THE QUALITY OF AGRO-TOURIST SERVICES - A DIMINISHING FACTOR OF FOOD INSECURITY

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Abstract: *The European Union contributes significantly to guaranteeing global food security. Internally, food insecurity can cause social convulsions and tensions that can damage the mental and physical state of the population, facilitating economic and political instability. Externally, food insecurity can generate unwanted diplomatic, economic and political pressures that affect national security. Food insecurity, climate change and price volatility are, more than ever, the three major global challenges with which mankind faces, climate changes (through the deepening process of desertification) is increasingly perceived as one of the greatest challenges for global food security. The competitivity of contemporary tourism organizations, irrespective of their size and nature, has its origin in the quality of the strategies they adopt and apply. In a world of sophisticated competition and demand, the quality represents the way in which tourist services can survive.*

Key words*: quality, food security, insecurity, agro-tourist services*

INTRODUCTION

Taking in consideration the unprecedented growth of competition among economic agents, appear and worsen also in Romania, both the problem of maintaining the existing clientele and of getting new clients, in parallel with the necessity to achieve a certain minimum level of efficiency of the activities of each economic agent. [1.5,9]

These problems can be solved concurrently and efficiently by generating/increasing the trust of potential or real clients - physical or legal persons - in the quality of products/services and processes of a particular economic agent.

It is also noticed that due to the constantly increasing requirements of the customers, advertising is less credible, and thus increasingly inefficient, other than the results of multi-criteria, competent, objective and transparent assessments of the quality of products/services and processes offered on market.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

For this study I applied as a working method: data collection, processing, centralizing data, data analysis and drawing conclusions.

RESEARCH RESULTS

People's interest in quality and good works (good, useful and beautiful) has been constantly manifested and developed over the past five millennia, enriching and diversifying considerably its content and its way of manifestation. [2]

Without using current terminology, but prefiguring some current concepts, principles and rules, some ancient papers from the Greeks, Egyptians, Babylonians, Chinese, etc., have been making edifying information regarding this aspect.

This interest has increased considerably since the 17th century, with the emergence and development of manufactures, with the transition to industrial production (medium or large). [4,]

The modern history of the concept of "quality" begins with the 20th century because only during this century have been discovered, developed and applied all the current concepts, principles, methods, techniques and instruments usable for the purpose of obtaining, maintaining and especially improving quality of products and services.

The world's history of quality is closely linked to the history of the organization.

According to the WTO, quality in tourism is the result of a process that involves satisfying the legitimate needs of products and services, consumer requirements and expectations at an acceptable price, according to quality standards related to ensuring tourists' safety and security, hygiene, accessibility, transparency, authenticity and the harmony of tourism activity with the human and natural environment.

In terms of increasing competition in all areas, expanding the economic markets and eliminating tax, customs, etc., a product/service can penetrate a market or maintain/improve its position on that market only if it has a quality/price ratio (fare) superior to that of similar products/services offered by competitors.

At the beginning of this century and millennium, globalization is a major determinant of addressing quality issues. This new economic reality rests on new bases.

The surrounding reality is changing rapidly due to:

-a formidable acceleration of the development of the socio-economic environment;

-an exceptional technological development based on new information technologies. [8,9]

It should be highlighting first of all that the speed of renewal in the socio-economic environment increases exponentially. (Comparing the evolution of the sciences - it was slow until the XX century - then it was an explosion of knowledge).

On the other hand, the speed of transformation of technological innovations into commercial applications has been constantly increasing (the time required to put the idea into practice).

At the basis of the design of the entire quality policy and strategy in the field of quality is the vision and the mission for quality. The tool for defining mission and vision for quality is strategic management. It is defined as a systematic approach that aims to substantiate and achieve the company's goals. [1,5]

The foundation of strategic leadership needs a unifying thought to answer questions such as: where it is desired to arrive, what is the reason for being, what it proposes to be, how it will be achieved. This thinking attempts to determine the cost of an activity or organization, its position, its modes of action, is the managerial philosophy.

The competitiveness of contemporary organizations, irrespective of their size and nature, has it origin in the quality of the strategies they adopt and apply. [4,7]

In a world of sophisticated competition and demand, the quality represents the way how the enterprise can survive. It follows that the qualitative level of products is an essential strategic element in the current economic context and the determination of how to act to achieve the proposed quality goal is essential, being the number one priority for strategic marketing.

The quality strategy is considered a competitive strategy, because the quality mission is to compete, to be competitive on the market. Through strategy, the company's management follows:

- meeting the social need and the requirements of the beneficiaries, removing the causes that may lead to the occurrence of the defects;

- establishing the level of quality characteristics, according to the conditions imposed by the requirements of the competitiveness of products or services in different markets;

- integration into the vision and mission of the company;

- changing the mentality of staff from distrust to confidence in achieving and improving quality.

The formulation of the quality strategy, which is an internal problem of the company, is based on the ability to achieve products or services at the level of the requirements imposed by standards or other normative acts, competitiveness, performance, price, time.

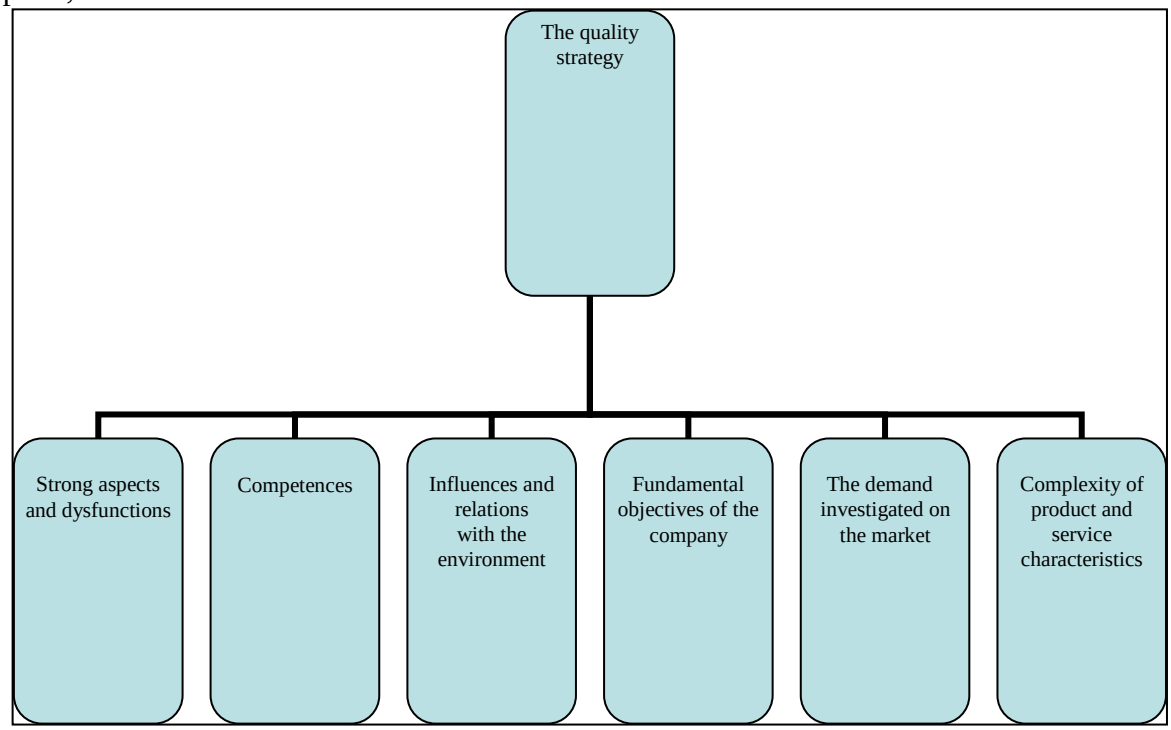

Figure 1. Factors that determine establishing the strategy in the field of quality

Requirements related to quality are, according to the terminological standard SR ISO 8402: 1995, an expression of needs or their transposition into a set of requirements expressed qualitatively or quantitatively, regarding the characteristics of a service, in order to allow its realization and examination. [6,8]

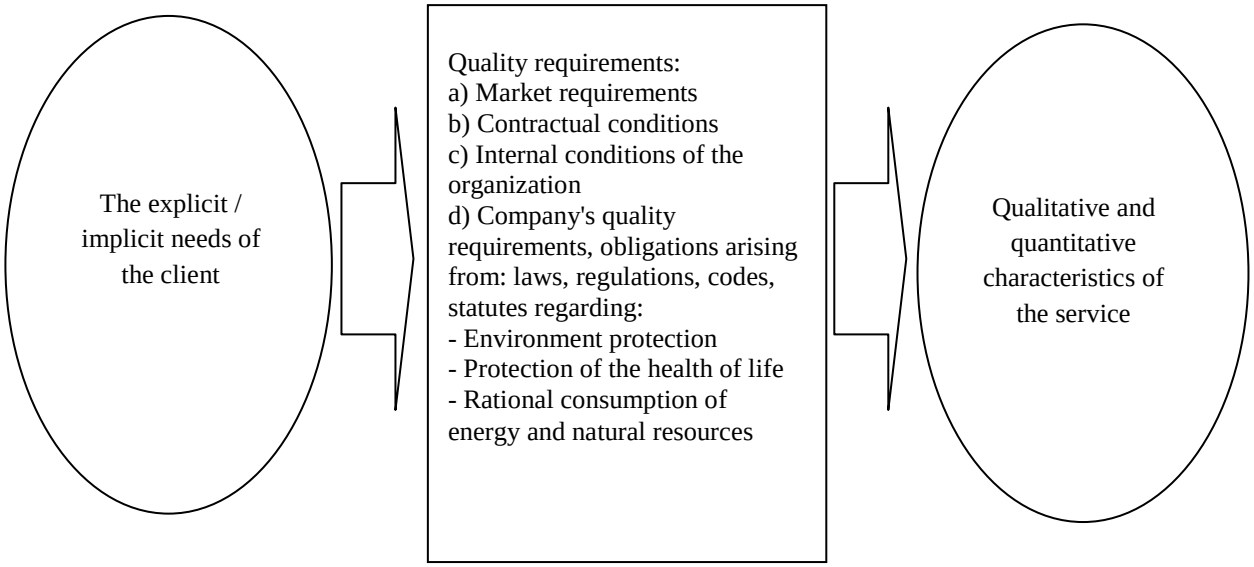

Figure 2. From customer requirements to quality requirements and agrotourist service features

In a report of the European Court of Auditors from 2012 on the effectiveness of EU Aid for Development in the area of food supply in the Sub-Saharan Africa, it is noted that a wide range of factors contribute to food insecurity worldwide, causes of poverty and lack of development, such as: [7,12,15]

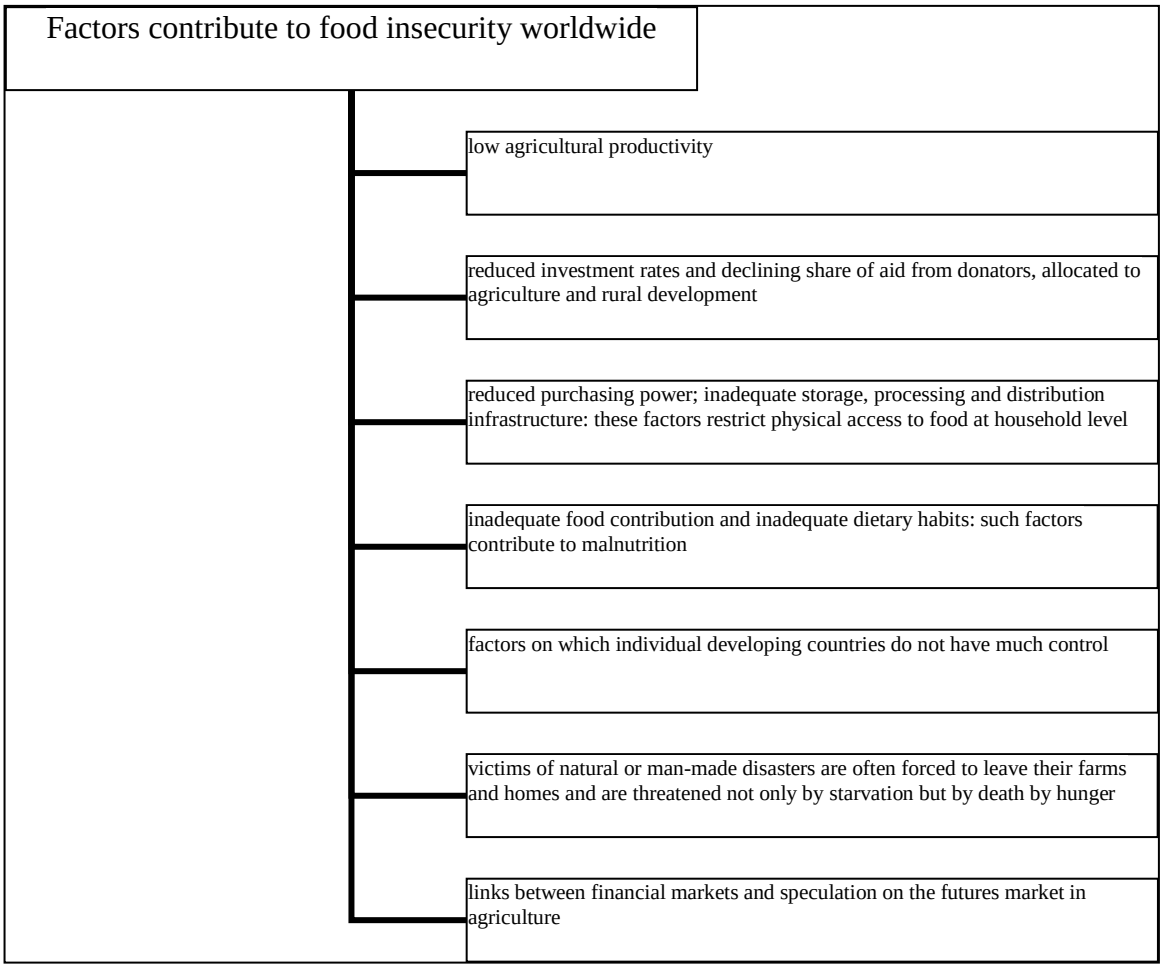

Figure 3. Factors contribute to food insecurity worldwide

(a) low agricultural productivity;

(b) reduced investment rates and declining share of aid from donators, allocated to agriculture and rural development;

(c) reduced purchasing power; inadequate storage, processing and distribution infrastructure: these factors restrict physical access to food at household level;

(d) inadequate food contribution and inadequate dietary habits: such factors contribute to malnutrition. They are correlated with the lack of education on adequate nutrition or insufficient diversity of food sources, inadequate health systems, inadequate access to drinking water and sanitation facilities or illiteracy among women;

(f) factors on which individual developing countries do not have much control:

(i) victims of natural or man-made disasters are often forced to leave their farms and homes and are threatened not only by starvation but by death by hunger;

(ii) links between financial markets and speculation on the futures market in agriculture, as well as the development of biofuels, contribute to food unavailability and rising prices. [3,11,12]

Internally, food insecurity can cause social convulsions and tensions that can damage the mental and physical state of the population, facilitating economic and political instability. [10,13,14]

Externally, food insecurity can give rise to unwanted diplomatic, economic and political pressures that affect national security. [10,11]

CONCLUSIONS

Food insecurity, climate changes and price volatility are, more than ever, the three major global challenges, with which mankind is facing, and climate change (through the deepening process of desertification) is increasingly perceived as one of the greatest challenges for global food security.

In order to combat food insecurity, it is necessary to adopt measures for a more open and transparent application of food law in order to ensure consumer, producer and trader confidence, including measures taken by public authorities to inform the public about cases there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that a food poses a health risk. The food chain's globalization causes a constant emergence of new challenges and risks to the health and consumer interests. In this context, it will be necessary to improve the legislative framework on food safety, as the provisions require constant updating, depending on new developments.

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