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

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ABSTRACT

It has been demonstrated. Tourism can have an important contribution to the realisation of the gross domestic product[3] 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*

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[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 existentat 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 Authority[5]* states that, for example, in Costineşti 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 Branch[6]* 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

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[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 the*reality met and/or perceived* by the clients of the tourism units.

Thetwo *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 Vânzări	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 internationala	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 organizatiei dumneavoastra se realizeaza audituri de comunicare organizationala?	Between Groups	22882.089	4	5720.522	17.611	.000
	Within Groups	49698.171	153	324.825		
	Total	72580.259	157			
Imaginea organizatiei fata de terti	Between Groups	23916.219	4	5979.055	31.309	.000
	Within Groups	29218.642	153	190.972		
	Total	53134.861	157			
Relatiile cu clientii	Between Groups	67536.044	4	16884.011	42.390	.000
	Within Groups	60940.791	153	398.306		
	Total	128476.8	157			
Crearea de clienti fideli	Between Groups	24075.084	4	6018.771	17.011	.000
	Within Groups	54134.865	153	353.823		
	Total	78209.949	157			
Nu stiu	Between Groups	34157.087	4	8539.272	28.244	.000
	Within Groups	46258.489	153	302.343		
	Total	80415.576	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%)*
Internet	2415	97.45
Leaflets from agencies	406	16.38
Tourist leaflets found in the postal box	16	0.65
Fairs and exhibitions	213	8.60
Information from friends/relatives	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*
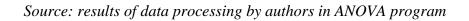
ANOVA

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

Degree of confidence in the source	*Number*	*Total percentage (100%)*
Completely	118	4.89
Pretty much: advertising is the soul of commerce	106	4.40
Pretty much: I have a complete picture	2097	86.98
Little: I do not trust	87	3.61
Not at all: I am interested to have a shelter	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

Degree of satisfaction with the usefulness of the information	*Number*	*Total percentage (100%)*
Completely	13	0.21
Pretty much	107	4.43
So-and-so (approximately)	2261	94.78
Little	23	0.48
Not at all: I am surprised how people can lie	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

Perception	Number	Total percentage (100%)
Completely	11	0.44
To a small extent; they only want to 'hook' us…	1971	79.54
I don't know the difference between client and tourist	61	2.46
No way: almost everywhere I have been treated with contempt	428	17.27
I don't know, so I'll pass	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 the *reality 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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