

POTENTIAL INTERPRETATIONS OF THE ECOLOGICAL BEHAVIOUR IN TOURISM

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Abstract

The ecological behaviour of the tourists is an increasingly important topic worldwide. The purpose of this paper is to thoroughly explore the ecological behaviour of tourists during their holidays and the consequences of it. We currently notice a barrier between the classic and modern tourism services. It was necessary to analyse the ecological behaviour of the tourists because, on one hand, Romania has got such a tremendous natural and cultural potential, which should be preserved and transferred from one generation to another, and on the other hand, because the methods of transferring ecological behaviour knowledge are so scarce. The novelty of the research consists in identifying the potential consequences of the level of tourists' education and information on their ecological behaviour. The findings of our survey reveal that the Romanian tourism has followed the right path as concerns ecology, given that people as both citizens and tourists have been increasingly concerned about environmental issues.

Keywords: tourist's behaviour, tourist, ecological process, green tourism

JEL Classification: D03, M10, O10

Introduction

“Tourism happens in unlikely places” (Ramsey, 2010). So why not try to see the unseen and go forward in exploring each corner of the world? A tourist has got multiple choices at the present: he or she can either go to the same place or choose another destination. To understand the tourist's behaviour and to carry out a profitable tourist activity, we ought to take a look at the parties involved in these processes: who they are, how they interact etc.

The sale/purchase concepts used in tourism should be introduced gradually in the analysis. This process works as follows in tourism: only competitive tour operators can survive on a highly competitive international and even regional market. When a potential customer of the tourism services decides to go on holiday, all the parties involved in the sales process (travel agents, airlines, accommodation facilities, food and beverage suppliers etc) find themselves in a race against time. In these circumstances, a tourism agent must be able to

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impress and educate the general public in order to be among the best agents. The colour green has acquired a new meaning since the early 20th century. Years before "Going Green" first became a familiar phrase, the colour green actively supported the eco-friendly way of living. "Green" means something natural, increased awareness and sensitivity to the impact on choosing one's lifestyle.

The concept of being "green" touched the spirits and lifestyles of those who sought to live a "natural" life. Thus, people started travelling to less known, less accessible or endangered places, while being more open to learn about life values. The year 2000 brought a significant shift in how people understood these connections, whereas a genuine green wave of awareness has been developing since 2006, with the growth of global awareness. Since then, the concept of "green" has evolved from a modern concept towards responsibility. Green has spread more and more, from products and packaging to attitudes and actions.

People have slowly become aware and have accepted that each and every individual had an impact on the world. Green has nowadays soaked into the hearts and minds of people from all countries and cultures. The need to do things right has become a main objective worldwide.

This is especially true within the global Travel & Tourism (T&T) community, which has been acknowledging for years the importance of trading lightly across the world's array of destinations, leaving only footprints. The dramatic growth of the T&T field has however caused a clash of colours. As hundreds of millions of travellers cross borders every year, the temptation for increased revenues, generated from visitors receipts, can lead to some development decisions, which make the amounts of natural green decrease. The number of green tourism campaigns is nevertheless increasing, some of them only encouraging the green attitude, but finally they all have an impact on the brand and trustworthiness of this field.

1. Entities Operating in Tourism

Today, many successful tourism companies have reached competitive levels by developing strategies of how to develop close relationships with the clients, ways to motivate and determine the employees' productivity and, of course, the undeniable desire to excel (Tigu, 2008).

The economic agents in charge of respecting and developing the strategies above are grouped in specific organizations supplying tourism services, such as accommodation, food and beverage, transportation, entertainment, spa, and so on. As in any simple equation on the tourist market, there is a supply and a demand which practically are the equivalents of the tourist and the travel agent (tour operators or other organizations).

Tourism is a very complex industry (Tigu, 2008) and for this reason alone it would be pointless to mention further sales processes without presenting the main agents.

Travel agencies can be defined as organisations from which a person can purchase a tourism package and/or gather information regarding an activity with specific tourism features (ask for information on how to book an airplane ticket, what accommodation options are available for a certain area etc.). From general to particular, the idea of a "travel

agency” is defined even more precisely by considering several sub-categories, as presented in figure no. 1.

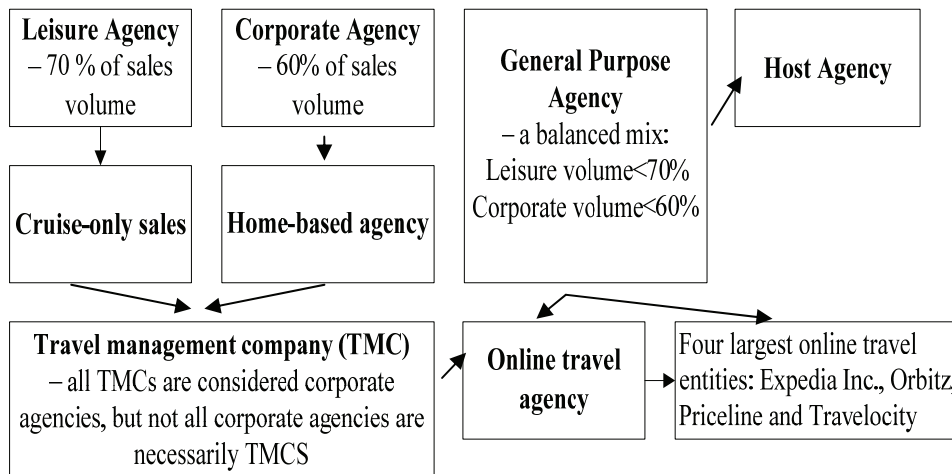


Figure no. 1: Travel agency categories

Source: Quinby, 2008

The PhoCusWright survey prepared by Douglas Quinby follows the evolution of the online travel industry since 1998 by analyzing the “consumer shopping trends in the North American, European and Asia Pacific markets” (Quinby, 2008), presenting some standard points and definitions, mainly in order to avoid confusions. Searching to establish certain common points, we have noticed that travel agencies can be classified as follows, depending on the specific activity they carry out:

- Agents that provide direct tourism services;
- Intermediate agents that focus on promoting and merchandising tourism packages.

According to the indications supplied by the World Tourism Organization, the type of agent can be used to underline the difference between the many types of travel agents.

It is important to periodically analyse the link between the travel agent and the tourist to see whether the employees of the travel agencies have developed the skills necessary for maximizing the outcomes.

Each communication situation occurs through a channel, a message and the parties involved in sending and receiving the message. In tourism activities, the communication situation is made possible by following the distribution chains as presented in figure no. 2.

As indicated in figure no. 2, there are five relationships worth mentioning. They are generally determined by certain specific factors, such as the levels of information and education of the parties, financial aspects, the end consumers’ requirements and how they are satisfied, trust issues, and customer care. The indirect position involves the presence of an intermediate player that is often represented by a tour operator, by travel agencies, mixed agencies (offering tour operator services and direct sale of tourism packages). The

first level, however, describes the case when the tourist organises by itself a whole tourism package with no help from a specialized entity.

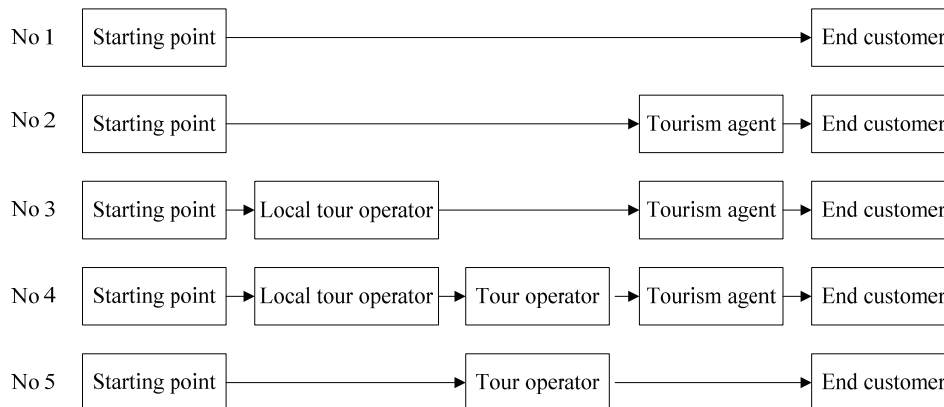


Figure no. 2: Distribution chains used in tourism

Source: Lumsdon, 1997

Based on which principle should a travel agency begin to set up its ecological strategy? What is the answer to the question “what do we want?” in the case of a travel agent? In this circumstance, we deem that a travel agency should “first decide what it should and want to sell” (Vellas and Bécherel, 1999), and a travel agent should “be business-oriented and enjoy selling tourist products and services” (Vellas and Bécherel, 1999).

The increase in the number of tourism movements is just a simple indicator that people all around the world seem more and more eager to travel, to be well informed, and benefit from high quality services all the time. Thus, there is an increased need for experienced travel agents as more people travel for business and pleasure, and the fact is that tourists also change, forcing therefore the travel agents to improve their skills and to be one step ahead of their customers.

A potential customer for tourism services should be very well informed and understand exactly what he or she wants and what possibilities are available for them or they should face serious problems in deciding upon the combination that suits them best. Keeping this picture in mind, a tourist will always see the “package as an experience available at a price” (Vellas and Bécherel, 1999) and the travel agent will always have the duty to provide the best price-quality combination, since:

- He knows when a potential customer is ready to buy;
- He knows how to use the information received from the client and how to ask the right questions;
- He suggests the appropriate products;
- He understands the principle of customer “qualification” (Stănciulescu and Marin-Pantelescu, 2009).

2. To Be an Ecological Tourist or an Ecological Client?

Tourism can be defined as an expression of the human behaviour, because “the individual is the main topic of tourism and this cannot be explained unless we understand the human nature” (Stănciulescu and Marin-Pantelescu, 2009). Knowing the psychological side of the human way of being and knowing what to say and when to say to encourage someone’s curiosity are vital skills, developed by the travel agents who intend to be successful in their domain.

For the modern tourist, a travel story must answer questions such as “What do they want? What are they now?” and “Where do they want to go?” The modern tourist should also solve problems such as “should I, as a tourist, accept specialized personnel recommendations regarding my holidays or should I consider organizing my spare time by myself?”

A peculiar classification of the individuals as tourists or customers is based upon how easily an individual can have access to data and how these are converted into valuable information. At this point, we can talk about a clear difference between Gadget Boy (the technology man) and the Stone Age Man, both notions being linked by the principle that “as with most things, the answer lies somewhere in the middle” (Vellas and Bécherel, 1999).

The difference between the tourist and the client consists in the moral duty a tourist can have. A tourist is free to set up a personal itinerary to follow, but is not free to interfere in the natural course of the environment he or she visits. A true tourist must make an effort to know what is genuinely important, because otherwise it would not be possible to understand the people, their culture, and lifestyle. While a client is more than overwhelmed by commercials and marketing strategies, a tourist should seek to find out more information regarding a touristic site and not be limited to the tourism attractions used in commercial planning.

All in all, the buying process in tourism is more closely linked to the personality of an individual when comparing it to the buying process in other markets. Most of the time, in tourism the potential customer has the option of spending money on other goods.

3. The Tourist’s Behaviour During the Buying Process

The incentive to travel is generally determined by many random reasons, internal impulses, and various external stimuli (Bucur-Sabo, 2006). Nowadays, the most important types of tourism activities seem to be those related to relaxation or business activities or a combination of both. However, it is particularly difficult to appreciate the real reasons motivating a person to carry out travel activities, considering that motivation is the main internal impulse. As (Prebensen, 2006) noticed in her PhD thesis, “Motivation is defined in terms of choosing an activity or task in which to engage, establishing the level of effort supplied for it, and determining the degree of persistence over time” (Prebensen, 2006). We would like to complete Prebensen’s idea by saying that motivation is, first of all, a state of mind and it is related to a person’s personality, thus making it impossible (or even useless) for a potential tourist to engage in activities that clearly exceed his or her personal limits and jeopardises his or her life.

The following statement struck us while reading the research bibliography used in this paper: "We must always remember that tourism cannot exist without tourists, and admit that if we want to manage tourism effectively, we need to understand tourists and their behaviour" (Swarbrooke and Horner, 2007). This sentence underlines one of the vital aspects of tourism: the tourist.

Human nature seems to be more interesting when it has complicated features. In tourism, these particular features answer the question "What motivates all these people to travel?" (Swarbrooke and Horner, 2007), and the number of answers is equal to the number of tourists existing all around the world. Furthermore, these answers are known in the specialized literature as consumer behaviour. Sales are like a jungle picture: there are unwritten rules you must observe to survive. "To conquer buying decisions" (Pizam and Mansfeld, 2000) in tourism, "the seller must go with the buyer through the buying process, and adapt the marketing effort to that end" (Pizam and Mansfeld, 2000).

Each individual is unique. As they say in genetics, not even twins are 100% identical; there is always something which makes the difference. As mentioned earlier, consumer behaviour is determined by motivation (to which we can add perceptions, attitude, and a set of beliefs), and motivation is ruled by personality. Therefore, the logic behind this chain of concepts explains the need to use consumer behaviour models to satisfy a very high number of demands.

From the chronological point of view, the concepts of consumer behaviour in general and tourist behaviour in particular are complex matters that have been developing over thousands of years. Even if it is impossible to say for certain when tourism activities began (Swarbrooke and Horner, 2007), we can still satisfy our curiosity in finding out how tourists travelled during Ancient Roman or Greek times, for example. Similar to those times, certain requirements should be met to convince a person to travel to a certain place:

- Climate and geographical position.
- History, language, and culture.
- The development of transport systems and the degree of maintenance of the environment.
- Economic development and government involvement in tourism.
- The degree of economic and political stability (Swarbrooke and Horner, 2007).

Andreason (1965) and Nicosia (1966) were pioneers in creating consumer behaviour models for the tourism industry, and they based their work on the way in which the communication channel works in organizations and at the individual levels (Prebensen, 2006). Apparently, the most relevant model of consumer behaviour seems to be the one proposed by Howard and Seth in 1969, "highlighting the importance of inputs to the consumer buying process". (Figure no. 3)

The models mentioned above are considered inspirational sources nowadays; the contemporary literature of tourist's behaviour models focuses on creating sales strategies that may ensure that the potential customer is provided with the best service in the market.

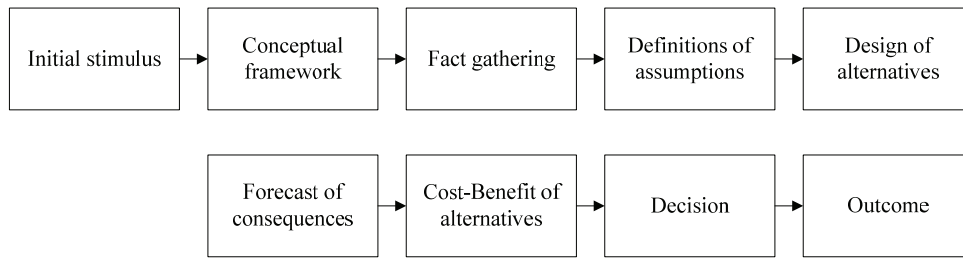


Figure no. 3: Model of consumer behaviour

Source: Wahab, Crampon and Rothfield, 1976

One may say: “I am not a typical tourist”:

- I am passionate about art and I want to spend my time visiting as many cultural sites as possible.
- I am an adventurer, Mount Everest is not my limit, but the sky is;
- I love winter, so Antarctica does not seem so far away.

And the preferences could keep going like this on and on. What do all these tourists have in common? The answer is represented by the idea that each of them has to pay a price to be able to satisfy their desires.

Even if the motivation in tourism includes necessities, impulses, intentions, atomicity, and specific trends with a subjective feature influenced by a series of factors” (Prebensen, 2006), probably the most important factor is the financial position of a customer when he or she wants to go on holiday. Thus, whether the tourist wants to organize a travel itinerary or to use the services of a travel agency, he or she will always arrive at a critical point when they must decide how much they are willing to spend for their holiday. And the verb “to spend” in this context does not refer only to money. It also includes availability, the features of the wanted holiday, and how open-minded he or she is as a person, regarding some of the services they can get from a certain package.

As presented in figure no. 4, the price policy in the tourism industry is a complex one. It is developed in many departments, such as sales and marketing, public relations, and human resources, and it observes the rules at a regional level.

The buying process in tourism goes as follows: tourism packages are sold by the buyer taking the goods from the producer. In this case, the potential customer must find out about the existence of a tourism package and express the wish to purchase it, in order to purchase that package. At this point, we discuss about marketing and the sales strategies used by travel agencies, tour operators, airline companies, and accommodation owners to attract tourists.

In tourism, the demand indicates the correspondence between the price level and client’s demand regarding a so-called quantity, the potential customers’ desire to purchase over a certain period of time (Bucur-Sabo, 2006). In fact, according to Bucur-Sabo, the demand in tourism is determined by features such as the existence of a need for tourism products, the existence of solvability (at certain prices), and the option to purchase those products.

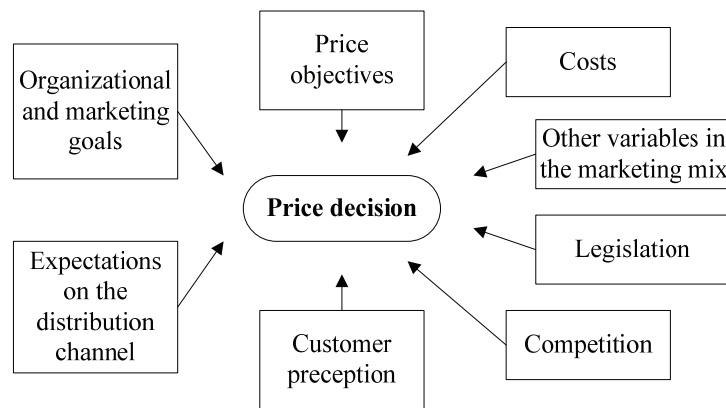


Figure no. 4: Price policy in the tourism industry

Source: Bucur-Sabo, 2006

4. Survey Method

This survey is based on data collected through the statistic inquiry method and aims at investigating the degree of education and information of the Romanian tourists from the perspective of the awareness and the ecologic behaviour.

The survey is based on the following hypotheses: the ecological behaviour is essential in sustainable tourism; the tourist's ecological behaviour can be further developed through education and information.

Starting from these hypotheses, the research objectives were to identify to what extent the Romanian tourists have an ecologic behaviour and awareness, to determine the causes and propose improvement solutions to develop the ecologic tourism in our country, both from the perspective of the customers and of the employees.

In order to meet the objectives of our survey, we tried to identify the most relevant, current, and pertinent sources of information. Unfortunately there were not too many options for the secondary sources of information. The study of the scientific literature regarding the education and information of the consumers from the perspective of the awareness and ecologic behaviour provided us with an initial support in the understanding of the general notions related to ecotourism, its development, the valences and implications it might have in various parts of the world, but they mostly refer to the ecological behaviour of the companies and less to that of the tourists as consumers. Therefore, in order to meet the research objectives, it was necessary to use some primary sources of information, collected directly from the field by investigating the tourists and the tourism employees.

As concerns the data collection method, we took into account the nature of the survey, its purpose, the need of obtaining some representative information from a statistic point of view, the relatively high number of available interviewers (206 students), and the economic, technical and organisational difficulties we have to deal with.

The tool used to collect the data was the questionnaire, taking into account the quantitative nature of the research through the punctual research. The drafting of the questionnaire was

a complex stage, firstly due to the topic we tackled and secondly due to the persons included in the survey.

We have analysed 2 types of surveys, filled in by customers and the employees from tourism respectively. The questionnaires consisted of 25 and 32 questions respectively, mainly closed questions. The research was carried out from 1 March to 15 May 2011; 620 questionnaires were filled in by tourists and 410 questionnaires were filled in by employees.

We have used the “funnel technique” to place the questions in the two surveys: they went from general to specific issues, while the open and closed questions were asked alternatively. As the complexity of the questions was increasing gradually, the surveys began with simpler, general questions and became more and more difficult and precise. The second half of the surveys included the questions related to the perceptions about the ecological tourism and the opinion scales. The identification questions were asked at the end of the survey. The scales revealed different options of answers, to prevent the emergence of the “contamination effect” (an answer given to a certain question influences the answer to the next question), as well as automatic, unreflective answers.

The identification of the population under analysis represented a stage where we took into account the research topic, the research hypotheses, and the possibility to address its constitutive elements. We mainly sought to obtain some results which should be statistically representative for the whole country.

We thought that by carrying out a double research we might reduce the degree of subjectivity of the customers in analysing their own behaviour, at the same time checking the way in which this behaviour is perceived by the people supplying the requested services.

The novelty of this survey is that it identifies and determines the consequences of the education and information of the Romanian tourists on the awareness and their ecological behaviour, as well as to carry out, in parallel, a survey on the way the employees perceive this behaviour.

16 of the 25 questions of the first questionnaire aimed at identifying the opinions of the customers, while 5 other were identifying their habits on a 5-stage Likert scale, and there were 4 personal identification questions.

As far as the second questionnaire is concerned, 25 of the 32 questions aimed at identifying the opinions of the customers, and 3 other at identifying their habits using a 5-stage Likert scale, and there were 4 personal identification questions.

The questionnaire was adapted as both content and form following some discussions with relevant persons and after having tested various customers. The survey aimed at revealing the tourists' habits regarding the preservation of the environment, their basic ideas about ecological tourism, and the customer's behaviour in the opinion of the employees, as well as defining some solutions regarding the ecological education of the tourists in the future.

5. Survey Findings

For a better understanding, the results of the two surveys will be analysed successively in the first stage and afterwards they will be correlated.

While analysing the results from the first survey regarding the identification of the extent to which the Romanian tourists have an ecological awareness and behaviour, we obtained the following results:

- the customers think that “protection” is the feature which defines ecotourism the best (40%);
- those taking a high responsibility in protecting the environment are the adults (37%), the youngsters (28%) and the elderly (24%);
- most of them have heard of 1 to 2 events/initiatives related to the protection of the environment in the last period (47%);
- most of them think that the environment is granted a higher importance abroad than in Romania (85%);
- the customers have identified that the main causes for the reduced concern regarding the environmental protection in Romania are the weak involvement of the authorities (36%), the indifference of the tourists (33%), and the weak information of the population (19%);
- 50% of the respondents were willing to redirect the 2% of their taxes to NGOs dealing with the protection of the environment.

We can say that the tourists are familiar with the concept of ecology; they assume the responsibility for the protection of the environment at any age, are receptive towards the means of information, and are expecting more involvement from authorities, their peers, and the media.

The results of the analysis on the tourists' habits from table no. 1 reflect the level of education and information of the Romanian tourists on the preservation of the environment.

Table no. 1: The habits of the Romanian tourists regarding the environment preservation when they are on holiday (%)

	Always	Often	Some times	Seldom	Never	Total
a) Avoid the waste of water and energy in any accommodation unit	0.21	0.33	0.24	0.13	0.09	1.00
b) Dispose of garbage in special places	0.65	0.28	0.06	0.01	0.00	1.00
c) Protect the plants, animals and fish	0.54	0.27	0.11	0.06	0.01	1.00
d) Have a civilised behaviour and observe the signs	0.63	0.27	0.07	0.02	0.00	1.00
e) Warn the tourists with an improper behaviour	0.04	0.12	0.22	0.32	0.30	1.00

Source: Drafted by the authors

The scores regarding the customers' habits were calculated separately for each of the 5 habits which are important for the preservation of the environment.

The main problems emerge at point a), where most of the customers seem not to always avoid the waste of water and energy (79%); very severe issues were also revealed at point e), where it comes out that only 4% of the customers warn their peers with an inadequate behaviour.

The profile of the customer respondents: most of them were women (56%), with university and post-university studies (69%), and an income between RON 700 and RON 3,000. They are customers travelling twice a year (36%), especially abroad (53%), 45% of them choose the hotel as accommodation, they prefer the seaside tourism (45%), they travel most of the time by car (44%), and spent on average the equivalent of a salary for the holiday per year (their is a direct proportional relation between the income and the amount spent for the holiday).

We have also analysed how we can increase in the future the concern regarding the protection of the environment in our country, and the questioned customers think that:

- There is rather little chance (44%) for the ecologic tourism to be developed in Romania in the next 5 years;
- Those who should get involved in the ecologic education of the tourists are the state (44%), education bodies (25%), mass-media (23%);
- As concerns the solutions for the development of the tourism in our country, the opinions of the customers are inclined towards: the involvement of the authorities (laws, sanctions) (36%), investments in this field (30%), the adaptation of some European plans (18%), information campaigns (15%).

While analysing the results from the second survey, aiming at identifying the level of education and information of the Romanian tourists about the awareness and ecological behaviour, and of the way in which this behaviour is perceived, we obtained the following results:

- Tourists get from the internet most of the information regarding the ecological behaviour (52%);
- Tourists throw the garbage in special places (only 23%);
- Tourists observe the natural spaces, the habits and traditions from the rural area to a small percentage (34%);
- The employees think that 26% of the tourists are willing to pay more for an ecological holiday;
- As for the complaints regarding the inappropriate behaviour of the tourists, 16% of them are willing to make such complaints;
- The employees think that 18% of the tourists are willing to choose a less polluting means of transport during the holiday;
- The employees think that 23% of the tourists are willing to choose an ecological accommodation place during the holiday;
- The employees think that 34% of the tourists have a ecological responsible behaviour.

Here is the profile of the client who is a consumer of tourism products, from the point of view of the tourism employees: is especially interested in the price when purchasing a tourism package, the holiday purchased in the last year was in Bulgaria (35%), Greece (24%) or Romania (11%); they choose a holiday with an average duration of 7 to 9 days;

they spend on average RON 1,000 to RON 3,000 per year for a holiday; their age is 25 to 50 years old.

Looking to the future to see how we can increase the concern for the environment protection in our country, while analysing the customer's behaviour, the questioned employees think that:

- There are chances that the ecological behaviour of the tourists in Romania may change in 10 years' time (56%);
- After analysing the interest of the youngsters to participate in voluntary actions for the development of the tourism in Romania, the employees are very pessimistic (31%);
- The people who should get involved in the ecologic education of the tourists are the state (36%), the education institutions (24%), mass-media (24%);
- As for the solutions regarding the development of the ecologic tourism in our country the opinions of the employees about the customers are inclined towards: the involvement of the authorities (laws, sanctions) (22%), investments in this field (38%), enforcing some European plans (16%), information campaigns (22%).

The second survey aimed at identifying the perception of the employees on the current behaviour of the tourists. Their estimations regarding the future are 12% higher than those of the tourists from the first survey (table no. 2).

By correlating the results obtained from the two surveys, we obtain both similarities and differences (table no. 2).

Table no. 2: Comparative analysis of the findings of the two surveys

		Survey no. 1 (%)	Survey no. 2 (%)
Similarities	The customers warn their peers with an inadequate behaviour	16	16
	Who should get more involved in the ecological education of the tourists:	44	36
	- the state		
	- education institutions	25	24
	- media	23	24
Differences	Throwing the garbage in special places	93	23
	The development of the ecological tourism in the next 5-10 years	44	56
	Solutions for the development of the ecological tourism in our country:	36	22
	- involvement of the authorities (laws, sanctions)		
	- investments in this field	30	38
	- enforcing some European plans	18	16
	- information campaigns	15	22

Source: Drafted by the authors

The differences emerge either because the employees who participated in the survey did not know their customers or the latter are too exigent, or because some customers who answered the questions have not been objective.

Another explanation could be that, according to a previous survey (State and Istudor, 2009), there are differences between the perceptions of the employees in the tourism field regarding the customers' expectations and the latter's actual expectations.

For example, in table no. 1, at point b), 65% of the questioned tourists said that they always throw the garbage in special places, 28% stated that it happens to them to throw their garbage in special containers, while 6% of them admitted that they sometimes deposit garbage in special places, and only 1 person said to seldom throw garbage where it should be thrown; most of these persons replied there was not their fault, but rather the fault of the authorities of not setting up more places where one can throw the garbage. Our question is: how are people from other countries able to do that? Had we not travelled abroad, we would have thought that they might have garbage bins from 2 to 2 meters; but it is not like this... people are more educated there and if they have something to throw they wait until they find a special place (*when TUI withdrew from Romania in 2006, they were, among others, dissatisfied with the lack of cleanliness*). The second survey revealed that a small percentage (23%) of tourists throw their garbage in special places, which supports the above mentioned statements.

We can state that the hypotheses of this survey prove to be true, since:

- 80% of the questioned people consider the ecological behaviour is essential in tourism;
- the Romanian tourist is a lifelong learner regarding the ecological behaviour. For example, most of the customers do not always avoid wasting water and energy (79%), but they show a civilised behaviour and they observe warning signs (63%).
- the ecological behaviour can be developed with the help of education and information, not only through ecologic and information campaigns (only 16% of the customers warn the tourists with an inadequate behaviour), but with the intervention of the authorities through laws and sanctions.

Our survey thus reveals that tourists are aware of the concept of ecology (34% of the tourists do have a responsible ecologic behaviour), assume the responsibility of protecting the environment at any age, they are receptive to the means of information and consider that a solution may be that the authorities, the citizens, and the media get more involved.

Conclusions

In conclusion, if the tourists behave on holiday exactly as it resulted from the first survey, it means that tourism is on the good path and that people have started to be concerned about the environment, helping to maintain and preserve it.

The second survey aimed at identifying the employees' perception on the current behaviour of the tourists. Their estimations regarding the development of the ecological tourism in Romania in the following 5 to 10 years are 12 % higher than the tourists' estimates.

Both surveys revealed that the state, the education, and media institutions in this particular order are the entities which should get more involved in the ecological education.

Looking at the solutions for the development of the ecological tourism in Romania, the tourists are betting on the involvement of the authorities, while the employees are expecting the investments in this field to support the increase of the concern for the protection of the environment in our country.

Considering the above, further actions should be taken to implement some innovative technologies and products, because certain services are still based on obsolete and ineffective methods. The investments should focus on the infrastructure, on developing the assets in the tourism industry, particularly the major structures such as airports, retail centres, theatres, hotels, and conference centres, which can have a dramatic effect on the impact which the industry has on the environment, both visibly and invisibly.

Last but not least, the tourists should be informed and educated in order to be aware of all these meanings of the ecologic consciousness. As beneficiaries of the natural resources in tourism and of the investments, they are liable to make all the individual and institutional efforts to protect and preserve a "green" environment for future generations. "Understanding the ecological behaviour" is a compulsory condition not only for the environment, but also for the brand and the business. It is a duty for the stakeholders in charge with the growth and development of the destinations and of the global T&T field – socially, culturally, economically, and also naturally.

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