

IS THERE ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE ATTITUDE OF ROMANIAN TOURISTS AS COMPARED TO THE FOREIGN ONES?

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Abstract:

This paper ranks within the field of marketing research, being primarily aimed at identifying differences between the attitude of Romanian tourists as compared to that of foreign tourists with respect to hotel room arrangement - in which they were housed during their staying – respectively the assessment of culinary preparations of the location (the restaurant) where they most often served meals. This paper also presents those aspects they were satisfied with, they are not satisfied with and that the respondents would change or improve in the Centre Development Region. The quantitative marketing research took place in the Centre Development Region between 15.05.2009-17.10.2009. A total of 410 questionnaires have been included in this marketing research.

Keywords: attitude, research, variable, total variant

Introduction

In the process of shaping the attitudes of a consumer, an important place is held by the influences of cultural and social nature (family, work group, affiliation group, social group, culture), and personality. (Cătoi and Teodorescu, 2004, p.75)

Social sciences are concerned in particular with the study of attitudes and their possible changes. (Florescu, Mălcome et al, 2003, p. 73) Therefore, consumer behavior requires constant analysis.

Improving the quality of decision making process involves the use of marketing research effectively and efficiently for better knowledge and understanding of the internal and external environment of the organization, for the choice of the most appropriate product, price, distribution and promotion variants, as well as for the evaluation of the results of the company policy (Cătoi, Bălan et al, 2002, p.17). Due to the fact that on the marketing variables often acts simultaneously several factors of

influence, in order to find an answer to the question whether there is any difference between the attitude of Romanian tourists and that of foreign ones, I applied the principal components analysis.

Principal components analysis

The main purpose of the descriptive methods of data analysis, grouped in what is called principal components analysis, is to search for the explanation of a set of facts in the action of a small number of independent concepts that can adequately describe the situation. (Lefter, 2004, p.398)

Principal components analysis consist of producing linear combinations of variables entered into the model to obtain a reduced number of components that explain certain behaviors or attitudes of individuals, called principal components. (Constantin, 2006, p.246).

For principal components analysis, I examined the interrelationships between multiple variables based on

which tourists interviewed in Centre Development Region positively appreciated the hotel rooms and offer of culinary preparations in the location where they most often had meals.

The variables measured are the following:

- The room offers a pleasant, familiar atmosphere.
- The room offers a special comfort.
- The room is arranged with taste.
- Menu variety.

- Food quality.
- Novelty of dishes.
- Specific, traditional offer of food.

A first category of results refers to the means obtained for each of the variables included in the model.

Table 1

**Variables means introduced in model
Descriptive Statistics**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Analysis N
The room offers a pleasant, familiar atmosphere	4.18	.877	386
The room offers a special comfort	3.98	.948	386
The room is arranged with taste	3.99	.948	386
Menu variety	4.06	.764	386
Food quality	4.17	.757	386
Novelty of dishes	3.74	.941	386
Specific, traditional offer of food	4.01	.945	386

It is noted that at the level of the 386 tourists included in the analysis (table no. 1) slightly different means for the seven variables included have been obtained.

In Table no. 2 eigenvalues ("Initial Eigenvalues") are presented for each

component and the percentage of the total value explained by these components. It appears that the first two components explain 75.85% of the total variance, the last component explaining less and less this variance.

Table 2

**Eigenvalues of the components and the explained variance
Total Variance Explained**

C*	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.097	58.525	58.525	4.097	58.525	58.525	2.892	41.311	41.311
2	1.213	17.327	75.852	1.213	17.327	75.852	2.418	34.541	75.852
3	.446	6.375	82.227						
4	.394	5.625	87.852						
5	.313	4.469	92.321						
6	.285	4.069	96.390						
7	.253	3.610	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

C* Component

The following table (Table no. 3) and the two principal components, shows the results of the correlation coefficients of the variables analyzed obtained after rotation of the axes using the Varimax method.

Table 3

**Correlations between variables and factors following axis rotation
Rotated Component Matrix(a)**

	Component	
	1	2
The room offers a pleasant, familiar atmosphere	.210	.866
The room offers a special comfort	.325	.807
The room is arranged with taste	.222	.887
Menu variety	.852	.208
Food quality	.802	.220
Novelty of dishes	.820	.274
Specific, traditional offer of food	.807	.251

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. a Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

We conclude that the first component is determined by assessments regarding the assessment of culinary products offer in the location (restaurant) in which respondents most often served meals while the second

component is determined by assessments on the arrangement of the hotel rooms.

To get an idea of the attitudes of tourists considered in the assessment of the two categories of factors expressed by the principal components,

a graphic presentation of tourists divided into two categories was made: Romanian tourists and foreign tourists respectively.

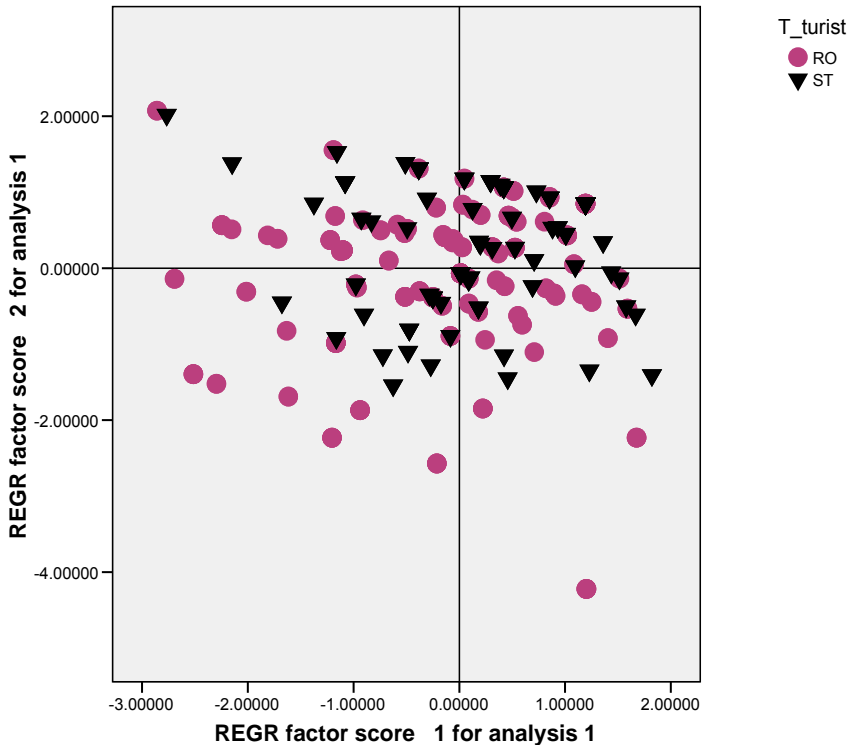


Figure 1. Graphical representation of the tourists attitude with respect to the arrangement of the rooms respectively the assessment of the culinary preparations offer

It is noted (Figure no. 1) a vicinity of attitudes regarding the assessments mainly with the first component, regarding: menu variety, quality of preparations, novelty of preparations and specific traditional offer of preparations. Romanian tourists' attitudes compared with foreign tourists regarding the assessment of the culinary offer are different, in that Romanian tourists have a more negative attitude regarding the culinary offer than foreign tourists.

It also noted an association with the second component of assessments relating to the pleasant familiar atmosphere, the comfort, the tasty arrangement of the rooms. In this case too attitudes are slightly different in that foreign tourists have a more negative attitude regarding hotel rooms arrangement than Romanian tourists.

Next, I shall present other important results of the marketing research conducted:

- among the 410 respondents who answered the question concerning the issues they are satisfied with in the Centre Development Region, it was found that a number of 306 persons presented 508 responses. The modal value was registered for "the natural framework", with 179 responses, representing 35.2% of all responses. This aspect the respondents were satisfied with was mentioned by 58.5% of sample members answering to this question, followed by "Transylvanian hospitality" (32%), the "historical patrimony" (12.7%), then by "gastronomic offer" (10.8%). The fewest responses, representing as issues that the respondents were satisfied with are the following: "not nationalistic," "Beautiful Girls", representing 0.2% of total valid responses. Issues that were mentioned by 0.3% of respondents.

- among the 410 respondents who answered the question concerning the issues they are not satisfied with in the Centre Development Region, a total of 256 people gave 420 responses. The modal value was registered for "road conditions", with 120 responses, representing 28.6% of all responses. This aspect, the respondents were not satisfied with, was mentioned by 46.9% of sample members answering to this question followed by "less clean areas" (19.9%), the "traffic" (14.5 %) then by the "high prices" (14.1%). The fewest responses, representing issues that respondents were not satisfied with are the following: "no advertising", "Romanian-Hungarian dialogue", "train services", "aspect of the buildings" representing 0.2% of total valid responses. Issues that were mentioned by 0.4% of respondents.

- among the 410 respondents who answered the question "What would you change or improve?" a number of 216 persons gave 242 responses. The modal value was recorded for "quality of

roads", with 99 responses, representing 40.9% of all responses. This aspect that respondents would change / improve, was mentioned by 45.8% of sample members who responded to this question, followed by the "prices" charged (8.8%), then the "diversification of cultural programs" (6%). The fewest responses, representing issues that respondents would change / improve is the following: "Communication between the manager-tourists", representing 0.4% of total valid responses. Issues that were mentioned by 0.5% of respondents.

Limits of the quantitative research

The error of $\pm 4.84\%$ can be considered a minimum representation limit. This amount was imposed in the research by organizational and financial reasons.

Although questions have been formulated as clearly as possible, there were persons that did not construed the sense of the question, and in this case, the answers given by them introduced inevitable errors.

A special significance was given to the fact that the questions in English and German express the same content as the questionnaire drawn up in Romanian and Hungarian. This fact / aspect implies a thorough knowledge of these languages. Although a great importance was given to the translation, foreign tourists identified small errors in the questionnaires translated into English. (The questionnaire in German was translated with a student from Hamburg, who also spoke Romanian and Hungarian).

As it is well known, the surveys made where respondents speak a language other than the official language in which the research is made or the mother language of the person giving the interviews, a very special importance should be given to correct pronunciation in international languages. For this reason

questionnaires were self-applied by foreign tourists and not based on direct interviews.

In the case of self applied questionnaires, the existence of some non-responses was identified, and also with direct interviews there were people who refused to answer questions in the questionnaire (non-respondents), this inevitably leading to errors. In the case of self applied investigation, the self-selection error may also occur where individuals who feel attracted by the topic of the survey fill in the questionnaire, unlike those who are not attracted by that topic and who fail to respond to the questionnaire. (Constantin, 2006, p.153)

During the investigation I found that male respondents were more "open" to direct interviews than female respondents, the reason may be gender, age, clothing of the interviewer, leading to inevitable errors.

Also it was found that the number of tourists from Hungary in Mures county who showed interest in this research was higher than tourists from other countries or even from Romania,

probably because these respondents' felt the need to "help" a person (the interviewer) who had the same ethnicity as them.

Conclusions

Following the analysis of the principal components I noted even a reverse attitude regarding the assessments and type of interviewed tourists with respect to the assessment of culinary preparations, namely the arrangement of hotel rooms where they were housed during their staying in the Centre Development Region. During principal components analysis I found that Romanian tourists have a more negative attitude regarding the gourmet offer than foreign tourists. But foreign tourists have a more negative attitude regarding the arrangement of hotel rooms than Romanian tourists. The natural landscape and the Transylvanian hospitality are the main points of attraction, while that aspect of roads condition represent the aspect the interviewed tourists are not satisfied with.

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