

STUDY ON THE STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF KNOWLEDGE USEFULNESS AND NECESSITY CONCERNING TOURISTS' PROTECTION

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Abstract

The subject concerning the protection of the consumers' rights and interests is of high concern nowadays, because the market economy, by its mechanisms and by the principles it promotes is permanently associated with the notion of correctness.

Considering the consumer's needs, the notion of correctness from the market economy has in view the assurance of great informative possibilities, of choosing and buying the products at convenient prices, with a corresponding quality. The market should be transparent, the information should circulate freely, and the prices should be known. Consequently, the competition will be efficient, loyal, and beneficial for the consumer.

Taking into account that one fundamental right of the consumer is to be informed and educated, we intend to realize a study on the identification and solving of the problems met by the students from the departments of Tourism Geography and Environmental Geography, concerning the usefulness and the necessity of a knowledge regarding the protection of tourism consumers. In correlation with this objective, we consider that the academic environment in which the students develop themselves represents an opportunity in what concerns sending and accumulating information from different fields, to efficiently contribute to the formation of a citizen who is aware of his rights as a consumer.

Keywords: consumers' protection, tourism, problem identification, students

JEL Classification: C01, C12, D18

Introduction

After joining the European Union, the development of the protection of the consumers' rights and interests has started in Romania. These consumer protection's movements constitute a true force which has started to act also in our country.

As a specialised institution there is The Consumers Protection Office (OPC) acting in this field. At first they did not have the autonomy, being a component of the organism named The National Commission for Standards, Metrology, and Quality.

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The Governmental Emergency Ordinance no 2/2001 establishes the rule of setting a National Authority for the Consumers Protection (ANPC) as an organism specialised in the central public administration, with juridical personality (artificial person), where the denomination of OPC is meant to be transformed in ANPC.

In what concerns the efforts made for the consumers' education, they practically do not exist. The consumers are hardly able to exercise this right to protection, especially for tourism products and services, due to their intangibility, their difficulty to appreciate quality, the high degree of subjectivism registered among the tourism consuming clients, but also because a reflex for the demand has not yet been formed, as, for example, for signing a selling contract with tourism agencies for the packages of tourist services.

The consumers' opportunity to have access to a multitude of tourist offers implies that not only the liberty of choice of the tourism products and services (the consumers choose what they like and what they desire), but also the responsibility to demand that what they receive is according to their rightful interests. Thus, the consumers' fundamental rights are expressed, supported by law. The same, the tourism economic agents must adapt their products and services, and offer them as the consumers require them.

For the first time in Romania, the consumers' fundamental rights were established in article 3 of the Governmental Ordinance no 21/1992 regarding the consumers' protection, admitting five of their fundamental rights. Afterwards, they were maintained by the Law no 296/2004 concerning the Code of Consumption, two more rights being added, regarding more the economic interests, which is explained by the impetuous development of the legislation in this field.

The foreign specialty literature emphasises the fact that the notion of protection of the consumers' rights and interests is complex, and often ambiguously defined.

To respect consumers' rights is one of European policies, and it is very strict: ignoring the consumers' rights leads to big fines from the inspection organisms, and also to the loss of the market share; and the consequences are predictable.

1. Recent research in the field of protection of the consumers' rights and interests

In what concerns the aspect of protection of the consumers' rights and interests, a series of studies and research works have been realised along the time.

Chebat, et al. (2005) tried to determine the degree of their dissatisfaction, using the Lazarus model in a study dedicated to the consumers. The study demonstrated that there was a strong connection between the level of education of the individual and the consumption of products and services. In other words, the consumers can express their feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction both according to their expectations, and according to the information they have concerning the protection of their rights.

The main instruments in the education and information of the individuals as consumers are on one hand the academic environment, and on the other hand the economic agents. According to Glazer, et al. (2008) they need to have an ethical behaviour. In a study realized in 2008, they demonstrate that discrimination represents a factor with a major influence over the consumer. Taking into account several factors, the authors also develop a mathematical model based on a series of ethical values.

Comparing the two studies, we can say that there is a relationship of direct proportion manifested by an improper ethical behaviour, with a powerful influence – positive or negative – over the consumer.

Eisingerich and Bell (2007) realized a complex study in the financial services for the determination of the consumers' level of education. The authors are proposing a model based on two important characteristics: the quality of the products and services, and the clients' trust. The results obtained proved the fact that this model could be an opportunity for the development of a prosperous business environment. The impact of the implementation of this model suggests that the client's education influences the relationship quality – trust.

To identify the students' level of information, we realized a study regarding the perception of the usefulness and necessity of a knowledge concerning the protection of tourism consumers. We intended especially to find out if the students have the general knowledge about the protection of consumers' rights and interests, achieved both by following a training specific to this field, and by the organization of debates on this issue. The results obtained will demonstrate if the education is an important instrument in the support of the information of the individuals in what concerns their rights as consumers of tourism products and services.

However, we mention the fact that further fundamental scientific research, and especially specific approaches, applicable to a large scale, were not realised in such a manner.

2. Research on the identification and solving of the problems met by students regarding their perception of the usefulness and necessity of a knowledge concerning tourism consumers' protection

2.1 Objectives and method

The research made for the realization of this study has *the main purpose to identify and solve the problems met by students concerning the usefulness and necessity of a knowledge concerning tourism consumers' protection.*

The objectives of the research with the purpose mentioned above are as follow:

- O.1.* To obtain the necessary data by research work using as a collecting data instrument the questionnaire applied to the third year students from the departments of Tourism Geography and Environmental Geography, Faculty of Geography and Geology.
- O.2.* The comparative analysis of the results obtained from the research.
- O.3.* Identification of the problems met by students.

The working hypotheses concerning the realization of the present research are:

- H.1.* The students are interested to be taught courses on issues concerning the protection of consumers' rights during their academic studies.
- H.2.* The students are not well informed on the notions of consumers' protection in tourism.

H.3. In the curricula are not included teaching subjects concerning „the protection of consumers' rights and interests in tourism”.

2.2 Research Methodology

The research *methods used* were various and in agreement with the objective established. These methods are:

- the documented study with two aspects: the bibliographical documentation from internal sources, and the bibliographical documentation from external sources;
- the theoretical analysis;
- the observation;
- the exploratory study involving obtaining data with the help of the inquiry using as a collecting data instrument the questionnaire applied to the third year students from the departments of Tourism Geography and Environmental Geography, Faculty of Geography and Geology.
- the information analysis and synthesis using the statistical program SPSS 13.0. The theoretical documentation intended to identify and to review *the knowledge stage* concerning the protection of consumers in tourism.

The *research area* is formed of two departments from the Faculty of Geography and Geology, University „Al. I. Cuza” of Iași.

The target group is formed of the total number of the third year students from the departments of Tourism Geography and Environmental Geography, Faculty of Geography and Geology.

The *resulted target group* is made of:

- a target group made of 74 students from the department of Environmental Geography, representing the total population present during the evaluation process in the first semester of the school year 2009-2010;
- a target group made of 175 students from the department of Tourism Geography, representing the total population present during the evaluation process in the first semester of the school year 2009-2010. (Table no. 1)

Table no. 1: Research area - number of the students

Department	The resulted target group
Environmental Geography	74
Tourism Geography	175

By this research we intended to identify the problems met by the students regarding the usefulness and necessity of a knowledge concerning protection of tourism consumers, and eventually finding out solutions to solve them.

The statistical analysis was realized according to the methods recommended in the foreign and Romanian literature.

Considerations concerning the elaboration of the questionnaire. The elaboration of the questionnaire was realized after a series of principles referring to the dimension of the questionnaire, editing and order of the questions. The questions of the questionnaire intended:

- the purpose and the general objectives of the research;
- the administration of the questionnaire;
- the method of data collecting;
- the methods of statistical processing;
- the observation unit.

For the realization of the *questionnaire inquiry* we used the questionnaire with ramifications applied to the third year students from the departments of Tourism Geography and Environmental Geography, Faculty of Geography and Geology. The questionnaire is mainly made of closed questions, and open questions. The closed questions were with multiple answers, and with dichotomy answers.

2.3 The results obtained

For the presentation of the results obtained from the research we used the variable V_i , which symbolises the answer variables at the questions from the questionnaire addressed to the third year students from the departments of Tourism Geography and Environmental Geography, Faculty of Geography and Geology, where $i \in [1, n]$.

Analysing the significance offered by the students from the two departments regarding the notion of protection of the rights and interests of the tourism consumers, we can notice that the significant differences appear concerning V2 (Table no. 2): the students from the department of Tourism Geography have a higher ability to understand the protection of the rights and interests of the tourism consumers through the protection of the economic interests (59.4%), as compared to the students from the department of Environmental Geography, where the proportion is lower (45.9%). Even if the difference is not very significant, it is an obvious conclusion if we take into account the fact that the curriculum of the students from the department of Tourism Geography includes subjects directly or indirectly linked to the economic field. The same, there are differences in what concerns V6: 34.3% of the students from the department of Tourism Geography understands that some specific measures are necessary to be taken for the protection of the rights and interests of the consumers, as compared to only 16.2% of the students from the department of Environmental Geography. However, the percentages are low, and they clearly show that there is a shallower perception from their part, without a deeper approach of the problems (for example, of the specific measures related strictly to the protection of the rights and interests of the tourism consumers). Surprising are the percentages from V4 – measures for the obtaining of the compensations – which can be generated also by a poor knowledge of the legislation.

Table no. 2: Distribution on departments of the target group of students according to the significance given to the protection of the rights and interests of the tourism consumers - %

Variants of answers	Department											
	Environmental Geography						Tourism Geography					
	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	17,6	45,9	91,9	10,8	18,9	16,2	18,3	59,4	92,0	10,3	23,4	34,3
No	82,4	54,1	8,1	89,2	81,1	83,8	81,7	40,6	8,0	89,7	76,6	65,7

Where:

V1 - physical protection of the tourist

V2 - protection of the economic interests of tourism consumers

V3 - standards for the security and quality of the packages of tourist services

V4 - measures permitting the consumers to obtain compensations

V5 - education and information programs

V6 - measures concerning specific fields (food, water and first aid points)

In what concerns the importance ascribed to some aspects regarding the consumers' protection, explained by the hierarchy of some demands of different nature (V1-V5 of table no. 3), we can easily notice that there is a certain convergence of opinions for each variable, without significant differences among the levels of appreciation of the students of the two Departments in what concerns the importance mentioned. It is good, though, that the percentages noticed in both departments at V4 – the individuals should be educated in their quality of consumers of tourist products and services (important and very important are 73% in the department of Environmental Geography, and 79.4% in the department of Tourism Geography).

Table no. 3: Distribution on departments of the target group of students according to the significance given to the protection of the tourism consumers (classification from 1- not important at all, to 5 – very important) - %

Degree of importance	Department									
	Environmental Geography					Tourism Geography				
	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5
1	29,7	5,4	51,4	-	12,2	22,3	11,4	48,6	4,6	13,1
2	29,7	10,8	24,3	9,5	25,7	32,6	14,9	24,6	8,0	20,6
3	17,6	21,6	10,8	17,6	33,8	22,3	24,6	10,9	8,0	34,3
4	12,2	44,6	6,8	20,3	17,6	14,3	32,0	10,3	25,1	17,7
5	10,8	17,6	6,8	52,7	10,8	8,6	17,1	5,7	54,3	14,3

Where:

V1 - the legislation should protect the interests of consumers of tourism products and services

V2 - the tourism companies should adapt the goods and services offered to the consumer's requirements

V3 - tourism products and services offered by tourism companies should not affect the consumer's life, health, or security

V4 - the individuals should be educated as consumers of tourism products and services

V5 - the price level should be in agreement with the quality level of tourism products and services consumed.

In general, there are no significant differences among the opinions of the students from the two departments (table no. 4, the answers "yes" and "no" at the variables V1-V6 explained below) regarding what they understand by fundamental rights of the consumers of tourist products and services; however, there is an additional group of students from the department of Tourism Geography who tend to identify the rights defined by V1-V6. Analysing the distribution of the answers, a consensus is normal, as for example in the case V2, 86.5% of the students from the Environmental Geography and 96% of the students from the Tourism Geography agreed that defining the fundamental rights of the consumers of tourist products and services involved a complete, correct and precise information on the main characteristics of the tourist products and services; there is also a consensus which does not seem as natural, both the students from the department of Environmental Geography (96%) and the students from the Tourism Geography (84.6%) disagreed that defining the fundamental rights of the consumers of tourist products and services would also involve „the right of the citizens to organize in associations of consumers of tourist products and services with the purpose to defend their rights and interests”.

Table no. 4: Distribution on departments of the target group of students according to the definition of the fundamental rights of the consumers of tourism products and services - %

Variants of answers	Department											
	Environmental Geography						Tourism Geography					
	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	16,2	86,5	24,3	77,0	4,1	36,5	14,9	96,0	29,7	81,7	15,4	49,1
No	83,8	13,5	75,7	23,0	95,9	63,5	85,1	4,0	70,3	18,3	84,6	50,9

Where:

V1 – the right to be protected against the risk of purchasing a product or a tourist service

V2 – the right to be informed completely, correctly and precisely on the main characteristics of the products and tourist services

V3 – the right to have unlimited access to a diverse set of quality tourism products and services

V4 – the right to be compensated in a real and corresponding manner for the damages generated by the lower quality of the tourism products and services

V5 – the right to organize in associations of consumers of tourism products and services, with the purpose to defend their rights and interests

V6 – the right to refuse to sign contracts of selling packages of tourist services containing abusive clauses, according to the provisions of the legislation in force

In what concerns the tourism agency, this has the obligation to provide the tourists in writing, before signing the contract, a series of information, graded in our research with variables from 1 to 12. The subjects were asked to check the usefulness of each variable (table no. 5). The answers could identify the problems appeared due to the ignorance of some information. A first observation is that, taking into account the options they expressed, in general the students agree to the importance that must be given to the providing of the information, the percentages obtained after the addition of “useful + very useful” being over 80%. There is a single exception, the variable V10, the minimum number of persons necessary for the realization of the program, where the percentage after addition is under 50%. Because it is a problem conditioning the efficient development of the tourist activity, it will be necessary to be clarified in the process of students' formation. For this type of information there are no significant differences among departments.

Table no. 5: Distribution on departments of the target group of students according to their opinions concerning the tourism agency obligation to provide the tourists written information V1 to V12 - %

Department	Variable	Very useful	Useful	Neutral	Little useful	Useless
Environmental Geography	V1	83,8	14,9	-	1,4	-
	V2	55,4	40,5	4,1	-	-
	V3	47,3	48,6	4,1	-	-
	V4	61,6	35,6	1,4	1,4	-
	V5	45,2	43,8	8,2	2,7	-
	V6	54,1	33,8	12,2	-	-
	V7	37,8	40,5	17,6	4,1	-
	V8	44,4	37,5	16,7	1,4	-
	V9	21,6	55,4	16,2	6,8	-
	V10	4,1	28,4	51,4	10,8	5,4
	V11	44,6	45,9	8,1	1,4	-
	V12	18,9	54,1	21,6	5,4	-
Tourism Geography	V1	90,9	8,6	0,6	-	-
	V2	54,0	43,7	1,7	-	0,6
	V3	60,0	36,0	2,9	1,1	-
	V4	60,3	36,8	2,9	-	-
	V5	45,1	45,7	7,5	1,7	-
	V6	46,8	41,0	11,0	1,2	-

	V7	39,7	40,8	13,8	4,6	1,1
	V8	42,8	50,3	5,8	1,2	-
	V9	32,0	57,7	8,6	1,7	-
	V10	4,0	39,4	46,9	8,0	1,7
	V11	61,1	31,4	5,7	1,7	-
	V12	38,3	42,3	16,0	2,9	0,6

Where:

V1 - the locality of destination

V2 - the route

V3 - the means of transportation used, its/their characteristics and category

V4 - the type of accommodation units, their addresses and classification categories

V5 - the food services offered and the classification category of food units

V6 - duration of the program, indicating the arrival and the departure dates

V7 - general information concerning the passports and the visas

V8 - general information concerning the health insurance necessary for the trip and for the stay

V9 - the advance of money, if necessary, as well as the deadline for the rest of the payment.

V10 - the minimum number of persons necessary for the realisation of the program

V11 - the deadline for informing the tourist, in case of cancellation of the tourist travel

V12 - duration for which the tourist offer is operating.

The subjects were asked to check their preferences for one of the three variables presented in table no. 6 in the case when, after starting a tourist travel, the organizing tourism agency is not able to fulfill one of the contractual clauses.

The answers distribution suggests a more pragmatic approach of the students from the department of Tourism Geography, who have a positive option in a higher proportion for the offering of alternatives to the client (37.7% as compared to 21.7%), for the restitution of the sums corresponding with the difference of services promised but not assured (14.8% as compared to 11.6%), but who are more reluctant in assuring the transport back and compensating of the client (47.5% as compared to 66.7%). In other words, their option is to persuade the clients not to give up the trip they ordered. However, we cannot ignore the low percentages for V1 and V2, and in some way for V3 too (or, here, not at the level of the expectations); few students agreed to measures for the compensation of the prejudice caused to the client, no matter in what form it would be realized. It seems that here, the students identified themselves more with the position of the operator who needs "to pay" than with the position of the client who must be compensated.

Table no. 6: Distribution on departments of the target group of students according to their opinions concerning their interest for some of the contractual clauses -%

	Department	
	Environmental Geography	Tourism Geography
V1	21,7	37,7
V2	11,6	14,8
V3	66,7	47,5

Where:

V1 - to offer variables to the tourist, without raising the price

V2 - to give back the sums of money representing the difference between the services

V3 - to assure the transportation back of the tourist and to pay him back

In what concerns the answers for some reactions of the students from their position of clients (table no. 7), there are differences between the two departments for variable V1, information concerning how to use the tourist equipment: 65.7% of Tourism Geography department students considers that such an information is useful, as compared to 41.9% of the students from the department of Environmental Geography. A slight difference is maintained (also in favour of the department of Tourism Geography), and for variable V3, the refuse to increase the price: 48% as compared to 41.9%. As a general idea, we can state that, again, a sufficiently high percentage of the students, from 34% to 58%, are not interested in defending their rights from their position of consumers (the option NO).

Table no. 7: Distribution on departments of the target group of students according to their opinions concerning their affirmation or negation as clients of the variables V1 – V3 - %

Answer options	Department					
	Environmental Geography			Tourism Geography		
	V1	V2	V3	V1	V2	V3
Yes	41,9	55,4	41,9	65,7	51,4	48,0
No	58,1	44,6	58,1	34,3	48,6	52,0

Where:

V1 – the client should be informed on the use of the tourist equipment, in order to avoid its improper use, or to avoid an accident

V2 – the clients should inform immediately in writing both the service provider, and the tourism agency from which they purchased the package of tourist services, about the deficiencies noticed on the spot concerning the package of services contracted

V3 – the client should refuse to pay more than the price established in the beginning for the services included in the program.

The student subjects were asked if „during their academic studies” were taught full or partial courses on the protection of consumers’ rights and interests, or if they participated in other training courses in this field of, or if they participated in other events, workshops regarding the protection of consumers’ rights and interests, or if they studied a certain related bibliography (Table no. 8). There cannot be made any differentiation between the two departments by analysing the students’ choices, because they were similar. However, we can emphasise the fact that the knowledge about the consumers’ rights and protection depends on the academic educational process developed through courses and seminars (however, a small percentage, 40% in both departments, do not consider they would have been taught such a thing); very few students participated in the formation courses or in other related events. The bibliographical references remained an important source for a higher number of students. However, it is obvious that, if we analyse only the NO option, a high percentage of students were not provided information on the consumers’ rights and protection in a manner helping them to approach the subject deeper.

Table no. 8: Distribution on departments of the target group of students according to their opinions concerning the affirmation or negation for the variables V1 – V4 - %

Answer options	Department							
	Environmental Geography				Tourism Geography			
	V1	V2	V3	V4	V1	V2	V3	V4
Yes	59,5	12,2	5,4	31,1	60,0	14,3	9,7	34,9
No	40,5	87,8	94,6	68,9	40,0	85,7	90,3	65,1

Where:

V1 - during the academic studies, you were taught full or partial courses on the protection of consumers’ rights and interests

V2 - during the academic studies, you participated in other training courses in the field of protection of consumers’ rights and interests

V3 - during the academic studies, you participated in other events, workshops regarding the protection of consumers’ rights and interests

V4 - during the academic studies, you studied a certain bibliography in the field of the protection of consumers’ rights and interests

The total agreement „manifested for the necessity to be taught courses on the protection of tourism consumers’ rights” was expressed by 48.6% of the subjects from the department of Environmental Geography, and 56.3% of the subjects from the department of Tourism Geography (Table no.9).

Table no. 9: Distribution on departments of the target group of students according to their interest in being taught courses on protection of the rights of tourism consumers
- % -

Agreement/Disagreement	Department	
	Environmental Geography	Tourism Geography
Total disagreement	-	0,6
Partial disagreement	-	1,1
Neutral	16,2	4,6
Partial agreement	35,1	37,4
Total agreement	48,6	56,3

2.4 Testing the hypotheses

In order to test the hypotheses *H.1.*, *H.2.*, and *H.3.*, we analysed the results obtained after applying the One-Way ANOVA test (Analysis of Variance).

Hypothesis *H.1.* "The students are interested to be taught courses on issues concerning the protection of consumers' rights during their academic studies" was verified with the One-Way ANOVA test. The results of the test are presented in table no. 10.

Table no. 10: Test output for One-Way ANOVA – Hypothesis H.1

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.210	1	1.210	2.409	0.122
Within Groups	123.624	246	.503		
Total	124.835	247			

As the value Sig. = 0.122 is higher than the value 0.05 (5%), consequently the hypothesis *H.1.* is accepted. In other words, the two categories of subjects are interested to be taught courses regarding the protection of consumers' rights during their academic studies. This is also confirmed by the values attached to the table no. 9.

Hypothesis *H.2.* "The students are not well informed on the protection of tourism consumers" was verified with the One-Way ANOVA test (table no. 11).

Table no. 11: Test output for One-Way ANOVA – Hypothesis H.2

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
V1	Between Groups	0,002	1	0,002	0,006	0,937
	Within Groups	59,838	247	0,242		
	Total	59,839	248			
V2	Between Groups	0,023	1	0,023	0,197	0,657
	Within Groups	29,334	247	0,119		
	Total	29,357	248			

V3	Between Groups	0,097	1	0,097	1,247	0,265
	Within Groups	19,132	247	0,077		
	Total	19,229	248			
V4	Between Groups	0,074	1	0,074	0,330	0,566
	Within Groups	55,588	247	0,225		
	Total	55,663	248			

As the values Sig. = 0.937 for V1, Sig. = 0.657 for V2, Sig. = 0.265 for V3, and Sig. = 0.566 for V4 are higher than the value 0.05 (5%), consequently the hypothesis H.2. is accepted.

Where:

V1 - during the academic studies, you were taught full or partial courses on protection of consumers' rights and interests

V2 - during the academic studies, you participated in other training courses in the field of protection of consumers' rights and interests

V3 - during the academic studies, you participated in other events, workshops regarding the protection of consumers' rights and interests

V4 - during the academic studies, you studied a certain bibliography in the field of protection of consumers' rights and interests

The results obtained by testing Hypothesis H2 are in agreement with the results obtained by testing the Hypothesis H1. The students manifest their interest in being taught courses concerning the protection of consumers' rights and interests, which is in direct connection with one of the fundamental rights of the consumers' protection, i.e. to be educated.

Hypothesis H.3. "In the curricula are not included subjects concerning the study of "the protection of rights and interests of tourism consumers" was verified with the One-Way ANOVA test (Table no. 12).

Table no. 12: Test output for One-Way ANOVA – Hypothesis H.3

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
V1	Between Groups	0,003	1	0,003	0,018	0,893
	Within Groups	36,865	247	0,149		
	Total	36,867	248			
V2	Between Groups	0,945	1	0,945	3,855	0,051
	Within Groups	60,573	247	0,245		
	Total	61,518	248			
V3	Between Groups	0,000	1	0,000	0,001	0,977
	Within Groups	18,394	247	0,074		
	Total	18,394	248			

V4	Between Groups	0,001	1	0,001	0,015	0,902
	Within Groups	23,284	247	0,094		
	Total	23,285	248			
V5	Between Groups	0,106	1	0,106	0,611	0,435
	Within Groups	42,746	247	0,173		
	Total	42,851	248			
V6	Between Groups	1,698	1	1,698	8,476	0,004
	Within Groups	49,483	247	0,200		
	Total	51,181	248			

As the values Sig. = 0.893 for V1, Sig. = 0.051 for V2, Sig. = 0.977 for V3, Sig. = 0.902 for V5, and Sig. = 0.435 for V5 are higher than the value 0.05 (5%), consequently the hypothesis H.3. is accepted.

For the variable V6, the value of Sig. = 0.004 is lower than the value 0.05 (5%), consequently the hypothesis is rejected. This result is also explained by the fact that the lack of information registered for the two categories of subjects determines them to mistake the notion of "protection of consumers' rights and interests" with "measures concerning specific fields (food, water, and first aid points)".

Where:

V1 - physical protection of tourists

V2 - protection of the economic interests of tourism consumers

V3 - standards for the security and quality of the packages of tourist services

V4 - measures permitting the consumers to obtain compensations

V5 - education and information programs

V6 - measures concerning specific fields (food, water and first aid points)

Conclusions

From the analysis of the results obtained we can identify the most important orientations and directions of action to consider for solving the problems met by students regarding the usefulness and necessity of a knowledge concerning the protection of tourism consumers.

A first conclusion useful for this research refers to the students' agreement concerning the necessity to educate any person who becomes in several situations a consumer of tourist products and services (73% of the students from the department of Environmental Geography, and 79.4% from the department of Tourism Geography expressed this agreement according with the information from Table no. 2). Not as good are the percentages of the students who understand that for the protection of the consumers' rights and interests it is necessary to take some specific measures (34.3% of the students from the department of Tourism Geography, and 16.2% of the students from the department of Environmental Geography, according to the information from Table no. 2). Meanwhile, this

result can be taken into account in the future orientation of the students' educational process.

Another interesting conclusion refers to the students' position toward some compensating measures, reimbursing the clients, or offering them other alternatives when there are problems after closing the contract (V4 from the Table no. 2 and Table no. 6). In fact, it is about their opinion as service providers. The percentage of students who agree to the variables that had been mentioned is low, showing certain reluctance in the application of corrective measures for the consumers. Again, the educational process can interfere successfully to correct this attitude. If any doubt had existed in what concerned the result, this would have been confirmed by the answers from Table no. 7, where an important percentage of students, this time as clients, do not seem to be aware of certain obligations which service providers should have concerning their clients.

After testing the hypotheses with the application of the One-Way ANOVA test the results confirm the fact that the students were interested to be taught courses on the protection of consumers' rights during their academic studies. The conclusion is more surprising as it not contradicts one fundamental right of the consumers, the right to be informed and educated. However, the research shows that, on one hand, the students consider that they have sufficient knowledge concerning the consumer's protection (we take into account the answers presented in tables 6 and 7), and on the other hand, they mistake the notions of protection of consumers' rights, and the specific measures which need to be taken in specific practicable cases.

In conclusion, we can say that this work has the purpose of a conceptual analysis, and of research structuring by the specific study over the identification of the problems met by the students in what concerns the usefulness and necessity of a knowledge regarding the protection of tourism consumers.

This work could not take into account all the issues; however, by bringing some theoretical and practicable new ideas, it leads to new directions of analysis and scientific research.

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