

A NEW OPTION FOR CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT OF TOURISM UNITS: CROWDSOURCING

Cristina STATE¹

Dan POPESCU²

ABSTRACT

It has been demonstrated. Tourism can have an important contribution to the realisation of the gross domestic product³ of any country. However, in the context in which, on one hand, the media frequently reports about many successes of domestic tourism but, on the other hand, it only contributes with 0.6% to Romania's GDP, we wanted to investigate to what extent "it is" is rather, "it seems"...

Therefore, based on the available statistical data, result of an increasingly aggressive but, however, under-performing external organisational communication, we want to analyse to what extent the beneficiaries of the services provided by the tourism units (clients) are indeed satisfied with the correspondence between their offer and the reality 'on the field'.

Methodologically, in a first stage, we used crowdsourcing. This is an alternative to obtain, due to the outsourcing, necessary services and/or ideas, by asking for contributions from large groups of people and/or from communities, using on-line resources rather than employees or traditional suppliers. In this context, we launched, on two websites that are accessible to any person willing to participate in our research, two questionnaires: one for assessing the quality of organisational communication within the tourism units, and another for assessing the level of satisfaction of their clients. As a second step, we proceeded with the interpretation of the answers received by verifying, econometrically, through the variance analysis (ANOVA), the research hypotheses. Basically, we investigated the two-way relationship existing between the tourism units and the beneficiaries of their services, in order to identify and improve several tendencies of external organisational communication, tendencies that can generate successful effects, as a direct result of improving customer relationship management.

At the end of our paper, we have formulated a series of proposals designed to reveal how and in what way - in a world where globalisation, internationalisation and interdependence are more and more obvious - the crowdsourcing, as a managerial and methodological element and as an attribute of the assessment and control function, can not only be an alternative, but also a viable solution capable to substantially contribute to the improvement of the customer relationship management in the industry of tourism and hospitality and, implicitly, to the improvement of the services provided to the clients.

KEYWORDS: *organisational communication, crowdsourcing, customer relationship management, tourism and hospitality industry, tourism units*

JEL CLASSIFICATION: *J4, L84, M3, M5, M21*

¹ Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania, cristina.state@man.ase.ro

² Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania, dan.popescu@man.ase.ro

³ Abbreviated in the content of the article as GDP - n.a.

1. INTRODUCTION

Our approach was based on the contradictory character and heterogeneity of statistical data that 'invade' us daily, as a result of external organisational communication of the units in tourism and hospitality industry. For example, we were asking ourselves: Why, given the fact that we are being informed by the *media* about how much the Romanians and foreigners spend (millions and millions of Euro) to feel good on the 'Romanian realm', their money have such a low contribution to the *GDP* (about 550 millions Lei, i.e. 750 millions Euro), in 2011 (source: www.insse.ro/cms/files/anul2012, accessed on 27.08.2014)? However, we were tempted to quickly stop our approach, because other *on-line* sources (such as, for example, www.bzb.ro, accessed on 27.08.2014) was presenting a totally different situation, (far too) positive: '*...Last year - 2011, n.a. - tourism had a total contribution of 5.1% to the Gross Domestic Product, which puts Romania on the 154 place in the world, out of 184 countries, after Albania (16.7% of GDP), Bulgaria (13.3%), Hungary (10.6%), Czech Republic (8.4%) and Slovakia (6%), according to the report of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC)... Moreover, in 2013, foreign visitors generated 42.1% of the tourism businesses, compared to 57.9% from internal tourism*'. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (www.wttc.org, accessed on 09.07.2014), in 2011, however, tourism contributed with 1.4% to the *GDP*; therefore, with twice the double of the amount paid by the *INS* and almost three times less than the opinion expressed on www.bzb.ro). Overall, only a little over 20% of the *arrivals* were represented by foreign tourists, while the *net use of accommodation* was of 18.1% of the total of tourist accommodation structures.

Another aspect that made us question ourselves more regarding the truthfulness of the available statistical data was related to the total capacity of accommodation existent at the Romanian seaside. Thus, according to tourism employers, the number of tourists to be accommodated on the seaside, in classified or 'black market' structures cannot exceed 150,000 (www.bzb.ro, accessed on 27.08.2014). According to the data provided by the Romanian National Institute of Statistics (*INS*)⁴, in 2011, the accommodation counted 74.343 rooms (www.insse.ro/cms/files/anul2012, accessed on 27.08.2014). However, the Romanian Tourist Authority⁵ states that, for example, in Costinești there are less than 12.000 accommodation rooms, in Mamaia - 21.532, in Neptun - 9.147, in Năvodari - 8.720, in Vama Veche - 1.036, in Eforie Nord and Eforie Sud there are almost 20.000, and in Saturn - 5.425 (www.bzb.ro, accessed on 27.08.2014). We summed up these numbers and obtained a total of 69.100 accommodation rooms. On the other hand, every weekend in high season, the number of tourists that 'invade' the seaside is of 200-250 thousands (www.mediafax.ro, accessed on 27.08.2014 and the majority of *media*). We should mention that, at national level, according to the official statistical data, at the end of 2011 there were 5.003 accommodation units, with a capacity of 278.503 rooms (www.insse.ro/cms/files/anul2012, accessed on 27.08.2014). What is the truth? It is impossible to know. Furthermore, in order to extend the 'chaos', recently, the Department for Small and Medium Businesses, Business and Tourism Branch⁶ in the Line Ministry suggested, '*during the years 2014-2016, to transfer, from the central public administration authorities, respectively from ANAT, to the local public administration authorities, the classification of the accommodation and catering structures, the authorisation of tourist beaches and water sports, the homologation of ski slopes and mountain routes, as well as the accreditation of national information and tourist promotion centres. Also, the issuance of the tourism patent and the administration of the local tourism heritage registers will be transferred to the local authorities*' (www.ziaruldeiasi.ro, accessed on 27.08.2014). In this way, it becomes obvious that the heterogeneity of 'requirements' increases substantially, as well as the quality of the services provided by the tourism units. This is one more reason to remember what

⁴ Abbreviated in the content of the article as *INS* - n.a.

⁵ Abbreviated in the content of the article as *ANAT* - n.a.

⁶ Abbreviated in the content of the article as *DIMMMAT* - n.a.

Toffler stressed out: '*He, who underestimates the revolutionary character of daily changes, is living an illusion. The world changes dramatically and irrevocable...*' (Toffler, 2006, p.39).

So, finally, it is crystal clear: at different degrees of intensity, each one of us is marked by a full and complex confrontation, identification, assessment and action process (Paton, 2004, p. 39), a process known as *change* (Popescu, State et al., 2012, p. 1). In this context, the change, seen as an improvement of organisational communication, also generates the modification of the image of each tourism unit to third parties. Secondly, as experience proves it, the quality of customer relationships depends on the way a tourism organisation communicates, both inside and outside.

This is the context in which, in order to improve customer relationship management in the tourism and hospitality industry, we chose *crowdsourcing*. In North-America, more and more frequently, organisations that monitor the subdivision of tedious work processes and entrust them to volunteers and/or part-time workers willing to secure additional income, use *crowdsourcing* (Howe, 2008, p. 17). Analysing over 40 definitions from specialty literature, Estellés-Arolas and Ladrón-de-Guevara offered what is considered to be the most complex definition of *crowdsourcing*: '*type of on-line participatory activity, in which a person, an institution, a non-profit organisation or company (trading - n.a.) proposes to a heterogeneous group of people with different levels of knowledge, through an open and flexible call, to voluntary undertake a task of variable complexity and modularity... The advantage will be mutual: the user will receive the satisfaction of a particular type of need (for example, economic or social recognition, self-esteem, development of individual skills, etc.). The crowdsourcer will obtain and use, for his own interest, all information provided by the user*' (Estellés-Arolas et Ladrón-de-Guevara, 2012, p. 8-9).

Crowdsourcing is a complex compound of the notions *crowd* and *outsourcing* (Howe, 2006, p. 3) and derives from the terms (in English) *crowd* and *source*. Adding the suffix *-ing*, as a form of emphasising the importance of continuing the approach initiated at managerial level underlines the need to obtain the final result due to the contribution of a large number of people outside the organisation.

Crowdsourcing differs from *outsourcing*; the latter defines activities from external sources, without them being ordered/requested by a (managerial) group inside the beneficiary organisation. Outsourcing services through *crowdsourcing* uses *on-line* platforms (such as *AmazonMechanicalTurk*, *Crowdsprings*, and *DesignCrowd* etc.), and its addressability spectrum includes, in a competitive regime, persons and/or groups and not collaborators or contractors, as in the case of *outsourcing*. Its transfer to the *Internet* was motivated by the reality that natural persons tend to manifest much more freely on a specialty *website*, feeling much safer without surveillance - from third parties - of their way of thinking and, in particular, of acting. This, especially, due to the fact that the atmosphere created by the *on-line* environment implies more attention and concentration from the performers of the tasks in a project, superior to the specific situations of interpersonal communication such as 'face-to-face'.

By *crowdsourcing*, the organisations reduce their costs. The performers of the outsourcing activities are paid in unit rates, whose quantum is lower than the one which would have resulted if those activities would have been performed by their own employees.

At individual level, those who use *crowdsourcing* are double motivated (Howe, 2008, p. 19; van Henk, 2010, p. 8; Brabham, 2012, p. 27-28), as follows: *intrinsic* (social interaction, intellectual stimulation through competition, etc.) and *extrinsic* (financial gain).

From another perspective, *crowdsourcing* can be both an excellent source of stimulating the entrepreneurial phenomenon, and an attractive way of promoting and manifesting it. For example, it can be a simple occupational alternative of the entrepreneurs, and an authentic form of dynamic connection of enterprises (in particular, the small and medium enterprises) to the realities imposed and/or induced by the digital era, in both cases having a positive impact on the general economic and social progress. In this context, extremely favourable and generating sustainability, viability and durability both at *macro* and at *micro* level, *crowdsourcing* supports, and it is an efficient way of stimulating the improvement of customer relationship management.

In terms of types, *crowdsourcing* includes: *crowdvoting*; *crowdfundig*; *microwork*; *creative crowdsourcing*; etc. (Howe, 2008; Saxton et Kishore, 2013; Lombard, 2013; Brabham, 2012).

Basically, the research conducted by us represents the first opportunity to apply *crowdsourcing* in Romania. The participants to our scientific approach have the possibility to access, for free, two *on-line* platforms available, namely: <http://goo.gl/sgzjU> (to assess the quality of organisational communication in tourism units); <http://goo.gl/JUaLx> (to assess client satisfaction on the quality of organisational communication in tourism units).

Through our initiative, we offered a new option for customer relationship management, respectively, to conceive and conduct a business in the tourism and hospitality industry, not only based on the tradition and/or management experience of the units in the field, but also based on the *feedback* offered to them, through *crowdsourcing*, by those who are direct beneficiaries of the services offered: *the clients*.

1. Research Objectives, Hypothesis and Methodology

1.1 Objectives

The main object of our applicative research was *outlining the way in which the implementation of crowdsourcing can contribute to the improvement of customer relationship management in tourism units*, with favourable direct effects on their performances. In this context, taking into consideration the fact that until the present moment, in Romania, no paper has been prepared in the field analysed, we focused our research approach in two directions, namely:

- a) The way in which the external organisational communication of tourism units is conceived and realised;
- b) The clients (tourists) perception of the unit image in tourism and hospitality industry, from their perspective and/or through their external organisational communication (technically, of the way in which they offer their services to the clients).

Our applicative approach was conducted from the perspective of improving the customer relationship management in the tourism and hospitality industry, with priority from the tourist-receiving units. This is a result of the way of thinking, of perceiving and treating them, not as mere consumers of products and/or services, but as *clients*, whose loyalty, resulting from a better understanding of their wishes and/or needs can significantly contribute to increase the performance of these units. In these circumstances, the approach of the applicative research was conducted in terms of initiating an entrepreneurial mindset change at managerial level, taking into account the reality that the opportunity for improvement in this direction has recently gained a more significant role in all types of small and medium enterprises (Barbu et Nedelea, 2005, p. 25) both as an academic discipline, and as a concern in the empirical field (Popescu, Chivu, Scarlat et al., 2010, pp. 49-50).

1.2 Research Hypothesis:

Main hypothesis: *Between the offer of the tourism units and the reality that the clients meet at the destination, there are major differences.* These are primarily due to the fact that the managers of the units in the tourism and hospitality industry conceive and realise organisational communication empirically, relying primarily on their own experience and intuition. This is likely to generate, finally, an extremely tough confrontation between *to be* and *to seem*, a confrontation between *services offer* and *thereality met and/or perceived* by the clients of the tourism units.

Two *secondary hypotheses* relevant to the role of organisational communication *in and for* obtaining sustainable economic results by the units in the tourism and hospitality industry, as a direct effect of an efficient customer relationship management, are the following:

1.2.1 The managers of the tourism units do not adopt efficient measures to improve and/or to develop its human resources training. Technically, due to lack of concern (or its existence, but only declarative) towards the professional development of human resources in control, the managers of the tourism units generate the lack of professionalism in the activities;

1.2.2 The quality of the relationships of the tourism units with their clients can be improved, especially because the foundation and adoption of the decision to contract services is determined, in general, by the documentation performed by their beneficiaries and not by the external organisational communication (promotion of their own image) of the tourism units.

After testing the two hypothesis, we wanted to formulate a set of proposals capable of ensuring the competitiveness and sustainability of the activity of the profile units and, especially, as a result of the *crowdsourcing*, to become a viable alternative for improving customer relationship management in the tourism and hospitality industry.

1.3 Research Methodology

The methodology used (*variance analysis - ANOVA*, correlated with *SPSS for Windows, version 15*) is the logical consequence of the questions used in the questionnaires applied in the research, representing a first step in choosing the quantitative/qualitative approach. For our research, we used two questionnaires that were launched on two *crowdsourcing* platforms, as follows:

- The first, published on <http://goo.gl/JUaLx>, was also sent by mail (to 327 recipients) or *on-line* (to over 10.000 tourism units: both tourist-receiving units and tourism agencies). This questionnaire is aimed to assess the quality of organisational communication in the related tourism units. The number of the answers received was 1408 (of which 73 in physical form);
- The second one, addressed to the beneficiaries of the services of tourism units (as current and/or former clients), aimed to assess the degree of satisfaction on the quality of the organisational communication process, as a direct result of the information available. The number of the questionnaire respondents was 2.478 (out of which: 376 answers received in physical form - these were uploaded by the authors on the *website* <http://goo.gl/sgzjU> - and 2.102 answers directly formulated, by accessing the *website* mentioned).

In our methodological research we started from the fact that *ANOVA* is used when:

- a. Differences between groups are analysed, from the perspective of one or more variables;
- b. The participants (respondents) to the research were tested (questioned) once;
- c. More than two groups (persons) are compared.

1.4 Results of the Research

Analysing and interpreting the answers to the questionnaires and applying *ANOVA*, we found the following:

1.4.1 In most of the tourism units, the concern for an efficient organisational communication depends directly on their classification. Consequently, the degree of professionalism is directly proportional with the degree of classification of the related units (Table 1). Thus, the heterogeneity of classification in terms of organisation of the tourism units in a certain classification category generates different attitudes compared to the external organisational communication. In this context, let us state that, first of all, a profoundly negative aspect is the reality that the tourism units consider clients as being 'tourists', which shows a certain mindset on *who* serves *who*. In our opinion, there is long until many of the tourism units will have the power to understand that they are in the service of the clients and not vice-versa! This happens in a reality in which many guest-houses do not hesitate to mislead their potential clients, 'luring' them with offers that are not real, and the 'stars' displayed by the tourism units, reflecting the classification, are in fact 'daisies'. Moreover, let us not forget the fact that, currently, over a quarter of tourism units (especially guest-houses) do not have a classification as required by the applicable law (www.wttc.org, accessed on 09.07.2014). However, they can operate without any practical consequence. The management of these units is performed arbitrarily and empirically; the owners hold certificates that do not certify, only on paper (in the most favourable case), their specialisation in the field. Therefore, in general, without any unitary base of the tourism units in Romania, each company communicates and promotes its own image as it considers fit.

Table 1: Relationship between the classification of the tourism unit and the degree of professionalism of organisational communication

| | | ANOVA | | | | |
|------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|------|
| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Departamentul Comunicare Organizationala | Between Groups | 32061.266 | 4 | 8015.317 | 21.719 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 56465.037 | 153 | 369.053 | | |
| | Total | 88526.304 | 157 | | | |
| Departamentul Vânzari | Between Groups | 30910.003 | 4 | 7727.501 | 24.617 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 48027.927 | 153 | 313.908 | | |
| | Total | 78937.930 | 157 | | | |
| Departamentul Marketing | Between Groups | 32674.120 | 4 | 8168.530 | 21.700 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 57595.051 | 153 | 376.438 | | |
| | Total | 90269.171 | 157 | | | |
| Directorul (Managerul) General | Between Groups | 20603.242 | 4 | 5150.810 | 15.132 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 52079.296 | 153 | 340.388 | | |
| | Total | 72682.538 | 157 | | | |
| Parteneri externi | Between Groups | 24188.007 | 4 | 6047.002 | 32.316 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 28629.493 | 153 | 187.121 | | |
| | Total | 52817.500 | 157 | | | |

Source: processing of authors in the ANOVA program

The data presented in Table 1 show there is a close correlation between the organisational characteristic 'classification of tourism units' and the person or organisational subdivision responsible for the organisational communication activity (F=15,132). All significance thresholds are relevant ($p=0,000$), which leads us to the conclusion that the *main hypothesis is validated*;

1.4.2 The existence of customer loyalty programs is more like an aspiration than a reality. In this context, we reveal the fact that less than 10% of the units responding to the questionnaire (127) have customer loyalty programs, but still, their efficiency is reduced. It is also very difficult to ensure loyal customers, given that, on the one hand, the offer of the tourism agencies per destinations is almost identical from the point of view of content and, on the other hand, the lack of professionalism in terms of external organisational communication, correlated with the difference between what is offered and the reality in the field, makes clients want to 'transform' in tourists. More specifically, instead of assisting customer loyalty, we assist a process in which clients consistently look for other locations for the same destination. The interpretation of the results obtained by processing with ANOVA is given in Table 2:

Table 2: Relationship between the loyalty modalities and programs, and the percentage of repetitive clients

| | | ANOVA | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|------|
| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Use of tourism agencies | Between Groups | 31726.580 | 4 | 7931.645 | 23.054 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 52638.439 | 153 | 344.042 | | |
| | Total | 84365.019 | 157 | | | |
| Use of 'other sources' | Between Groups | 25222.253 | 4 | 6305.563 | 34.961 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 27595.247 | 153 | 180.361 | | |
| | Total | 52817.500 | 157 | | | |
| Use of internet | Between Groups | 24809.563 | 4 | 6202.391 | 18.436 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 51472.621 | 153 | 336.422 | | |
| | Total | 76282.184 | 157 | | | |
| Loyal clients = 1% - 25% | Between Groups | 16713.847 | 4 | 4178.462 | 11.482 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 55680.843 | 153 | 363.927 | | |
| | Total | 72394.690 | 157 | | | |
| Loyal clients = 26% - 50% | Between Groups | 17685.566 | 4 | 4421.391 | 12.454 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 54319.168 | 153 | 355.027 | | |
| | Total | 72004.734 | 157 | | | |
| Existence of loyalty programs for clients | Between Groups | 26049.024 | 4 | 6512.256 | 34,814 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 28619.735 | 153 | 187.057 | | |
| | Total | 54668.759 | 157 | | | |

Source: processing of authors in the ANOVA program

Statistically, all F coefficients are positive and have high values (between 11.482 and 34.961) and, also, all significance thresholds are relevant ($p = 0.000$, therefore $p \leq 0.05$). Consequently, the results can be extrapolated to the organisational reality, which also leads us to the *confirmation of the validity of the main hypothesis*;

1.4.3 With regard to the development/improvement of professional training of its own human resources, the results presented in Table 3.a and Table 3.b. *confirm the first secondary hypothesis*. Note that, as a priority, the managers of tourism units are interested, possibly, in the development of their own skills, and not those of the subordinated human resources. A direct consequence of this fact is, among others, their high fluctuation. We also noted that many employers rely, primarily, on training at the workplace and/or on the integration (orientation) and improvement of subordinates in the IT&C field. As far as specialising in specialty areas is concerned, such as *communication skills, bases of hospitality, sales and/or negotiation techniques* etc., these are considered, at least 'traditionally', to be the 'prerogative' of the managers. Also correlated with the results of the *variance analysis, the first secondary hypothesis* is, therefore, **validated** (for each variable, F is between 19.513 and 31.272, and all significance thresholds p are also null).

Table 3.a: Relationship between the classification of the tourism unit and the form of professional development used (1)

| ANOVA | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|------|
| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Bazele ospitalitatii (sau cursuri similare) | Between Groups | 29124.399 | 4 | 7281.100 | 20.142 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 55306.873 | 153 | 361.483 | | |
| | Total | 84431.272 | 157 | | | |
| Abilitati de comunicare | Between Groups | 29579.891 | 4 | 7394.973 | 21.487 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 52656.647 | 153 | 344.161 | | |
| | Total | 82236.538 | 157 | | | |
| Leadership | Between Groups | 30559.636 | 4 | 7639.909 | 22.361 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 52274.168 | 153 | 341.661 | | |
| | Total | 82833.804 | 157 | | | |
| Teambuilding | Between Groups | 23620.353 | 4 | 5905.088 | 31.272 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 28890.920 | 153 | 188.830 | | |
| | Total | 52511.272 | 157 | | | |
| Informatica | Between Groups | 25764.576 | 4 | 6441.144 | 19.513 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 50503.861 | 153 | 330.091 | | |
| | Total | 76268.437 | 157 | | | |

Source: processing of authors in the ANOVA program

Table 3.b: Relationship between the classification of the tourism unit and the form of professional development used (2)

| ANOVA | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|------|
| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Tehnici de vânzare si / sau de negociere | Between Groups | 21054.304 | 4 | 5263.576 | 15.842 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 50835.930 | 153 | 332.261 | | |
| | Total | 71890.234 | 157 | | | |
| Limbi de circulatie internationale | Between Groups | 15468.933 | 4 | 3867.233 | 10.437 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 56690.257 | 153 | 370.525 | | |
| | Total | 72159.190 | 157 | | | |
| Cursuri de marketing online | Between Groups | 32285.726 | 4 | 8071.432 | 21.804 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 56638.426 | 153 | 370.186 | | |
| | Total | 88924.152 | 157 | | | |
| Cursuri de social media | Between Groups | 28902.476 | 4 | 7225.619 | 22.168 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 49869.321 | 153 | 325.943 | | |
| | Total | 78771.797 | 157 | | | |
| Alte cursuri | Between Groups | 33093.952 | 4 | 8273.488 | 22.143 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 57166.934 | 153 | 373.640 | | |
| | Total | 90260.886 | 157 | | | |

Source: processing of authors in the ANOVA program

With regard to the same issue, we consider that the existing situation related to organisational communication in the tourism units should not surprise anyone, especially in the context in which, even if they appear to be very interested in the image of their own organisation towards third parties, the managers do not perform any specialty audits, and they do not (or, rather, we think they do not wish to have) any clear guidance on the modalities in which they could create loyal clients. The related data are presented in Table 4.

Finally, it is obvious that, at the level of tourism units, the application of the principle '*it is good as it is*' proves its 'efficiency', while potential clients prefer to choose, by personal effort, their destination, acting as simple tourists...

Table 4: The relationship between the classification of tourism unit and the organisational communication audits performed in order to obtain customer loyalty in tourism units

| ANOVA | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|------|
| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| În cadrul organizației dumneavoastră se realizează audituri de comunicare organizațională? | Between Groups | 22882.089 | 4 | 5720.522 | 17.611 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 49698.171 | 153 | 324.825 | | |
| | Total | 72580.259 | 157 | | | |
| Imaginea organizației față de terți | Between Groups | 23916.219 | 4 | 5979.055 | 31.309 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 29218.642 | 153 | 190.972 | | |
| | Total | 53134.861 | 157 | | | |
| Relațiile cu clienții | Between Groups | 57536.044 | 4 | 16884.011 | 42.390 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 50940.791 | 153 | 398.306 | | |
| | Total | 128476.8 | 157 | | | |
| Crearea de clienți fideli | Between Groups | 24075.084 | 4 | 6018.771 | 17.011 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 54134.865 | 153 | 353.823 | | |
| | Total | 78209.949 | 157 | | | |
| Nu știu | Between Groups | 84157.087 | 4 | 8539.272 | 28.244 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 46258.489 | 153 | 302.343 | | |
| | Total | 130415.576 | 157 | | | |

Source: processing of authors in the ANOVA program

1.4.4 According to the concerns of those who should become clients of the tourism units in order to identify and choose their destination, we make the following clarifications:

a. most of the 2.478 respondents have declared they use, primarily, in order to choose their destination, the *Internet* and ask *friends and/or relatives* (the data are shown in Table 5):

Table 5: Situation of informational sources used before choosing the tourist destination

| Way of information | Number | Total percentage (100%) |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------|-------------------------|
| <i>Internet</i> | 2415 | 97.45 |
| <i>Leaflets from agencies</i> | 406 | 16.38 |
| <i>Tourist leaflets found in the postal box</i> | 16 | 0.65 |
| <i>Fairs and exhibitions</i> | 213 | 8.60 |
| <i>Information from friends/relatives</i> | 2265 | 91.40 |

Source: results of the crowdsourcing initiated by the authors

Processing in ANOVA has certified the conclusions regarding the use, by the beneficiaries of the units of tourist services, of the *Internet* and *friends or relatives*. The coefficients *F* and *p* also validate the **second secondary hypothesis** ($F=59.607$ and $p=0.000$; $F=51.893$ and $p=0.0071$). The data are shown in Table 6 and in Table 7.

Table 6: Situation of information sources used for documentation, before choosing the tourist destination - source: *Internet*

ANOVA

Internet

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|------|-------------|--------|------|
| Between Groups | 35012.051 | 1 | 35012.051 | 59.607 | .000 |
| Within Groups | 91630.987 | 2477 | 587.378 | | |
| Total | 126643.0 | 2478 | | | |

Source: results of data processing by authors in ANOVA program

Table 7: Situation of information sources used for documentation, before choosing the tourist destination - source: *friends or relatives*

ANOVA

Friends or relatives

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|------|-------------|--------|--------|
| Between Groups | 1053.570 | 1 | 1053.570 | 51.893 | .00171 |
| Within Groups | 86814.101 | 2477 | 556.501 | | |
| Total | 87867.671 | 2478 | | | |

Source: results of data processing by authors in ANOVA program

It is interesting to mention the usefulness of promotion by the tourism units of their own image through the *Internet* and its use by the clients as a personal source of information. The fact that the majority chooses its destination using this source reconfirms the low level of professionalism of organisational communication of tourism units;

b) As far as the level of customer confidence in the usefulness of the informational sources is concerned, degree reflected in the fidelity of information in relation to the current situation, the related data are presented in Table 8. Please note that this question was answered by 2411 people, respectively 97.3% of those who accessed the *crowdsourcing websites*:

Table 8: Perception on the degree of confidence in the usefulness of the consulted informational sources

| <i>Degree of confidence in the source</i> | <i>Number</i> | <i>Total percentage (100%)</i> |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>Completely</i> | 118 | 4.89 |
| <i>Pretty much: advertising is the soul of commerce</i> | 106 | 4.40 |
| <i>Pretty much: I have a complete picture</i> | 2097 | 86.98 |
| <i>Little: I do not trust</i> | 87 | 3.61 |
| <i>Not at all: I am interested to have a shelter</i> | 3 | 0.12 |
| TOTAL | 2411 | 100.00 |

Source: results of the crowdsourcing initiated by the authors

In this case also, the results of econometric processing have certified the conclusions regarding the **validation of the second secondary hypothesis** ($F=91.779$ and $p=0.000$), as from the data presented in Table 9.

Table 9: Situation of fidelity of used informational sources

ANOVA

Fidelity of information

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|------|-------------|--------|------|
| Between Groups | 33451.905 | 1 | 33451.905 | 91.779 | .000 |
| Within Groups | 56859.392 | 2410 | 364.483 | | |
| Total | 90311.297 | 2411 | | | |

Source: results of data processing by authors in ANOVA program

c) The appreciation of the real usefulness of the information provided to the clients of the tourism units is presented in Table 10 (2411 respondents). As it can be noted, almost 95% of the clients have an average confidence degree in the usefulness of the information provided by the units in the tourism and hospitality industry:

Table 10: Perception on the degree of usefulness of consulted informational sources

| <i>Degree of satisfaction with the usefulness of the information</i> | <i>Number</i> | <i>Total percentage (100%)</i> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>Completely</i> | 13 | 0.21 |
| <i>Pretty much</i> | 107 | 4.43 |
| <i>So-and-so (approximately)</i> | 2261 | 94.78 |
| <i>Little</i> | 23 | 0.48 |
| <i>Not at all: I am surprised how people can lie</i> | 7 | 0.10 |
| TOTAL | 2411 | 100.00 |

Source: results of the crowdsourcing initiated by the authors

The results of the processing in ANOVA, as evident from the data presented in Table 11, are likely to *validate*, again, the *second secondary hypothesis* ($F=27.079$ and $p=0.000$).

Table 11: Situation of satisfaction degree of travel services beneficiaries

ANOVA

Degree of satisfaction with the information obtained from the providers of travel services

| | sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig |
|----------------|----------------|------|-------------|--------|------|
| Between Groups | 7812.158 | 1 | 7812.158 | 27.079 | .000 |
| Within Groups | 45005.342 | 2410 | 288.496 | | |
| Total | 52817.500 | 2411 | | | |

Source: results of data processing by authors in ANOVA program

d) The general perception on the interest of tourism units in having a significant *feedback* from their own clients is unfavourable. Most people who used *crowdsourcing* say they are convinced that they have been simply 'interviewed' statistically. Most people who answered our questionnaire said they did not feel as being treated as clients, but rather as mere consumer 'tourists'. The data obtained are presented in Table 12.

Table 12: Perception of respondents on the potentiality of being treated as future loyal clients

| <i>Perception</i> | <i>Number</i> | <i>Total percentage (100%)</i> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>Completely</i> | 11 | 0.44 |
| <i>To a small extent; they only want to 'hook' us...</i> | 1971 | 79.54 |
| <i>I don't know the difference between client and tourist</i> | 61 | 2.46 |
| <i>No way: almost everywhere I have been treated with contempt</i> | 428 | 17.27 |
| <i>I don't know, so I'll pass</i> | 7 | 0.29 |
| TOTAL | 2478 | 100.00 |

Source: results of the crowdsourcing initiated by the authors

The results obtained (Table 13) certify, again, the *validity of the third secondary hypothesis* ($F=34.961$ and $p=0.000$).

Table 13: Situation of the perception on the interest to the client

ANOVA

Degree of perception on the interest to the clients

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|------|-------------|--------|------|
| Between Groups | 25222.253 | 1 | 6305.563 | 34.961 | .000 |
| Within Groups | 27595.247 | 2477 | 180.361 | | |
| Total | 52817.500 | 2478 | | | |

Source: results of data processing by authors in ANOVA program

CONCLUSIONS

Our study aimed at *outlining the way in which implementing crowdsourcing can contribute to the improvement of customer relationship management for tourism units*.

For this purpose, we used *crowdsourcing* and we created two specialty *websites* (<http://goo.gl/JUaLx> and <http://goo.gl/sgzjU>), by means of which 1408 tourism units and 2478 beneficiaries of their services have expressed their opinion on the quality and efficiency of organisational communication.

Through the econometric methodological tool kit used we managed to prove the following:

1. *Between the offer of the tourism units and the reality that the clients meet at the destination, there are major differences*. These are primarily due to the fact that the managers of the units in the tourism and hospitality industry conceive and realise organisational communication empirically, relying primarily on their own experience and intuition. This is likely to generate, finally, besides a defective customer relationships management, an extremely tough confrontation between *to be* and *to seem*, a confrontation between *services offer* and *thereality met and/or perceived* by the clients of the tourism units.

2. *The managers of tourism units do not adopt effective measures to improve/develop the training of subordinate human resources;*
3. *Given that the decisions of choosing the final travel destination are taken by the clients based on their own research and/or consulting friends and/or relatives and not on the efficiency of tourism units efforts, customer relationship management can be substantially improved.*

From the content of the information presented also result the *two proposals* that we formulate to the attention of the responsible decision makers in the field:

1. *Using, in order to get a true opinion of the tourism units' clients, the crowdsourcing as the main feedback form. By crowdsourcing, the managers of the profile units can get extremely useful informations in order to improve their own activity;*
2. *Creating a database (both at national level and at regional and/or local level) with the main tendencies of the clients in choosing the destinations and the criteria for substantiating their decisions. It is a new way of improving one's own activity. Once again, crowdsourcing has proved its usefulness in improving customer relationship management in the tourism and hospitality industry.*

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