing the trip, if those who mainly organize on their own, would still call on the help of an agency, they believe that it would be good to have all the services ensured from the beginning;
- the level of prices is a determining factor in choosing a holiday destination, however most respondents stated that they would, however, be willing to pay a higher rate to benefit from higher quality services;
- according to the answers received in our survey, we concluded that the emphasis placed on trips abroad, a trend in terms of increased international tourism, is due to higher quality services, much better trained, kinder staff and clearly superior conditions ;
- the frequency of trips is an aspect worth mentioning, noting the fact that most of the interviewees go on vacations a maximum of twice a year, predominating those who make only one trip a year, a fact that is due to relatively low incomes;
- regarding the quality of the services purchased by the respondents, we found that the majority declared themselves satisfied with this aspect but would be willing to allocate larger amounts for increased comfort.

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