QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract: The paper tackles, in evolution, the main actions initiated at a European level which have represented landmarks in promoting some systems of assurance of educational quality in the general context of development of some strategies of quality. Connected to the tendencies existing at a European level, the paper presents the legislative- normative framework of ensuring the quality of educational services in Romania as well as other elements which have directed and substantiated the elaboration of the Regulations of Assuring the Quality of the Services of Education and Scientific Research in the Academy of Economic Studies of Bucharest. The system of education, in general, and the system of higher education, especially, hold a central place in the development of mankind and of the modern contemporary society, owing to their intellectual and cultural key-responsibilities and to their moral impact upon all of society. The preoccupation of assuring quality in education, by promoting some high quality curricula and some highly efficient strategies of instruction under conditions of complete transparency, were also due to the issuing of some diplomas proving the graduation from various university levels which the knowledge acquired didn’t justify, a fact whose implications are deeper and deeper and ever more complex.

The preoccupations at a European level in the field of quality assurance in the institutes of higher education began in the period 1994-1995, when the European commission initiated a pilot-project for experimenting a unitary model of evaluation for higher education in the member-states. Initially, the project involved 47 institutes of higher education from 17 countries, a number of European associations in the field (CRE, EURASHE and the Confederation of The Conferences of Rectors in Europe) as well as an important number of international experts. The result was materialized in the elaboration of a complete methodology of evaluation which, following a series of improvements became an international reference in the field. [10] In 1998, the Council of Europe issued a recommendation of promotion within the national systems of higher education of some “comparable systems” of ensuring quality, having as a main purpose the facilitation of exchanges and the recognition of studies in the various member-states. Thus, quality assurance was focused on by the General Direction XXII of the European Commission which became the coordinator of the European Network of Quality Assurance in Higher Education. Its purpose was to develop a common, adequate, generally accepted framework for all the academic environments in the European Union and to promote the cooperation among the member-states in the field of quality assurance.
The major preoccupations for the quality of the educational act were mainly due to the role and responsibilities of universities within a “Europe of Knowledge” which were emphasized at various international meetings on this subject:

- by the much higher level of education based on intensive knowledge of a continuously growing number of students, the universities contribute to the strengthening of the competitiveness of European economy;
- by the knowledge transmitted to the specialists being trained, the universities have an overwhelming contribution to the raising of the extent of occupation of the work force and to achieving social cohesion;
- by the values and ethical norms which lie at the basis of their functioning, the universities have a great influence not only on the academic life of the students and of the university staff but also on the moral aspect of the whole society [8,9].

Besides all of the above, the increase of the interest in the quality of the educational act is also due to the following tendencies and characteristics:

- the mass character of university studies, by the increase of the demand of training in this field;
- the continuous transformation of the role held by the institutions in the field of education and research;
- the increase of the number of programs of long-distance education (national and international);
- the ever more ample need of information and research;
- the tendency of development, at a national and regional level, of an ever closer cooperation between universities and the business environment;
- the tendency of the business environment of sub-contracting its own activities of research to the universities with the best results;
- the need of mobility of the students by the exponential growth rate of the international student exchanges;
- the transnational development of university studies by franchise, campus brands and other similar arrangements;
- the mutual recognition of university degrees among the various states of the world. [3]

The values and ethical principles which should govern European academic life, enlisted in the Declaration of Bucharest adopted at the International Conference “The Ethical and Moral Dimensions for Higher Education and Science in Europe” (2-5 September 2004) are the following:

1. **Academic ethos, culture and community** - the universities, on the basis of their autonomy, should contribute to the promotion of the public well-being, by encouraging some high academic and ethical standards. Academic culture, regarded as an ensemble of declarations, documents and codes of behavior, should promote values, norms and practices based on the observance of the principles regarding human dignity and integrity, continuous education, the development of knowledge and the continuous improvement of quality.

2. **Academic integrity in the teaching and instruction process** – The values and norms of academic integrity: honesty, trust, discretion respect and hierarchical subordination as a basis of the working atmosphere favoring the exchange of ideas, creativity and individual evolution should lie at the basis of the development of the students’ knowledge and instruction by means of the teaching act and of high quality research.
3. The democratic and ethical management and administration. The management of universities should involve the whole academic community (students, teaching staff, researchers and administrators) in the decision-making process. The whole activity should reflect the growth of the complexity of higher education institutes as well as their role and responsibilities, by promoting the most favorable practices in the administration and observance of the legal norms and the academic and ethical key-values. [6]

In most European countries, the education institutes have an increasing autonomy and are responsible for the quality of the educational act. However, parallel to this, the public authorities, as representatives of the general interest of the citizens, have adopted a series of measures meant to stimulate and ensure quality in the education institutes, by promoting productive procedures and conditions of work.

The quality assurance in education refers to all the policies, processes and actions of the public authorities by means of which quality in education is maintained and developed at a national level. Among the main objectives of quality assurance, we can mention the following: the supply of information in connection with the functioning of the educational system, with the recorded results and the possible ways of improving it; the assuming of the responsibility for creating some conditions favorable to attaining quality; the maintenance and improvement of high academic standards; the demonstration of a high quality of the programs of academic or professional training, initial and continuous, for all the students and learners in an institute of higher education; the development of an institutional culture of quality and of ensuring a real protection of the education beneficiary – the student-learner [7].

That is why, in order to achieve a high quality of the educational act, the following components have a crucial importance: the objectives of the educational acts; the level of competency ensured by the curricula; the studying environment, the competence of the teaching staff and of the auxiliary technical staff and the efficiency of the working practices; on the one hand, the independent evaluation of the teaching and research activity and on the other hand, the results obtained by the students; a functional emergent system of education and sufficient financial resources.

Along these lines, the elaboration of some general rules is aimed at which should govern all the educational programs in higher education with a view to continuously improving the quality of the teaching process, irrespective of the type of education (with presence in the campus or long-distance education, financed by the budget or by academic fees) and the level of the educational service (graduation degree, master’s degree, Ph.D or continuous training) in order to ensure equal opportunities for all the students by high quality comparable curricula; efficient instruction strategies, experience-based activity; support programs; staff, material basis: equipment, technological integration, financial resources and other facilities.

In order to define the performances required from the graduates on the market of work force, the management of universities should continuously collaborate both with its internal clients (members of the teaching staff, auxiliary staff, students, learners, etc.) and with its external clients (the representatives of the business environment, of industry, governmental and non-governmental bodies, non-profit organizations, etc.).

The most advanced country in the European Union from an institutional point of view and from the point of view of the results obtained in the field of higher education quality assurance is Great Britain. This is a consequence of tradition (the oldest university is over 800 years old) and of the preoccupations in this field which have dated ever since 1965 when “The Council for National Academic Awards” (CNAA) was set up, aiming at
the elaboration and implementation of some minimum standards of quality assurance for the curricula offered by the newly founded higher education institutes.

The whole system of quality assurance, which is based on self-evaluation, unfolds on the basis of a guide of the National Agency of Quality Assurance, permanently subject to a process of development and improvement. The guide comprises a general framework which the universities can adapt to their own traditions and characteristics as well as a model of the system of quality management, whose adoption is optional, as the universities may create their own system. Within the internal evaluation, the quality of higher education is judged in accordance with the professor-student interaction or dialogue and with the integrity and professionalism of the academic community, every member of the teaching staff having clear responsibilities, from the point of view of the act of teaching, research and administration, to the: students, subject taught; to the university and the collectivity they belong to; to the professional bodies involved in the organization and the unfolding of the education process.

As concerns the external environment, the universities wish to gain the confidence of the interested parties (future students, employees, governmental and non-governmental bodies etc.) in the fact that the whole activity relies on the observance of some university and professional standards, which are subject to a permanent process of improvement of quality. The universities are evaluated on the basis of some extremely detailed audits of quality, which are made by prestigious university staff members from outside the institute audited. Within these audits, universities are evaluated from an institutional point of view, from the points of view of educational efficiency and of the culture of the quality of the academic environment synthesized in the mission of the respective university. Aspects connected to the contents and structure of the courses are audited, including the aspects of course management and tutorial activity, on the basis of the declared academic standards, the training and evaluation of the teaching and research staff, the quality of the teaching-learning activity, the evaluation of the teaching staff-members by the students, the evaluation and monitoring of the students' performances, the transparency of the activities unfolding at the university level, the quality management, its efficiency etc. [2]. The audit reports of the universities are published and they have not only the role of guiding the students and employees but also of offering precious information to the respective university for a continuous improvement of quality (these audit reports are the basis for several types of benchmarking).

Germany has a special characteristic in the field of education owing to its organization on States, the universities being obliged to periodically publish reports regarding the evaluation of curricula and of the recorded performances, as a response to the public demand for academic responsibility and quality. Starting with 1998, “The Management of the National Project in the Field of Quality Assurance” (Project Q) was introduced with a view to promoting the exchange of information and experience in the field of quality assurance, by creating a national network of experts and teaching staff in this field and by interconnecting, at a regional level, the bodies of quality assurance in higher education. Academic evaluation has as a main component the evaluation by the students and takes place at the end of every term; thus, the hierarchization of the teaching staff is made at the level of every department in the basis of the recorded performances. By the implemented systems of quality assurance and by the evaluations made, the universities and the governments of the States aim at being able to offer complete information to their potential students as well as to the employees. The students and the social partners play a decisive role in the acceptance of the academic qualifications offered. [1] The evaluation
systems rely on the informational feedback obtained on the basis of the colleagues’
appreciation, as elements of input of a process of continuous improvement of quality and
less on the demands of some quality standards, ISO 9000 family of standards, procedures
TQM. On the basis of these standards a very small number of functional entities are
certified.

In France, the responsibility for ensuring quality in higher education lies with the
state. In 1984, the National Committee of Evaluation was set up whose main activity has
been institutional evaluation. The main objective of institutional evaluation has been the
improvement of the functioning of the higher education institutes by developing a culture of
quality and of good practice in the field of ensuring quality in initial and in permanent
education, in scientific research and technological transfer, in the spreading of scientific
and technical knowledge and in the field of international cooperation. Institutional
evaluation is achieved in accordance with the complexity and the specific characteristics of
university education and scientific research relying on the permanent communication
among the National Committee of Evaluation, the university management and the students.

In Italy, the National Committee for the Evaluation of the University System was
set up in 1999, having attributions in the field of quality assurance. Its role is to establish
the general criteria for the evaluation of the University activity, to promote the
experimentation, the application and the dissemination of the methods and practices of
evaluation and to make an annual program of external evaluation of the universities.

In Romania, the legislative framework of assuring the quality of the educational
services in the institutes of higher education is ensured by the Law no 87/10.04.2006. In the
light of this normative act, the assurance of the quality of education refers to a number of
criteria and to the following domains: institutional capacity, educational efficiency and the
management of quality. Among the main objectives of quality assurance, we can mention
the supply of information connected to the functioning of the educational system, to the
recorded results and to the possible ways of improving these results; the assuming of
responsibility for the creation of conditions favorable to attaining quality; the maintenance
and improvement of high academic standards; the demonstration of a high quality of the
curricula of academic or professional training, initial and continuous for all the students and
learners in an institute of higher education; the development of an institutional culture of
quality and the ensuring of a real protection of the education beneficiary – student/learner
[4].

The members of the teaching staff of the Academy of Economic Studies of
Bucharest, being aware of the central role of universities as a public asset and responsibility
and as an irreplaceable factor in the development of the European cultural dimensions, have
adopted, in the light of the normative acts in the field, “Regulations regarding the quality
assurance of the services of education and scientific research” and “Regulations of
academic evaluation” which stipulate the periodic evaluation of all the members of the
teaching and research staff, their scientific contribution and professional prestige, whose
fulfillment is compulsory. By aligning with the European practice, an important part within
the evaluation of the teaching activity lies with peer-review and students’ evaluation.

Every member of the teaching staff in the Academy of Economic Studies of
Bucharest will be evaluated once in five years, 20 per cent of the total of the teaching staff
being evaluated every year. The evaluation of the quality of the activity carried on by the
teaching staff in the Academy of Economic Studies of Bucharest can also be made on
demand, before the time established at the Faculty level, in the following cases: in order to
obtain, by way of competition, a teaching position; in order to receive some annual prizes

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or distinctions of the Academy of Economic Studies of Bucharest; in order to obtain some salary incentives; in order for the present professors to obtain the capacity of Ph.D supervisors; in order to obtain the capacity of consultant professors; for those persons who wish or are requested, as an exception, to be evaluated.

Academic evaluation is made distinctly, in accordance with its purpose in the following way: for the position of assistant or assistant-lecturer, on the basis of criterion 1 ÷ Teaching activity; for the position of lecturer, senior lecturer, professor or Ph.D supervisor on the basis of the four criteria, cumulatively, for the respective teaching position; for consultant professor, Ph.D supervisor, according to the criteria required for the position of university professor; for distinctions – according to the regulations in force for their granting.

The activity of internal evaluation is made by special commissions, in accordance with its purpose, in the following way: to occupy didactic positions, by commissions approved by the Senate Board; for the periodic evaluation – by commissions at the level of faculties, made up of 5-7 members and run by Deans/Rector; for the evaluation of university professors who wish to become Ph.D supervisors, for the reevaluation of the existing Ph.D supervisors, for the evaluation of professors who wish to become consultant professors, for the granting of distinctions and material incentives, by a commission of 5-9 members made up at the university level while the conclusions are endorsed by the ASE Senate.

With the view to elaborating these internal regulations, the management of the Academy of Economic Studies of Bucharest involved the whole academic community, presenting several variants of projects which have been subject to debate by the periodic organization of some public meetings on this subject, with the participation of the interested teaching staff members. The activity unfolding in the Academy of Economic Studies of Bucharest at present is directed towards the formation of a feeling of pride among the academic community on account of belonging to this University.

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STYLING OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS OF THE NEW INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS

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Abstract: After the second international war, the design appear as an important phenomenon of aesthetics' organic implication in the industrial production, having as result goods, which are entirely suitable with the material and spiritual requirements of the different consumers. Out of the designers endeavor to adapt to the technical, economic and social restrictions and realities, two apparent contradictions result: the products are manufactured in different countries having the stamp of the national cultural environment; the differences related to the origin and national culture are gradually reduced. In our times intensive circuit of goods increases the interdependence and even, the worldwide process; but this phenomenon doesn't dissolve the importance of the national specific as the first condition of goods' universality.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important human qualities is to take, according to his necessities, into serious consideration the environment, settling a preferential attitude to each of its elements. Selections, hierarchies, preferences granted to the objects, phenomena, human conduct, material and ideal human creations could be considered values, as far as they are able to satisfy at a certain moment human needs, wishes and ideals. Values can be considered a coefficient of civilization and of human creative capacities, conferring meaning and finalities to his actions. Aesthetic values concentrated upon the concept of beauty refer to those characteristics of the human universe, which achieve their peculiar feature through a balanced colourful or expressive composition corresponding to human need of harmony and colour. Thus, they are human significance that confers aesthetic dimension to things, phenomena and ideals. Although it was remarked since the early history of this aesthetic category, the existence of more kinds of beauty, of various "groups of beauty" has been precisely shaped only nowadays, when terms such as: natural beauty, artistic beauty, industrial beauty are usually used.

The industrial beauty a deeply rooted notion in the aesthetic theories of the XXth century civilization increases the comprehension of the value of beauty, through a direct and explicit reference to the various faces of the material-creative human dimension. The contemporary's endeavour of clearing up the level and the reason of the aesthetics presence within the technical and consumer goods production represents a necessity evolved from the very increasing of the process of seducing human being, altogether with the multitude of the nowadays economical enquiry.
It is in the intention of design, industrial aesthetics and goods aesthetics to aim to the transmutation from the abstract-quantitative capitalization area to the concrete-qualitative one. Thus, the aesthetic factor brings in, concerning the material production, a qualitative coefficient of individuality at the level of batch production and an ideal coefficient of each individual product. It is noticeable that from the struggle between reality and human ideal the industrial production is awarded an increasing attention, according to the more and more important place taken by the manufactured products in people's life.

GLOBALIZATION OF STYLES VS NATIONAL STYLE

"A detailed examination of each object reveals concretely the level of intelligence, of ability and of artistic comprehension of that people who created it. It could also reveal the climate, the religious belief, the governmental system, natural resources, the economical and cultural achievements." This is the remark of an American designer, Richard Latham, regarding the way in which products made in different countries are in a strong relationship with the social-cultural medium that produced them. They can’t be conceived out of the social-cultural influence of the ambient, social group, fashion and of the outer influence that the designer suffers, and of the development stage of culture and general and individual aesthetic education [6].

Hundreds of years ago the functional objects were made of a raw material, the end-user often being the same one who made them; for that reason they were carefully preserved and were inheritable (furniture, housewares, appliances, clothing etc). The concernment for aesthetic value is proved by the adornments applied to the visible sides of the objects, even if in this way they could be hardly used and this was reflected into the increasing of price. The adornments have a historical character. They change in each epoch their appearance and decorative functions. Besides, they often vary from country to country, representing a national stamp. When the creator (creators) conceives objects with the same general characteristics, this constitutes style, aesthetic concept with a wide significance and a large variety of interpretations. Generally, the concept of style is an expression of the dominant characteristics of the aesthetic activities of the society, a reflection of aspects of the aesthetic values belonging to a certain period of time, as a mirror of spiritual and material life peculiarities, of specific national features.

The artists and craftsmen's works are deeply influenced by the cultural and artistic trends and tendencies of the various steps of the social-historical development. There are especially remarked those from the last XIXth century and the beginning of the XXth century: "Arts and Crafts", "Art Nouveau" and "Art Deco ". The typical features of this period, although mainly an artistic one, have got more and more important functional value. They focus on "the rational structure of the object, on the uncompromising use of raw materials and on the plastic modality of expressing the manufacturing process" [6]. It is the first attempt of binding arts of techniques. The most advanced conceptions concerning the goods production had already counted on industry and standardization and their managing aesthetic principle was the mathematical calculus and the standardized industrial production. At the beginning of the XXth century, the coexistence of the aesthetic factor and the utilitarian one is a more and more frequent phenomenon. It is more
exactly the phenomenon called design. Nameless and programless, design was practiced as the basis of all the great styles, but it was reconsidered as a specialized field since the development of the industrialized society. In this respect, arts conferred to design the role of preserving the unity of style [1].

At the end of the last century, while the continuous developing of the industrial society, production ran such a flow that all market demands for the useful products could be satisfied, at least virtually. The interest in the aesthetic value acquires new dimensions. However, the aesthetic values of the product cannot be conceived at random being subjected to the technical and functional criteria and also to the purpose. This generates the alteration of the relationship between creation-production-consumption but usually creation itself is the privilege of very few. Prototype is the initial stage of conceiving, while the accomplishment of the task is further the end of the technological process. At the beginning the so-called reproductions started to be manufactured in larger or smaller amounts. These are defined both as products belonging to decorative arts field and to industrial products. There could be mentioned some examples in this respect: the serial manufactured pottery, decorated by tracing, adorned glassware obtained by moulding or by punching alike those engraved or painted objects made by artists; the artistic canvas panels, made with printing technique, manufactured carpets; even some copies of embroideries also serial manufactured; metal shapes as reflected in cutlery and jewels [7].

For some objects like pottery, glassware, some metal housewares, artistic-like conceived, but serial manufactured by industrial means, there are two directions of their production development: one of them refers to following a model that was successful in the past, and the present production seems to be an imitation of it. Maybe they are appreciated in order to preserve tradition even in utilities. The other direction aims to take over as prototype some successful products or to conceive models for mass production according to them; these products are closer to the "design type" family of objects. Jewels are worth to be mentioned.

Modern technology make possible the producing of faking jewels like the original ones, made of precious metals and stones by engraving, moulding, setting, punching, filigree, enameling which visually differ very little from the original pattern. A similar technical success was also reached by the weaving industry since the very beginning, completed by the amazing aesthetic quality. The Egyptians made tapestry, carpets, pillows embellished with marvelous drawings whose models are still fashionable. Wonderful linen of some ancient peoples proves the special artistic taste of the creators. Weaving increased the number of techniques by knitting various threads and materials and in the XIXth century it was mechanized by introducing the “Jacquard” loom; the XXth century brought a large range of new and competitive methods.

Sometimes it is difficult to set boundaries between national styles, especially in a period like the contemporary one when the intense flow of values has accelerated the process of interlacing and even of globalization of styles (but this phenomenon didn't fade away the importance of the national culture as the main condition of the further globalization of values). As a matter of fact, the aesthetic elements could be found in different cultures and different periods of time. There are some examples: amphora and glass phial shape throughout history; ethno-design of the woolen canvas of the Andes culture (North of Columbia and Peru) that are almost identical with woolen ethno-design from the Carpathians.
area; Brancusi phenomenon - essence and transcendence of form - the Infinite Column as the fundamental shape in the cultures from the area between the Tigris and the Euphrates, as well as in the sculptural adornments of the inhabitants from the Danubiano-Carpathian area, and they are also found in jewels from Hinova culture.

The concernment for simplifying form, surfaces and volumes, for the clarity and expressively of the whole, of the technical composition does not suppose the total exclusion of embellishments or adornments. However, the adornment gains a major aesthetic value when it isn't in mere waste, when it is not obnoxious, but when, on the contrary, it encounters some aesthetic needs and necessities, feigning the common sense. The adornments still hold an important place in a large number of industrial products, such as: furniture clothing, linen, clothing, carpets, tapestry, silverware and jewels [5].

Due to experience, technical development and products diversifying as well as to human sensibility, forms evolved towards simplicity and beauty. They are easily perceptible, logical and intelligible and own a maximum of informational value. Although technical forms are strongly dependent on the technical-functional peculiarities of the object, the technical form owns a relative independence that allows at the constructive autonomy level a string of adjustment solutions and from the evaluating point of view it allows a certain gradation according to the aesthetic ideal that governs society, community or the individual.

The deep changes of our social-economical world, the strong penetration of automatization in each field of activity, the governmental regulations regarding the economic activity exert a special impact on the mass production. The complex, interactive and determinative factors for the applicability of the new innovational strategies are revival of international economical growth, the maturity of the stock market and diffusion of new technology, market globalization. All the above mentioned tendencies are emphasized by the market globalization reflected in the existence of multinational concerns which try to make the products suitable to the local market or, more specific, the existence of internationally accepted products and of the international trademarks [2].

CONCLUSIONS

In such circumstances, designers, engineers, economists try to cope better and better with the restrictions and technical and economical realities. The globalization of some products, the interactive market drive at such type of design whose differences related to origins and cultures are progressively dissolved. Such differences are due to some specific policies of the enterprises and countries regarding the image, products and the sale market. These come from: researching the styling context; exploring product semantics and product symbolism [3],[4].

Contextual and intrinsic aspects of the product together define its styling opportunities and constraints (Figure 1). Styling opportunities and constraints are of two general types. Firstly, there is a business context into which the new product must fit. A new industrial product developed for one company operating in a particular market might, for example, be completely inappropriate for another company in a different market [8]. Secondly, there are styling issues intrinsic to the product itself. What is the product and what statement is it trying to make to customers?
Production factors:
- strategies
- resources
- competitiveness

Cultural factors:
- cultural values
- semantical aspects
- customs and traditions

Massive movement of product

Intensive movement of people

Company or brand identity
Style of competitive product
Functional differentiation

Symbolism
Styling vision and personalizing
Life style and social values

INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS

NATIONAL STYLE

GLOBALIZATION

UNIVERSAL STYLE

Figure 1. The growing-up of the industrial product within globalization

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INTERNET BUYING BEHAVIOR. CASE STUDY: RESEARCH OF AES STUDENTS’ BEHAVIOR REGARDING ONLINE SHOPPING

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Abstract: Internet has become for many organizations a profitable channel for conducting businesses and a necessary condition to gain competitive advantages in a more technological orientated market. In spite of its importance, e-commerce diffusion has reached different levels of complexity in developed comparative with developing countries and this is shown in the European statistics regarding the volume and value of online shopping activities. Because it’s increasingly importance for external trading, many countries have integrated this new model of business at a macroeconomic level. At a microeconomic level, companies who want to integrate electronic channels in their strategic business plan need relevant and accurate information about the growth of online shopping and the dimension of internet buying behavior. Online shopping or online buying behavior may be considered a phenomenon which describes the process of buying goods or services via Internet. The present paper presents the results of an empirical research conducted in the Academy of Economic Studies from Bucharest and had as principal audience a sample of Romanian students. The main objective of the research was to determine the declared online shopping behavior of individuals.
74 in the EU27 who ordered goods or services over the internet increased from 24% in 2005 to 30% in 2007. The highest proportions of internet shoppers in 2007 were recorded in Denmark (55% in 2006), the Netherlands (55%), Sweden and the United Kingdom (both 53%), and the lowest in Bulgaria and Romania (both 3%) and Lithuania (6%).

Because it’s increasingly importance for external trading, many countries have integrated this new model of business at a macroeconomic level. Although, the speed and aera of penetration of Internet and electronic commerce are apparently high, there still are great differences between some geographical regions. The explanation may consist in the dynamic of the local business environments, which are characterized by specific economical, political, legal, social and technological features and may stimulate or discourage e-commerce adoption. Those fact are, also, reflected by Eurostat statistics, which show that: in 2006, 12% of individuals aged 16 to 74 in the EU27 had not ordered goods or services over the internet in the preceding 12 months because of worries about giving credit card or personal details online. These security and privacy concerns were most common in Spain (27%), Finland (26%) and Cyprus (20%). In the EU27 internet users, meaning individuals aged 16 to 74 who had used internet in the last three months, increased from 52% of all individuals aged 16 to 74 in 2006 to 57% in 2007. During the same time period, the proportion of internet users who used internet banking grew from 38% to 44%. In 2007, this proportion was highest in Finland (84%), Estonia (83%) and the Netherlands (77%), and lowest in Bulgaria (5%), Romania (7%) and Greece (12%).

At a microeconomic level, companies who want to integrate electronic channels in their strategic business plan need relevant and accurate information about the growth of online shopping and the dimension of internet buying behavior, both from an international and national perspective. Information regarding online consumer purchasing behavior will help companies to define and implement online strategies for Web site design, online advertising, market segmentation, product variety, and inventory holding and distribution (Bellman, S., Johnson, E., Lohse, G., 1999).

Online shopping or online buying behavior may be considered a phenomenon which describes the process of buying goods or services via Internet. The process consists of five steps similar to those associated with traditional shopping behavior (Liang and Lai, 2000). The process of online shopping behavior begins with the recognition of a certain need, which determines consumers to search for information on web sites. In the next stage, they will evaluate different buying possibilities by a set of personal criteria and will chose the product which best fit their expectation. After taking the purchasing decision, the consumer becomes the customer of a specific organization, due to a transaction and a series of eventual post-sales services.

Online shopping has been often considered to be the result of a complex relationship which exists between human attitudes and behavior towards purchasing products and services via Internet. Many empirical studies published in international economic and marketing journals highlights the factors which influence the consumer decision to buy online. They may be resumed in ten interrelated factors (Li, N., and Zhang, P., 2002) described as independent or dependent variable. The independent variables are antecedents of online consumers attitudes being classified in: external environment (existing legal framework that protects the consumers from any kind of loss in online transactions, a third party certification bodies who’s role is to ensure the trustworthiness of online firms and the numbers of competitors), demographics (age, gender, income, education), personal characteristics (consumers’ Internet knowledge, need specificity, cultural environment), product/service/vendor characteristics and website quality. These
five factors directly influence attitudes which determine the intention to shop online. The last mentioned variables stay at the base of consumers decision making which influence online purchasing and after that, the level of customer satisfaction.

The present paper presents the results of an empirical research conducted in the Academy of Economic Studies from Bucharest and had as principal audience a sample of 218 Romanian students from this university.

The main objective of the research was to determine the declared online shopping behavior of individuals. For this reason, the research focused on the following topics:
- the frequency of visits on an e-commerce website;
- the reasons for which they visit e-commerce websites;
- the percentage of those who have made at least one online purchase;
- the purchase frequency from the e-commerce websites;
- the most frequent bought products on the Internet.

Before collecting the necessary information for this research, we filtered the possible respondents so that those who work in e-commerce related domains wouldn’t participate in the investigation. Also, the students that had higher knowledge about marketing research were eliminated so that they wouldn’t alter the veracity of the information obtained.

The first objective of this research referred to the frequency of visits on an e-commerce website. As it is shown in Figure 1, most of the AES students visit an e-commerce website 2-3 times per month (22%), the average frequency being 5 times per month.

![Figure 1. The frequency of visits on an e-commerce website (%)](image)

Considering the fact that the index for the Internet usage in Romania are very low, it’s interesting to stress the fact that 35.8% of the AES students visit the ecommerce websites at least once a week. This gives a positive perspective to the future evolution of the online business, taking into account the growing rate of potential clients.
The next objective of the research is taking into account the percentage of AES students that have made at least one online purchase. The results show that 67.4% of the respondents bought at least once from an e-commerce website.

Using a bivariate analysis, we could show a correlation between the frequency of visits and the percentage of e-commerce buyers (see Figure 2) – once the frequency of the visits increases, the percentage of Internet buyers raises, those who visit the e-commerce websites daily being the ones who buy the most.

Another objective for this research considers the reasons for which AES students visit e-commerce websites. Figure 3 shows that the most frequent answer was “product purchase” (67.4% of the cases), followed by the need for general information about the products (63.8%) and “price comparison” (36.2%).
From this information we can conclude that there is a high purchase intention rate, those who visit the e-commerce website being a potential client. But an e-commerce organization must not rely only on these numbers, because the intentions are not always transformed into actual purchase.

For this reason, the next objective of the research refers to the purchase frequency from the e-commerce websites. Every business must take into consideration, besides the number of clients, the frequency of their purchase. This value isn’t very promising for the Romanian market, considering the fact that the results for the research show that, on average, an AES student buy for the Internet once every 3-4 months.

The last objective of this research is referring to the most frequent bought products on the Internet. As shown in Figure 4, the most bought products by the AES students from the Internet are clothes, footwear and accessories (38.5%) and IT equipment (37.8%).
### Figure 4. The most frequent bought products on the Internet (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>clothes, footwear and accessories</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT equipment</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mobiles</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gifts</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stationery</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>audio-video equipment</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>labor-saving devices</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>music and movies</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>others</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CONCLUSION

Considering the fact that every organization must make a very rigorously market segmentation, a correlation between the purchase frequency from the Internet and the products that are bought will give the e-commerce organization the opportunity to establish the most profitable segments. The results from this research show that AES students by with a higher frequency gifts, audio-video equipment and mobiles.

The present research proves its importance in establishing a quality strategy in an e-commerce environment, highlighting a series of relevant correlations between different dimensions of consumer buying behavior and the quality of the websites. As a conclusion, the e-commerce business objectives have to be customer oriented and to stimulate website visitors in becoming effective clients.

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ANTHROPOSOCIOLOGICAL ELEMENTS IN CULTURAL PUBLIC SERVICES

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Abstract: The importance of cultural services, of cultural public services-CPS, in particular, is obvious, taking into consideration the new political and socio-economical conditions, all around the world and from Romania. Especially on a cultural level, there are pointed out some processes and phenomenons which disquiet both rulers and simple people, both old and young people, both big and small countries. The present work underlines the fact that the approach of cultural services, when the anthropological elements are taken into consideration, brings the expected results.

INTRODUCTION

Public services are advantages or satisfactions given by companies or by the State to the public, free of charge (transportation, juridical consultancy and housekeeping); expressed more concise, public services are general importance activities, provided by a public or a private organism but they, also, are organisms that provide those kinds of activities/Sch/.

Cultural public services (CPS) represent the category of public services that have, as a common element, the cultural characteristics. In the respective category, there exist entities and activities that pursue the conservation and the development of the culture from the reference space.

CULTURAL PUBLIC SERVICES

The culture is defined in many ways: "all the material and spiritual values made by humankind and all the institutions needed for transmitting these values" /Cot/, "ensemble of values formed as human characteristic of projective, attitudinal and prefferential reactions to the world, the process of creation and modification of values" but, also, "activities and models of behavior of a given social group, differentiated by the rules to whom they subordinate, being transmissible thorough education" /Pop/ or "the ensemble of social structures and artistic, religious, intellectual manifestation that define a group, a society in comparison with another one" /Lar/.

Referring to the synonyms of the terms "culture" and "civilization", varied authors have different positions: O. Spengler considers civilization "the last stadium of decay and culture’s death"; for E. B. Taylor, "civilization is a higher stadium of culture, which comes after savageness and wildness" /pop/. The significance of "cultural" adjective refers to the culture of a society, of a person, to its development and it takes into consideration the culture’s development and evokes the forms of culture. In the specialty literature it is well known the "cultural industry” collocation, with the significance of "ensemble of cultural and artistic activities presented from the point of view of their economical importance, of their market" /lar/.
Culture has many components: individual culture (knowledge and layouts of behaving which the person uses in order to make a imagine of perception about the exterior world and for completing its own goals), general culture (knowledge that satisfies the need of the spirit and offers the person aesthetical taste and critical spirit), mass culture (socio-cultural reality which includes behavior, attitude, reactions, collective representations, values that are produced and strongly broadcasted through means of mass communication - TV, radio, press, cinema, internet).

Major difference are made between material culture, spiritual culture and physical culture (institutions, systems, concepts and all the means that pursue the harmonious development of the human body, both for its health and for the development of physical qualities, necessary in human activity, sport etc.).

The Need of CPS and its Importance

The need of culture does not seem to be a primordial need of a person, if we refer to the well known pyramid of the human needs, of A. Maslow. In the respective pyramid, there are mentioned indirect cultural needs like: the need of wellbeing, of friendship, of respect, of self esteem, of morality etc.; all of them are being presented at a higher level (three or more), so, without a tartness aspect /Mas/. However, systematical studies shows that, in developed countries, a segment of population considers the cultural needs as important as the primordial needs or very close to these needs.

A necessary distinction between individual needs and social needs has to be made; on a social level, it can be distinguished the huge importance and the tartness of the cultural needs. In general, society did not acquaint important changes on different levels of evolution. The rule, in the evolution of the society, is of the *consonant changes* /Scol, which emphasizes strong relations between the evolutions of different sectors of the society. It is obvious, for example, the concomitance of the political and cultural stages in the process of Europeanisation of the countries recently accepted in the European Union.

More, the contemporaneous society is affected by the general phenomenon of globalization, situation which needs an adaptation of change, multiculturalism, mobility, tolerance etc. But, this availability is build up through strong cultural education, correctly systematical oriented. The factors that influence the change can be distributed in four big groups: political factors, economical factors, socio-cultural and technological factors. Some socio-cultural factors are: demographical tendencies, the changes of a life style, the attitude near work, the attitude in front of minorities, sex problems, environment concern, ethic in business /Mar, p. 82/.

Recent literature presents the consacration of an unconventional capital form, with a status of some strong motivational factors, on a person level or on an organization level: cultural capital and symbolical capital. *The cultural capital* is a cultural concept well known, because of Pierre Bourdieu, who, in his work *The forms of capital* (1986) describes three form of capital: economical capital, social capital and cultural capital (knowledge forms, qualifications, education; any advantage and situation that offers a person a better imagine, in a society, over expectations). The first accumulations of this capital are made in family, when parents provide to their children a social capital, attitudes and knowledge that makes the educational system a more comfortable and familiar place and so the children could be more successful. Later, was brought the concept of symbolical capital, with the significance of resources that a person disposes as honour, prestige and self esteem.
In English community, there is an interest for defining the cultural rights from the user point of view, with a special attention on excellence, access, innovation, creativity and success. The goal of this action refers to arts, creative industries, museums and donations, galleries, libraries, archives, events promotion and festivals.

Modern society found the optimal formula for enlightenment which can be accomplished through cultural public services, making part, most frequently, of the so called public administration. So, Romanian Law Number 215/2001 for local public administration (published in the Oficial Monitor no. 204 on the 23rd of April, 2001) modified by Law 286/2006 mentions in the second section, called "The attributions of the Local Council", at art. 38, (2) that between the main attributions of the Local Council, it has to contribute to the organization of scientific, cultural, artistic, sport and amusement activities. The same low settles, at art. 104, the main attribution of the County Council: "it provides financial support for cultural actions or for those actions initiated by religion cults, as for educational-scientific activities and for sport activities" and it establishes cultural and social institutions (…) providing their proper function, because of the allocation of the necessary funds.

**Features of Public Administration / CPS**

As any public service, the cultural service can be characterized by: universality, continuity, constant adaptation (flexibility), accessibility (the equality of everybody near the public service), transparency. Some of the details of these features, which characterize entities, in particular- public services are being commented, from now on.

For all the work that is being deposit, public servants have a salary given by the public budget, situations which impose a certain strict status, specific to the public servant.

In democratic countries, public administration is laic, because it uses personnel which do not interfere, directly, for providing a religious need; but, in some states, in an exceptional manner, the religious cult has a public service feature.

Public administration is equal, because it has to provide services for everybody, in an equal manner, without making a distinction of origin, race or public affiliation.

Administration has a continuity feature, those activities and public services provided by the administration have to be made in a continuous manner.

On a side, the administration is realized by representatives chosen by the people, by temporary servants, but also, by permanent servants who form servant corps (this is a very obvious feature in cultural services) that offers to the administration a continuity feature.

**Examples of CPS**

On a different level of human communities (states, regions, localities) there are big differences regarding the list of cultural services, its content, the manner of managing/administrating, differences which are determined by many factors: local traditions, people’s culture level, economical development level (economical potential of the administration), political context, social.

Carrying on, there are presented some of the realities of the contemporaneous public services in the world.

An example of a cultural service given by a state in another state, is represented by the services offered by France in USA, which include: cinema projections, Francophone
Days, (every year, on the 20th of March, it is celebrated the common language of those 200 millions French speakers all around the globe), literature (books launch, writers meeting, literal spectacles), music (the promotion of some French musical values, like Charles Tessier’s creations—about 1600—a very prolific and appreciated composer of his time—by the ensemble of soloist instrumentalist managed by Vincent Dumetres, with the band called Le Poème Harmonique), dramatic spectacles, visual arts (expositions, spectacles) /fre/.

The cultural services of Cultural Service for County Council, Somerset-UK, as a part of the Directory of Culture and Community, hints at cultural actions most in libraries, but also in galleries, spectacle halls etc. These services develop the quality of life, promote active engagement through literature and art, and contribute to learning and to the forming of civic spirit.

The Central Government and the local authorities of China have adopted, from early March 2008, a new law which aims to increase the number of visitors: more than 300 of museums, libraries and galleries will have their doors opened for free access in their halls. The law is announcing to be not only contextual, but permanent too. The authorities have taken in consideration some problems produced by the rise of the number of visitors which have a connection with the changing of air composition in the exposition spaces. They are, also, confronting with some problems regarding the ignorance of some of the visitors about the rules which regard the preservation of the artifacts; so, they force the museums administrations to buy systems and equipments in order to assure the protection of the exhibits.

At the same time, elevated cultural services, which were by now particular only to the biggest Chinese urban centers, were prepared for other regions of the country too. For these activities and for the increase of the level of the particular understructure (the so-called "Culture Industry"), in the last five years, 50 billion yuans have been spent. Also, some important sums will be spent for the acquisition of equipments and means which can assure a good and large access to information and culture /wcn/.

These three examples that have been presented reflects different situations from vary points of view: the first one reflects the situation of a country which represents a great modern culture and which makes a propaganda in a huge, multicultural, space, as USA; the second one reflects constant concerns of a cultural environment relatively conservator and elitist, careful with traditional values; the third example brings concerns from a multi millennium cultural space, with an impressing developing evolution, in a very special context— the imminent on-coming of the Olympic Games that they will host.

ANTHROPOSOCIOLOGY AND SPECIFIC APPROACH IN CPS

Anthropology studies human being and humanity, in all its aspects: physical, anatomical, physiological, pathological and cultural-social, psychological, geographical etc., in correlation with the natural and socio-cultural conditions. Anthropology, defined in this manner, contains, of course, specific elements of the cultural public services. Besides, in the centre of this discipline exits the concept of culture and the idea that this represents the human specie, specie which have develop its capacity to manage symbols and to represent reality, the social one, especially, through symbols.

In particular, anthropology studies human being by comparison with other animal species with an accent on the use of language in communication, arts, religions, clothes, places to live, action and operation techniques, representations of space and time.
So, anthropology contains more important branches: cultural-social anthropology, anthropology of language, physical anthropology, archeological anthropology. The first two contains interest elements for the present work. The significances that are being given, in different countries, to these names of the main branches can be different: for example, the notion of cultural anthropology is, also, called social anthropology in United Kingdom or ethnology in France, Italy and east-European countries and it has the meaning of the study of faiths and institutions, of customs and traditions of different human societies.

The important chapters of life and human culture made different areas memorable in anthropology, in which concerns different aspects: political, social, economic, religious, simbolic, etc. And in the meantime various studies and issues of the humanity generated many anthropologies: starting with the anthroplogy of the body and nourishment anthroplogy going as far as to the anthroplogy of the family or even mass-media.

Similarly, sociology studies the rules and processes which lead the interhuman individual relationships, but mainly between human groups: from small associates in different firms, where human behaviour is viewed from the social point of view and also handles the study of institutions in the given society.

The most prevalent methods of investigation and knowledge in sociology are: the interview, opinion analysis, social observation, group analysis.

The anthroposocial approach is, more than in other cases, essential in cultural services, where efficient communication is the first condition to obtain positive results in a specific action. It is tipical for people to feel their culture, the beliefs and practices in their community as something normal and most natural while the other’s are viewed as something foreign, and even inferior. Various empirical observations show this fact and maintain at the same time pesimistic conceptions regarding the perspectives of a more efficient future communication, characterized by multiculturalism. It is a paradox that even if technical improvements are at their height, communication between human beings and between different cultural groups is regressing, showing a slow progress in comparison to the high level of technology progress.

Nevertheless, various facts show that people belonging to different cultures, speaking different languages, whithout understanding each other through the language they speak, are able to walk down the same path togheter, live and work side by side without any conflict aroused.

These facts generate questions aiming at the limits of the anthroposocial boundaries, reports between different types of human relationships and groups and stating the possibility "of gaining goodwill from conflictual values" /Ham/. These data and suppositions are used to project the possibility of creating competences for multicultural environments, where we place public cultural services.

Economic Aspects of CPS

As shown above, in Romania the public administration – local councils – is compeld by law to contribute in organising scientific activities, cultural, artistic, sports and pleasure activities and at the same time to assure their well function allocating the necessary funds.

The bugetary classification of expenses and incomes reveals also the social and cultural expenses such as: education, research, health, sports, religion and social asistance. The state budget has the financial resources compiled annually by law to finnance social or cultural activities as well as educational ones.
Public expenses for social and cultural activities have their origins in the interventionist political-economic ideology, known in America after the second world war, the so-called doctrine of the *goodwealth state*. A few of the authority’s goals in such a state are: the assurance of a minimum income, the guarantee of a good living standard for the entire population related to a certain list of services and minimalising the effects of an event which implies social risk. These kind of services are offered free of charge or at a small price, or through allowances, pensions, assistance through which the population can afford a decent living standard. In high developed countries in order to assure these facilities 50% of the national income is spent.

Public expenses for social and cultural activities usually involve different areas such as health, culture, sports, youth dedicated actions, security or social protection. From the public social and cultural expenses in the Romanian budget it is worth to mention distinct areas: culture, religion and youth.

Public expense for culture, sports and youth activity have a special contribution to spiritual, aesthetic, and moral education of the population through artistic activities, sports or leisure activities. These kind of expenses are the source of finance for cultural and artistic institutions (publishing houses, museums, libraries, movie theater, etc.) which produce either goods of spiritual values, either services of spiritual values.

The central and local budgetary resources are the source of finance, as well as the extrabudgetary income and budgetary allowances or even funds from outside the state budget (for example: The National Fund of Cinematography, The National Cultural Fund), from private funds of public/private organisations – sponsorships, from funds of organisations without profitable purpose (NGO’s, charity institutions, etc.), from external financiers (refundable and nonrefundable, offered by organisations such as: UNICEF, UNESCO, The World Bank, etc.).

The price of these products can be heard totally by the state or partially by subventions, and by case the services are either free of charge (the case of public libraries, some musical shows) either paid for (museums, shows). The free of charge or paid character must be fundamented on some contextual analysis which has to take into consideration the results on the long term as well as the ones on the short term and compare the expenses with all the results (economic, social and all results of any other nature).

We should mention that cultural services are different from others in which concerns the long term and very long term results as well as the strategic character of some of these kind of services, mainly those for young people.

**CPS for Youth**

In Romania the National Authority for Youth – ANT is a special organ of the central public administration, with judicial personality, subordinate to the Government, financed by the Prime Minister’s budget, with a role in applying the youth government policy. The main idea that guides the organisation’s activity is the harmonization of its programs with the one’s from outside the civil society, facing the necessities and social issues of young people. It was founded in 2004, taking over the activity in youth area from the former Minister of Education, Research and Youth. The institution had as its main attributions the following: supporting youth organisations, organising its own actions, administrating youth centers all around the country as well as organising camps. The new founded institution had in its order. The Agency for Student Support, The Student Houses of Culture and The “Tei”
Student’s Sports Cultural from Bucharest. The organisation incorporated also the former National Agency for Supporting Youth Initiatives.

The activity of The National Youth Authority is focused on: elaborating the legislation in youth area, developing studies, research in youth area, consultancy in the same field, organising nonformal education programs, proper with the targeted audience: summer schools, thematic camps, team building courses; financing different youth projects and actions to promote civic involvement, associativity, mobility; organising leisure and amusement programs – through – amusement centers and Student Culture Houses; informing and counseling through youth centers; international collaborations in youth interest areas (health, education, culture, leisure); international youth exchange programs.

From the ANT activity Calendar for 2007, the following factors and directions detach, in which concerns the cultural components in youth interests:
- National sounding /diagnosis representative for the 8 regions of Romania: describing the aspirations horizon, the need for self-development of young people; the degree of adjustment of local and regional communities to the progress of nowadays global society, as well as to the way this is reflected in the individual consciences, in what concerns the access to technology, knowledge, education, work, values of tolerance and open society, etc.
- National sounding regarding opinions and work and education options: the identification of the main expectations young people have in what concerns their professional formation as well as assuring proper workplaces, the development of personal strategies regarding the migration of labour force.
- National sounding regarding leisure and participation options: the identification of the specific leisure needs, identification of the main participation types.
- Evaluation of the activity of some social services for young people: youth centers, information and counseling centers, amusement centers, building and placing force labour centers.
- Non-governmental organisations and volunteering: the identification of opinions, perceptions, attitudes, values, knowledge of young people regarding the formal/informal participation to NGO’s activity, mainly volunteering; shaping the resistance factors to the civic participation and politics in general and particularly nongovernmental organisations.
- The cultural consumption of young people from books to computers: exploring young people’s preferences in the cultural consumption field; identification of cultural consumption’s supply and possible types of customers; evaluating the impact of cultural programs developed by the European capital of culture (Sibiu, 2007) on young people.

CONCLUSIONS

Nowadays cultural context highly underlines the cultural public services, which have a great importance in preparing generations to step into the competition that contemporan society involves with maximum chances.

The great challenges in individuals’ life and the world’s in general caused by de commercial globalisation, mainly from behalf of the young generation, created new cultural competences, enlarged, that must be taken into consideration by all people involved in social and cultural activities: guvernment, political factors, public services, public.

To keep it short it is very important to take into consideration the anthroposociologic basic views as an efficient measure of effectiveness regarding cultural public services.
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POLICIES CONCERNING SQAM SERVICES DEVELOPMENT IN ROMANIA

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Abstract: The main instruments that ensure the free movement of goods on the big European market are: the European directives, harmonized standards, accreditation, conformity certification by a third party (of the management system, of products and services), testing and metrology. The rendition or setting up of these instruments do not signify that the economic agents are immediately capable to use them in an optimal way. It is necessary to build a national infrastructure, aligned with the European and international practices, that can carry out SQAM services for the economic agents so that they can put into practice these instruments, vital for efficiency and competitiveness. The SQAM services refer to standardization, quality insurance and conformity assessment, accreditation and metrology. The paper refers to the competitive potential of the SQAM services, connected to the European and international practices, and also to the promotion of a national policy for the development of these services, with specific objectives and actions in the field of standardization, assessment and certification of conformity, accreditation and metrology.

COMPETITIVE POTENTIAL OF THE SQAM SERVICES

The main arguments which demonstrates the competitive potential of SQAM services refers to:[3]

a) Increasing the competitiveness through quality of the Romanian companies

• Romania joining EU supposes to apply the single mark CE on all Romanian products. Considering that granting the CE mark will be done in specific conformity conditions with the essential requests of the EU Directives, this will influence in a positive way the manufacturing technologies of products, with benefits to products’ performance and quality.

• Signing the multilateral recognition protocols with the EA by the national accreditation organization, in the field of accrediting the certification bodies for quality management systems (SMC) will lead to a fast increase in Romanian companies’ competitiveness that will implement and certify a SMC, considering at least two aspects: the certification will be international acknowledged and manufacturing the products according to the essential requests of the Directives from the New Approach of the EU, under the incidence of the D, E, H modules requires the existence of a quality management system.

• Implementing and certifying the management system (mainly the quality management one) will lead to an increase of professional and managerial performances in the Romanian companies and will allow them to occupy a competitive position on the European internal market and the international one. In the same time, they will optimize the quality/price report assuring that the products satisfy de quality demands.
The growth in Romanian companies’ competitiveness through the increase of their performances generated by the applying and certification of the specific management systems: environment (SMM), food security (HACCP), occupational security (OHSAS), informational security (SIS).

The increase in competitiveness of the Romanian products by decreasing cost for testing and conformity certification of the products

- The existence of a national organization for accrediting the conformity evaluation infrastructure (RENAR), recognized by the Romanian Government will determine the applying of the principle “One testing, one certification” at a national level, thus removing the additional costs generated by supplementary testing and certification requested by different authorities or institutions.

- Signing the Multilateral Recognition Agreement (MLA) by the national accreditation organization with the specialty organization of the EU – European Cooperation for Accreditation (EA) – will lead to applying the principle “One testing, one certification, one accreditation” also for the Romanian products that will have access to the single European market. This will be materialized in the opportunity for the economic agents from Romania to test/certify the products meant for export in the EU area, resorting to laboratories and certification organizations in Romania, at lower prices than the ones practiced in the developed countries of the European Union.

- Also, through partnerships between the Romanian organizations and the similar ones from the EU countries will decrease costs for testing and certification. The decrease of the price of Romanian products will contribute to the substantial growth of the competitiveness in the export, which will have beneficial effects on the profit of Romanian companies.

- Relieving the Romanian producers of the burden of additional costs generated by multiple testing and certification will be realized also through signing the Mutual Recognition Agreement with the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and the International Accreditation Forum (IAF).

CONNECTING TO THE EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL PRACTICES

The competitive potential of Romanian organisations which are SQAM service providers grows because they are related to European and international practices in this field as follows: [2]

a) Romanian Association of Standardization
- the rules and the structures of ASRO are full compatible with those from the European standardization organization;
- ASRO activity take place at the technical committee similar for the majority of the standardization domains at European and international level, setting up in this way an identical work methodology with those from the standardization organization;
- ASRO is a full rights member of the European standardization organization CEN and CENELEC and of the international organizations ISO and CEI;
- Because of ASRO, Romania adopted totally the latest European published standards used by the standardization organization CEN, CENELEC and ETSI, as well as New Approach Directives;
• In Romania standards used has a voluntary character, as the New Approach regulations according to the standardization, and also the Good Practice Code of OMC are expected.

b) The Romanian Accreditation Association
   • the statutory rules and the structures of RENAR are fully compatible with those of the similar organizations in the EU countries;
     • RENAR carries on its activity by the ISO/CEI 17011/2004 standard all of a same as the accreditation organizations in the EU;
     • RENAR is a member of European Cooperation for Accreditation (EA), as well as the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and the International Accreditation Forum (IAF), using reference documents adopted by these organizations from the series ISO 17000 ISO 9000, ISO 14000, European norms from the series 45000 and guides of application for these standards;
     • RENAR has constituted Mirror Technical Committees (after the EA example) depending on the types of activities with a main attribution of taking and harmonising the EA guides and recommendations;
     • RENAR is a signatory of the Multilateral Recognition Agreement (MLA) with the EA and the Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) with ILAC and IAF;
     • the rules of accreditation and and selection criteria of the evaluators are established in conformity with the reference standards from the series SR EN ISO/CEI 17000 and SR EN 45000.

c) The organizations of assessment and certification of conformity
   • the assessment of conformity procedure practised by the Romanian organizations are based on the assessment modules of the Global Approach in the testing and certification field;
     • the law that states the infrastructure of the assessment of goods conformity (no.608/2001) is compatible with the European rules in this field;
     • like in all the other member states of the EU Romania has adopted the practice of certification in the regulatory area and the unregulatory area;
     • in the field of management systems the certification of conformity is made by the standards in the series: SR EN ISO 9001 (in the field of quality – SMC), SR EN ISO 14000 (in the environment field – SMM), SR EN ISO 22000 (in the food security field – HACCP), SR EN ISO/CEI 17799 (in the information security field – SSI), and the OHSAS 18001 (in the health and occupational security field).

d) Romanian Bureau of Legal Metrology
   • the metrology legislation is compatible with the EU regulations;
     • the BRML confirmation and acknowledgement for the competence of the economic agents laboratories as well as the regional laboratories, is realized based on the SR EN ISO/CEI 17025 referential;
     • National Institute of Metrology (INM), which is subordinate to BRML, is a full right member of European Cooperation in etalon domain (EUROMET);
     • INM is a signer of the Mutual Acknowledgement Chord of National Etalons and Etalon and Measurement Certificatory (CIPM-MRA).
PROMOTION THE NATIONAL POLICY REGARDING SQAM SERVICES DEVELOPMENT

In conformity with the study “Increasing through quality of the Romanian industry competitiveness”, carried out by Fiatest TQM, UGIR 1903 and ASRO, during the period 2007 – 2010, it is supposed an increase of the demand for the products having CE mark an increase of the number certified SMC and SMM companies. This fact imposes a set of priorities in developing the activity of the Romanian bodies providing SQAM services. (table 1)

Table 1. The evolution of the certifications 2007 - 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of CE certified products</th>
<th>Number of certified SMC companies</th>
<th>Number of certified SMM companies</th>
<th>Number of certified SMC auditors</th>
<th>Number of certified SMM auditors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>8000</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For obtaining these requirements it is necessary for service provider organizations SQAM from Romania to set up some priorities like those referring:

- to the optimization of the resource utilization;
- to grow the relevance on the market;
- to improve the communication process at a national and international level;
- to improve the performance for the testing laboratory;
- to improve the methodology infrastructure and its capacity to survey the market;
- to extend and going deep for human resources expertise for evaluation activity of accreditation and certification.

For every organization which provides SQAM services the problem of implementation of the informational system for the marketing strategy has highly importance. This kind of system must contain informational areas including market information, economic information, competitors information, the demand SQAM services information and information about the European and international organization in this field. [5]

The implementation of the SQAM services to the European and international practices, as well as the arrangement of some priorities for Romanian organizations which activates in this field are not enough for full revaluation of the competitive potential of these services. It is also necessary to make a promotion for the national development policies for SQAM services, with specified objectives and actions in the standardization, assessment and certification, accreditation and metrology.

Specified objectives

- institutional development for the national organization of standardization as a capable structure for developing activities in standardization and for providing services at the demand level according to the European and International practices;

Numar special ? Noiembrie 2008
laboratory capacity development for a better determination of the characteristics and performance of the products, in similar condition with the laboratories from the UE;

- the accreditation activity promotion as a trust solid basis in the laboratory competence, certification organization and inspection organization implicated in testing, certification and supervision activity;
- the growth of the accreditation domain to new directions, request by the market and by the environment management system, health and security at employment level, but also the information security;
- the preparation of the economic agents for obtaining requirements impose by the free circulation of the products on the European market.

**Specified actions**

**a) Governmental level**

For realizing an efficient development for the quality of the infrastructure and for the certification of the resemblance according to the law 608/2001 which requires to the evaluation of the product resemblance, the Economy and Commerce Ministry was appointed as an activity coordinator in this domain.

In this position, MEC elaborates: policies and strategies, evaluates and surveys the organization activities for resemblance evaluation, MEC initiates and promotes legislative horizontal measures specified to this sector, sustains the integration of the national structure in European and international organization which activates in resemblance domain, initiates projects and nationally technical assistance program.

Align efforts to the requirement and European practices in the quality infrastructure domain are and will be sustained by the Romanian government, but it is necessary for it to have a more constructive vision upon the SQAM services provider organizations in order to improve their competence and capability, without these the application of the free circulation of goods can not get economic advantages on European market for Romania. As a result, the Government must be implicated in activities like:

- unitary coordination for organization and structures which activates on the market in order to maintain surveillance of the quality of products like accreditation, certification, inspection organization;
- settle the responsibility area for this organizations, the input and output elements, but also the connection between them;
- the implementation of severe regulations for those who break the market laws referring to the quality of the products and track those who break these laws;
- the implementation and certification for the quality management system in the governmental institution and public administration, in order to grow the services quality;
- the stimulation of economic agents which develop activities in a management system and which participates to the Romania/European quality prize by expenses deduction for certification and consultation from the income tax. [6]

Although SQAM service provider infrastructure exists and functions for some years in Romania, until now it is not realized an analysis to settle that this services, assured by Romanian organizations, answer totally to the economic agents needs. From this reason it is necessary to realize a study upon the way how the SQAM service provider organizations answer to the requirements of the economic agents. From the result of this study they can take necessary measures to fortify and develop the system.
b) The employers and trade union level

- encourage promotion and implementation/development of the management system in the companies for making the economic agents to understand the role and the importance of quality on the European and international market; education and training for information and consulting in the management system domain;
- organize regional seminars for understanding the UE requirements for free circulation of the goods and for the notification, accreditation and certification national system, as well as the UE Directives referring to the products security and CE mark;
- organize a number of courses for resemblance evaluation, laboratories accreditation, quality system certification system, applying CE mark on the Romanian products and realization of a data base with the Romanian products which have the CE mark;
- encourage the Romanian companies to participate at the Romanian/European prize for quality and for the elaboration of the projects for national programs CALIST (quality and standardization) and INFRAS (quality infrastructure);
- organize an information Bureau concerning the economic agents obligations which come from the application of the principle of the free circulation of the products.

c) Research and high education institutes level

- the accreditation of the experiment/analysis laboratories and providing specified services for the economic agents form Romania, and also for those from the country members of the UE, in the context of the existence of the European internal market and the existence of some acknowledgement multilateral chords signed with European Cooperation of Accreditation;
- development of some experiment schemes inter-laboratories which can provide on economic basis services specified to the laboratories from our country and EU;
- realize some economic partnerships with the research/development institutes from the EU countries for realizing together analysis/testing and certification services;
- creating a national center for testing goods offered to the consumers in order to provide information validated through experiments in accredited laboratories;
- the adjustment for the technical and economic support for the learning programs including master’s and doctor’s programs realized at the EU requirements for preparing necessary personnel for the SQAM service provider infrastructure;
- certifies the partnership between universities and evaluation and certification resemblance infrastructure, necessary for growing the competence of the specialists who participates at the accreditation/certification process.

d) Certification and accreditation level

- accreditation of the organization and laboratories only by the accreditation organizations which signed the Multilateral Acknowledgement Chord with EA and Mutual Acknowledgement Chord with ILAC and IAF;
- the experiment traceability assurance only in relation with international standards used by the National Institute of Metrology or by the etalon laboratories known at the international level;
- participation of the testing/experiment laboratories at the experiment scheme of comparison with the well known international inter-laboratories;
- all the certification and inspection organizations will work only with accredited laboratories;
• settle partnerships between notified organization from Romania and those from the EU countries;
• settle an official partnership between evaluation and certification resemblance laboratories/organizations and the market security organizations and border authorities;
• the importance of mass-media, for the promotion of the materials which has importance for the certification and evaluation resemblance infrastructure of the products and management systems as well as the their role in growing products and Romanian company competition.

CONCLUSION

At a national level, both the legislation and the institutional framework concerning the infrastructure of assessment and certification of conformity are well structured and connected to the European and international practices.

Connecting the infrastructure of assessment and certification of conformity to the European practices will assure: rights and interests consumers' protection, the increase of products and services' quality, the substantial growth of the Romanian products' exports, a better satisfaction of internal and external customers.

The national infrastructure for assessment and certification of conformity has a strong multiplicative effect on the development and competitiveness of Romanian companies because: they contribute to the increase of competitiveness of firms on the international and European market, they ensure the free movement of goods and services, they contribute to the consumers' and environment protection.

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Abstract: Food safety and traceability are currently at the forefront of both government and industry discussions around the world. Numerous initiatives designed to introduce various forms of tracking and tracing functionalities in food supply chain are underway. The introduction of EAN•UCC system is a solution for this problem. But the main disadvantage of EAN•UCC system is the fact that barcodes are carriers of data. By using RFID tags some of barcodes disadvantages were eliminated and also new facilities are available. This paper presents a way for tracing agriculture, food and beverage products by using RFID tags and their advantages.

INTRODUCTION

Consumer safety has become one of the most critical and priority issues for the food supply chain. Despite the best efforts by food products supply chain participants, food safety problems may never be completely excluded. However, an effective and cost-efficient traceability system can pinpoint such a problem to a specific region, packing facility, group of growers, a grower or even a field, rather than an entire commodity group. Narrowing the potential scope of a problem is in line with legal requirements and can reduce the negative economic impact on the supply chain participants who are not responsible for its occurrence.

Implementation of public and private traceability systems by means of automated data capture, electronic data processing and electronic communications can significantly improve accuracy and speed of access to information about the production and provenance of food. They can reduce risk and uncertainty both across the supply chain and between trading partners.

To achieve traceability of agriculture, food and beverage products within supply chains it is essential to identify the items concerned and to provide a seamless facility for maintaining identification of those items from source to consumer. Primary and secondary aspects of identification are necessary to ensure traceability.

Primary identification is about identifying the source components whether they are crop-based, fish or animals. Different techniques are available to determine identification at this level and are primarily DNA or other molecular based analytical methods that can be used to identify an individual entity to a reasonable degree of statistical confidence. They are invariably feature extraction techniques since they depend upon recognizing a set of features that can be considered characteristically unique for the entity concerned. The most significant feature of these techniques is that they identify the entity by measuring some aspects of their make-up.

In contrast secondary identification is based upon attributing an identifier to an entity in a form that can be attached or conveniently accompany that entity through or
partly through the supply chain. Secondary identification relies upon the use of numbers or alphanumeric strings, where possible exploiting available standards for numbering and identification (like EAN•UCC system standard). The identifiers are carried in appropriate data carriers or devices that allow either human or machine readability, or both.

Secondary identification can be used at source, to tag animals, for example, and may also be used to identify batches of raw materials. By far the greater use of secondary identification is for identify entities at various level of packaging from single items through packages, transport units, unit loads and pallet level, containers and transport units.

In order to use a secondary identifier for item management and traceability purposes a data carrier is required. This is the physical entity which is attached to, directly marked upon or accompanies the item and carries in some machine-readable form the identification number or alphanumeric means of identification.

A range of data carrier technologies and an even wider range of products and systems are available to support identification at these various levels. The technologies that are considered particularly relevant to the needs for agriculture, food and beverage products traceability include: linear barcodes, two-dimensional codes, contact memory devices, radiofrequency identification (RFID).

**RFID TECHNOLOGY PRESENTATION**

Radiofrequency identification (RFID) is an important area of data carrier development, with new generation systems and products offering considerable potential for low-cost data carrier applications. RFID covers a range of data carrying technologies, for which the transfer of data from the data carrier is achieved via a radiofrequency link.

A basic RFID system consists of three components: an antenna, a reader (transceiver, decoder, and antenna) and a RF tag that is electronically programmed with unique information.

The antenna emits radio signals to activate the tag and read and write data to it. Antennas controls the system’s data acquisition and communication. Antennas are available in a variety of shapes and sizes; they can be built into a doorframe to receive tag data from persons or things passing through the door, or mounted on an access point to monitor traffic passing by on a freeway. The electromagnetic field produced by an antenna can be constantly present when multiple tags are expected continually. If constant interrogation is not required, a sensor device can activate the field.

Readers can be configured either as a handheld or a fixed-mount device. The reader emits radio waves in ranges of anywhere from one inch to 100 feet or more, depending upon its power output and the radio frequency used. When an RFID tag passes through the electromagnetic zone, it detects the reader’s activation signal. The reader decodes the data encoded in the tag’s integrated circuit and the data is passed to the host computer for processing.

RFID tags come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes. They are categorized as either active or passive. Active RFID tags are powered by an internal battery and are typically read/write, i.e., tag data can be rewritten and/or modified. An active tag’s memory size varies according to application requirements; some systems operate with up to 1MB of memory. In a typical read/write RFID work-in-process system, a tag might give a machine a set of instructions, and the machine would then report its performance to the tag. This encoded data would then become part of the tagged part’s history. The battery-supplied power of an active tag generally gives it a longer read range. The trade off is greater size.
greater cost, and a limited operational life (which may yield a maximum of 10 years, depending upon operating temperatures and battery type).

Passive RFID tags operate without a separate external power source and obtain operating power generated from the reader. Passive tags are consequently much lighter than active tags, less expensive, and offer a virtually unlimited operational lifetime. The trade-off is that they have shorter read ranges than active tags and require a higher-powered reader. Read-only tags are typically passive and are programmed with a unique set of data (usually 32 to 128 bits) that cannot be modified. Read-only tags most often operate as a license plate into a database, in the same way as linear barcodes reference a database containing modifiable product-specific information. [1]

Their frequency ranges also distinguish RFID systems. Low-frequency (30 KHz to 500 KHz) systems have short reading ranges and lower system costs. They are most commonly used in security access, asset tracking, and animal identification applications. High-frequency (850 MHz to 950 MHz and 2.4 GHz to 2.5 GHz) systems, offering long read ranges (greater than 90 feet) and high reading speeds, are used for such applications as railroad car tracking and automated toll collection. However, the higher performance of high-frequency RFID systems incurs higher system costs.

The significant advantage of all types of RFID systems is the non-contact, non-line-of-sight nature of the technology. Tags can be read through a variety of substances such as snow, fog, ice, paint, crusted grime, and other visually and environmentally challenging conditions, where barcodes or other optically read technologies would be useless. RFID tags can also be read in challenging circumstances at remarkable speeds, in most cases responding in less than 100 milliseconds. The read/write capability of an active RFID system is also a significant advantage in interactive applications such as work-in-process or maintenance tracking. Though it is a costlier technology (compared with barcode), RFID has become indispensable for a wide range of automated data collection and identification applications that would not be possible otherwise.

Developments in RFID technology continue to yield larger memory capacities, wider reading ranges, and faster processing. It is highly unlikely that the technology will ultimately replace barcode — even with the inevitable reduction in raw materials coupled with economies of scale, the integrated circuit in an RF tag will never be as cost-effective as a barcode label. However, RFID will continue to grow in its established niches where barcode or other optical technologies are not effective. [2]

ADVANTAGES OF USING RFID TECHNOLOGY FOR LABELLING FOOD PRODUCTS

For the secondary identification a worldwide used system is EAN•UCC system. It carries data, which allow supply chain participants to track and trace products. The application of this system requires growers, packers, importers/exporters, carriers, distributors and retailers to keep records of serial numbers of logistics units (SSCC), identification numbers (GTIN) and attribute information of traded units and location numbers of their origin (GLN). When used in conjunction with databases containing accurate and timely records, EAN•UCC standards provide all supply chain participants with the technical capability to see the origin of a product, both in their own locations and across the entire supply chain. The main disadvantage of EAN•UCC system is the fact that barcodes are nowadays used as main carriers of data. [3,4]

Because barcodes are nowadays used by the EAN•UCC system as the main carrier of data, supply chain participants can not handle directly with other important information.
like: storage conditions (temperature, humidity) and product’s main characteristics. Without an access to the database where information are stored carriers, distributors and retailers can not use EAN•UCC system for products traceability. RFID tags have a memory with a capacity up to 1 MB; this capacity is enough for keeping in it all the information about the product. By using encryption algorithms or RFID tags with a ROM memory area, information’s security is assured. It is very difficult to counterfeit passive RFID tags but it is quite impossible to access and modify data encrypted in a RAM memory or written in a ROM memory. So all the information about product is safely stored in a RFID tag and it is easier to access it directly with a reader.

Within the food supply chain opportunities may be seen for applying RFID tags to palletized or container carriers of items for purposes of identifying container contents on a regular basis and re-writable to allow differing container contents to be identified without recourse to changing labels. Reuse in this way will amortize the cost.

A significant feature of new generation RFID tags is the ability to read a number of them when present in the interrogation or read zone at the same time. This feature is known as contention management whereby each tag can be read without the reader being over-helmed or confused by the signal responses received. Such systems open up the opportunities for batch reading applications within the supply chain where, because of conditions or data capacity and transfer requirements, bar coding and other forms of identification would be inappropriate.

Applications where RFID is seen to have particular benefit include the tracking of carriers, pallets and vehicles under conditions where non-contact exchange of data is required. RFID tags are unaffected by the grease and humidity or the non-metallic vagaries of food handling environments.

Furthermore, active RFID tags may be redesigned to contain a small circuit for measuring temperature. This circuit is not difficult to achieve, occupies a small area on the chip and such RFID tag is not very expensive. The circuit contains a small diode or transistor working as a temperature sensor, an amplifier and a low cost analog-to-digital converter. By applying RFID tags with temperature sensors to palletized or container carriers of items, it is possible to track product’s temperature in every moment. Readers mounted in transportation vehicles and warehouses can activate the tags and write the measured temperature in its memory. At the destination the customer reads the temperature values and knows if the storage conditions were respected.

CONCLUSION

RFID technology can ensure that the right products are shipped to the right location at the right time and in the right conditions. It can enhance cargo security, lowers shipping costs and reduce quality and out-of-stock incidents. As the costs of tags reduce and standards are produced, applications for RFID identification will undoubtedly expand.

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EVALUATION AND MEASURING THE QUALITY OF ECOLOGICAL TEXTILES CORRESPONDING TO THE ECO-TEX STANDARD

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Abstract: This paper presents at beginning the ecological attitude of modern textile consumers. They are more receptive to the textile impact on the environment and health. The new approach of ecoconception refers to three aspects: the ecology of people, the ecology of production, and the ecology of recycling rubbish. The Oeko-Tex 100 certification must fulfill over 100 criteria concerning the detection of injurious substances. The evaluation of ecological quality conform the Eco-Tex 1000 standard offers the safety that all production chain respect the ecological conditions. We underline the advantages offered by Eco-Tex standard in comparison with other systems as EU EMAS. The paper ends by referring to the importance of Eco-Tex labeling on the health consumer and environment protection.

INTRODUCTION

The textile ecoconception has as consequences the coming out of many ecological labels and even brands. By brand, the company was obliged as its entire offer to be extended following the ecoconception. The usage of ecological labels has a purpose to emphasize one or more innovative characteristics or to segment the offer.

THE ECOLOGICAL ATTITUDE OF CONSUMERS

The consumers are responsive to the new tendencies concerning ecological fibers, alternative (functional) fibers made of corn, soy, milk, bamboo etc. The consumers from Central and East Europe see more and more the influence of manufacturing process on the environment. The producers have the possibility to obtain textile with a lower level of injurious to health substances, using ecological technologies. So, we mention the colorants selection, the whitening process without chlorine, finishing process with lower formaldehyde content, the selection of raw materials without pesticides, heavy metals etc. It was obtained safety goods without risks for consumers.

The consumers are interested by the wearing comfort because the body-textile relationship is essentially for them. The continuous researches shows that the temperature and the perspiration produce by the human body activate these substances. They exist as traces on the textile and penetrate the skin affecting the health. The percentage of textile consumers is in continuous increase. The German studies concerning ecological textile made by Oto and GKF showed the increase of Eco-Tex notoriety. So in the last three years, the notoriety of Eco-Tex brand had doubled from 13% to 24%.

Some kind of goods uses different strategies. For the Ideo cotton production, it uses the developing countries, with fair terms of conditions. Hemp Valley has used the China option with social terms of condition and for Ardelaine lane it has used the France production with local terms of conditions.
THE NEW APPROACH OF TEXTILE ECOCONCEPTION

The old concept of ecological textile was used in general sense and sometimes can conduce at error of interpretations. By definition, a natural textile is not harmful for the environment only if it was not whitening and coloring with natural substances. If the finishing process is unknown then it can assure ecological properties.

The new ecoconception of textile presumes the approach of three aspects concerning the ecology: the production, the human resources and recycling rubbish.

• The ecology refers at influence of textile human body in the wearing process and to their testing to detect the injurious of health substances. The Eco-Tex standard satisfied this request. The human ecology can be testing and researched easier.

• The ecology of production must cover all production phases from fiber production to finished goods. This is a complex process. The International Association for Research and Testing has developed the Oeke-Tex 1000 (Eco-Tex 1000) standard. This offers to producers the possibility to use ecological technologies, measurable and controllable by an audit process.

• The ecology of recycling rubbish has as objective the recovering of textile goods after they finished their lifetime. It refers at recycling processes by natural biodegradation of goods. The textile rubbish can be recycled, reused and recovered by some certificated methods. Only a small part of them are considered domestic rubbish.

THE CERTIFICATION CORRESPONDING TO THE OEKE-TEX 100 STANDARD

The certificated textile with Oeke-Tex label must respect over 100 criteria of human ecology concerning the detection of injurious of health substances. These criteria are periodical revised to content the more recent information about noxious substances, their normal ranges, detection techniques, offering an equal or more rigorous standard as the imposed legal standards.

The testing covers the main criteria as:
- the ph value (acidity or basicity)
- the bioacids
- the chlorinated phenols (e.g. pentachlorinephenol – PCP)
- dibutyl or tributyl terephthalate
- colorants (allergenic or azinic colorants)
- fireproof substances
- heavy metals that can be remove
- formaldehyde
- colorant/free coloring
- phthalate
- volatile substances (solvents)
- pesticides

After their destination, the textile goods were divided in four classes:
- Baby textile
- Textile with direct contact the skin
- Textile without direct contact with the skin
- Decorative textile

Each class of textile contains a group of different articles used in the same purpose. The components of the articles, for each class can be certificated in all phases.
(fiber, threads, tissues and knitting) but the accessories and the finite goods can be certificated too.

The certificated goods have no risk for consumers. The Eco-Tex 100 standard was introduced in 1992 and the imposed restrictions represent the bases for testing criteria. In 1st January 2002 it makes changes that aim the biocides. They are no more accepted if they are not on the special Eco-Tex list. They make change on normal ranges too for formaldehyde at the first class corresponding to the Japanese low, no 112.

At 1st April 2007 the new Eco-Tex 100 criteria become valid and are obligatory. In these conditions, the Dispense Orange 149 colorant is no more included in any certification process because it contains 4 -aminoazobenzene that is forbidden by low. The phthalate utilization was limited too and other restrictions were introduced.

Today, over 5000 textile and wear producers from 75 countries use the Eco-Tex system to improve the quality of their goods. Over 30 000 certificates have liberated. The implementation of Eco-Tex 100 standard contributes to increased importance of ecological Oeke-Tex label for the consumers.

**THE CERTIFICATION CORRESPONDING TO THE OEKE-TEX 1000 STANDARD**

This standard was introduced by International association for Research and testing Oeke-Tex referring to the ecology of production. This is a testing control and certification system for the ecological emplacements of manufacturing centers. It offers an objective perspective of the company efficiency to minimize the impact on the environment.

To receive a certificate Oeke-Tex 1000, a company must to fulfill criteria concerning the ecological production processes and to prove that almost 30% of total production is certificated in conformity with Oeke-Tex 100 standard.

There are many previous conditions to receive the certification:
- to observing the specified criteria and normal range for harmfully substances in production process
- to observing the normal range referring at waste water and evacuated air
- the optimization of energy consumption
- the lower level of noise and dust pollution
- the protection measures at work place
- the forbidden of children employing
- the evaluation of environment management system (ISO 14000 or EMAS system)
- the implementation of quality system that use internal methods or ISO 9000

The company needs to write every year, for auditor, a report concerning the environment offering information about their activity, their achieved or non-achieved objectives. Based on this report it makes a conformity control.

**The certification process** represents the analysis of strong and weak point for each company. The result is a record of the impact on environment. This is used to build plans to make all needed changes. The independent auditors check the respecting of Oeke-Tex 1000 standard inside of production emplacement. If the audit result is favorable the certification is achieved. If the audit process finds something wrong, the company has the change to make some improvements.
The advantages offer by the Oeke-Tex 1000 standard:

- It offers competitive advantage showing that the technological developments from production process are reflected in environment protection.
- The certification system is available at international level, beside the EU EMAS system can be used only in European Union.
- The consumer receives a high level of protection. The goods from a certificated center fulfill the ecology of human resource too.
- The certificated goods refer at all production yards, beside the EU EMAS system that evaluate only one production place.

The certification corresponding to the Oeke-Tex 100 plus standard

This certification it can be made in some conditions if the company was certificated conform the Oeke-Tex 1000 standard and if the goods was previous certificated Oeke-Tex 100.

A previous condition is to prove that all production chain respect the request of Oeke-Tex 100 standard. The Oeke-Tex 100 plus goods have the guarantees that are safe for the consumers concerning the ecology of human resource and they were produced by companies that respect the environment.

The textile ecoconception is an actual problem but regard the future too. The ecological textile will represent a big part of textile market. The future trend of ecological textile is presented in The European Technological Platform: ‘To a zero impact on the environment and textile consumer’s health’.

CONCLUSIONS

- The textile consumer's behavior is changing to in favour of ecological textile.
- The new approach of textile ecoconception is bounded to the ecology of human resource, the ecology of production and the ecology of recycling rubbish.
- The quality evaluation of ecological textile is made by certification conform to the Oeke-Tex 100, Oeke-Tex 1000 and Oeke-Tex 100 plus.
- The commercializing of ecological textile with Eco-tex label confirms that the goods are absolute safe from the point of environment protection and health.
- The ecological textile represents a standard of excellence.

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IMPROVEMENT OF COMPETITIVENESS OF INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES IN A MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract: Competition is a very prominent issue in today’s economic life and competition is already moving across country borders as well as across cultural barriers. The essay shall demonstrate how international companies are faced with different cultural approaches and how this may affect their business life. It shall even go one step further and draw up possible solutions how to approach and secure the own competitiveness within a multicultural environment.

COMPANIES IN A MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT AND COMPANIES THAT HAVE A MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

Different Cultures / Aligning Global Diversity

Diversity among employees in terms of cultural background leads to a richer, more sophisticated and more effective corporate environment. But diversity in the form of misaligned corporate goals, objectives, and processes – especially as the result of leaders disconnected from operations, not respecting cultural differences, around the globe – is a potential disaster. In today’s business life there are only very few companies that do not have at least more than one culture among their employees, no matter on which hierarchical level. A culture mix in practice is the result of further globalisation, of adaptations to local and regional markets as well as easier and more transparent communications and trade.

Times are even changing, that certain companies and corporations are specifically searching for people with a different cultural background. Having in mind that different experiences and cultural lifestyles are bringing benefits and additional soft assets to a company. And usual they are right. If in practical business life several cultures are concerned with the same topic and if a work collaboration is managed in the proper way and with the needed high sensitivity towards the different cultures, the success is on the side of the multicultural workforce.

Effects On Business Life

Through the European Union and its agreed constitution, containing an open border politic practice, which secures the free movement of workers, job offers and exchange of work potential among member states, it is forcing the cultural mix within the EU and its companies. Even though not all countries have the same rights, since protection clauses come into place for newly integrated states, the cultural diversity has been increasing highly in last few years, and will not stop for the next years. Nevertheless, the general movement or workers has been eased a lot and less bureaucracy, as well as less visa and work permit restrictions are the result of the last years developments. All these aspects
making it a lot easier for a worker to take the decision and move across one border, away from his home country to another EU member state.

In this respect the moving staff interests are to be pointed out, very much in the sense of salary expectations and the resulting willingness of work effort. Those expectations will be adjusted under the circumstances of change. The willingness to work is depending on the surroundings of work environment and the motivation a person has for its work, this especially in the case of changing the workplace – forced or freely willing –.

Many inhabitants of the EU have the willingness to move for a better workplace, but better workplace always being connected to a better salary and monetary attractive attributes. Here comes one obstacle of the EU in place, in some regions the salary levels are very much different, and even with changing the profession, people are intended to move abroad.

This means a high sensitivity for the human resources departments, not only in the countries (mostly eastern European) where a person is moving from, also for the personnel agent in the country that has to integrate new workers from other countries of cultural backgrounds.

Remaining Competitive

The question now to answer is, how companies can remain competitive with the fact that different salaries are being paid in different regions, workers are willing to move in order to receive higher salaries and the fact that it has to be taken care of the new, and old, and remaining staff.

One option for the proper integration of cultural diverse employees is the improvement of the own cultural awareness and sensitivity, for example by leaders and managers also coming from other countries (placing them in the same situation as workers).

Another way to succeed, could be having managers with such high leadership skills, that they are so aware of change and other perspectives, that they “feel the difference” for firms with adept global leaders, the competitive playing field tilts significantly in their direction. These leaders not only know the customs, culture, and etiquette of the region or regions in which they operate, but, more importantly, they understand the nuances of business in those areas – small differences that can determine success and failure. These can be as simple as awareness of cultural negotiation norms, or as complex as knowledge of the supply chain relationships in a particular country. “Companies that invest in developing global leadership talent find new opportunities and better execution, while companies that don’t face new risks and potential failure of their multinational strategy”

Further ongoing is a sensitive HR department towards the integration of new foreign employees, but also the awareness raising among the older and settled in workers or team members.

SOLUTIONS TO OVERCOME COMPETITION STRUGGLES IN A MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

Integrate Employees In Other Cultures

The integration of a person in another culture (no matter if company or state culture) is than finished if an employee is completely surrounded by his new work and role,
and this in the totally vice versa reflection from his employer, and if he is identifying himself with the new company.

The integration may be negatively influenced by the following:
- The initiation is taking place mainly by accident and unplanned
- The expectations towards the new employee are rather high
- The information needed by the employee are considered
- A wrong godfather or mentor is being nominated
- The superior is not properly introducing the new employee
- The superior is not keeping promises or delaying them
- The colleagues are not properly informed, or do not know why the new employee has been hired
- Internal and external partners are not informed accordingly

A very good tool is the motivation approach in work. “Motivation while working” which shall be explained as follows: Motives are reasons for the human behaviour. They are created out of the need, which is been tracked to a deficiency syndrome, as well as from the expectation that the deficiency can be abolished with a certain action or behaviour. Motives are desirable targets and they create also a latent willingness of action. In order for this willingness to end in an action some more components are needed, at least the appeal or thrill has to be added. This is securing that the human being is getting excited, but this excitement can be eliminated with an action, for example the feeling of hunger is a stage of appeal: the need for food. It is being eliminated by the action: eating. To make it clearer the following equation is explaining the human behaviour: reason + incentive = behaviour.

So a motivated employee will be far more effective and efficient than a non-motivated employee. Having committed people in the team that are willing to work (even a bit more or harder than expected) will bring greater and faster success to an operation that unmotivated staff. Concluding from here the competitive advantage is again in the human asset of people working.

Create Own “Company” Culture

Companies that have staff from several cultural backgrounds can give the chance for each culture to remain independent to a certain extend, or they can try to built up an own company culture, which ideally reflects parts of other cultures. This can be rolled out via the mission and vision or corporate guidelines of a company or “unwritten rules” are established. For example the ‘short Friday’ approach in a traditional German company, which is getting away from the expectation of ‘every day 8 hours of work, starting at 8 ending at 4’ or in eastern European countries, the theme of team buildings to strengthen the common goal, team spirit and trust among the staff, but also from the employees towards their company or organisation.

The company culture can be a very important tool to integrate employees, or give them the feeling of comfort. For an example a special group of employees shall be picked: a group that has been working in a company in country A (preferred their home country) and is now working for the same company or subsidiary of the company in country B. The culture within the two parts belonging to a bigger group should be very similar. Work processes are the same, usually the same “language” is spoken in terms of strategies, approaches and visionary expectations. For this employee, it will be very easy to integrate in the new part of the company since guidelines and frameworks are the same, so the only
adaptation he will have to make is to the non-business life surroundings, which are than by far easier to cope as without the comfort and back up of an aligned company culture.

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

Expat Sensitisation

For many companies it is of positive help to exchange managers between countries, or to install people with a unique knowledge temporarily in another country than their home country. The goals here are the exchange of know how, experience and shared expertise. In the wake of ongoing internationalization, collaboration between business partners and colleagues from different cultural backgrounds represents an important component of the success strategies of internationally operating enterprises. In order to make this collaboration sustainable, it is of utmost importance that cooperation and communication across national borders is as efficient and effective as possible. And that managers coming from one country or culture are able to function in another culture as well. This is usually achieved by sensitisation. Intercultural awareness, management or country specific seminars are transmitting the cultural differences that an employee will be faced with by moving to another country or working in a different cultural environment. Here they are trained to overcome cultural obstacles that can affect business relations to a very high extend.

Taking the Romanian example of the greeting ceremony. A woman coming from a western European country, approaching a group of Romanian men, is being introduced by her companions, but feels highly offended when the typical handshake between her and the Romanians is not taking place. She feels reduced and not treated properly. Knowing now that it is an old Romanian tradition, not to shake a women hand, and actually paying her more respect by not doing it, would have changed completely the attitude of the western European woman.

Giving two other examples: An executive from Texas insists on giving his new China partners an old-fashioned bear hug upon greeting them and uses various hand gestures when making his points – not knowing that China executives typically do not like personal contact and that gesturing is distracting (finger pointing often is seen as an offence).

The purchasing director of a fledgling multinational is insulted when his potential Russian manufacturer declares that they’ve presented their “final offer”. The director storms from the room and the lousy deal, not knowing that “final offer” in Russia is rarely the final offer, and the persistence leads to outcomes that can be far from attractive.

Inpat Sensitisation

A nearly unused matter is the sensitisation of the host country employees. Continuing the drawn picture of a foreign person going abroad working in another country in an own company culture or not, it can also be seen as a potential for training the staff in the country where the foreigner is coming to. Despite the fact that usual management positions are filled with expatriates, but nevertheless the team remains local. They can also be prepared for the cultural differences they will be faced with by the new superior. It can help a lot if they would also understand why the new person would be action or reacting in situation in the special “cultural” way of his home back ground.
As example, why a German superior will most likely always ask for a proper project documentation in given prefaces and masks, where an Italian superior most likely will celebrate team meeting where the discussions about the project will be of high importance, or a British boss that would expect accurate work with no emotional interference of the Scandinavians that will create a casual, loose work atmosphere with an always open door policy.

Employees coming from a culture with contrary work expectation as the mentioned will feel awkward in the first place, might be adopting the work style of the foreign project leader, but might also have their problems with it, will become unmotivated and therefore unproductive. This in the big context of competitiveness will make the company with those inner cultural problems less competitive due to a poor work performance.

CONCLUSIONS

Companies can stay competitive even in a multicultural environment when they are aware of the fact, that more than one culture is existing within their business environment. Those cultures can come from mixed staff, interaction on a foreign market or the culture within a company. Nevertheless, with all cases has to be dealt and taken care of.

One option is the proper training of all involved parties from different cultures, on the first view the training might be seen as an unnecessary investment, but taking in consideration that the training will lead to a smooth and efficient workflow in a company or a team, this image of - in the best case- motivated staff will be transmitted and viewed to the outside. The company will appear positively on the market. Taking now in consideration that competition is existing on the market, which competitor would be chosen, the one having a positive image, or the one struggling with intercultural obstacles?

In the case all other indicators of companies remain the same, such as price, time of delivery or execution, the well trained team will succeed. Not only that all problems can be put aside, also more creativity and positive atmosphere will push the working atmosphere.

One aspect which has not too deeply been touched is the fact that, due to globalisation, EU or other transparent trade tools, companies start to come into the position of having to compete on a multinational and including of course multicultural market. Whoever is prepared for this, in the sense of being capable to deal with other cultures, and dealing meaning successful handle the cultural differences, will gain reputation and chances in this challenging international environment, but exactly those chances will make the difference in the direct competition with other companies, teams or workforces.

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A MULTIPLE RANKING MODEL. CASE OF ROMANIAN TOURISM

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Abstract: The tourism development analysis is of maximum importance in the context of increasing the integration level of Romania’s economy into of the European one. Various methods are used by specialists for evaluating and disseminating data on the evolution, in order to provide information to policy makers. The regional structure of Romania’s tourism is one of the basic elements for designing its economic prelaunch and development strategies, integration into the European economy and of course for establishing tourism policies. In the selection of the better way for the analysis an important place, has the multiple factor analysis that focused on disseminate the correlations between the specific tourism indicators and the indicators of economic growth. Consequences, the tourism policies could be seen as an instrument for providing the structure stability and as a way of harmonizing the European and national commercial interests through the use of promotion and protection measures. Regional structural are utilized like criteria for the utilization of multiple factor analysis or canonical analysis. We are proposing hereby such a unified method. Our proposed model defines of structure of the tourism regions, the stability degree and the intensity of the measures to be used for restructuring the tourism offer structure (existing and estimated). The case study was made on Romania’s tourism statistics. The modification of the tourism structure can be done only through several promotion and protection measures strong enough to facilitate the new trends.

INTRODUCTION

The last year reflect, in term of macroeconomic development, the continuing advances in market-oriented reforms in most countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The results are different from country to country, because of various growth trends, as affect of relatively various conditions and economic performances. Tourism is an important component of economic growth and is an objective for central land local administration.

State Sector is imply direct and indirect in tourism, motivated from economic considerations (improvement of payment balance, regional development, economic diversification, increase of revenues, increase of employments, stimulation of investments, etc).

Actually, at international level, is a constant interest for tourism development like a parte of administrations politics or target for intervention programs with implications to sustainable development. Extension of public intervention is different from the country to country, and is in a large measures determined from the specifics of governmental strategies.
ROMANIAN TOURISM SECTOR

The experiences of the countries with a generous tradition in tourism, show on the other part, that the identification of the tourism causalities at the all levels of management. In this context, in Romania acquire importance the definition of the directions in the field of the tourism development, in concordance with the conditionality’s of EU.

The strategies of the tourism development are characterized from:
• Identification of position in the economic growth strategies [BB06];
• Identification of EU politics connected directly or indirectly, with effects that generate increase or decrease of tourism sector;
• Evaluation of ways and methods utilized for the assurance of competitiveness advantage of Romanian tourism;
• Characterization of the relation between the tourism and natural resources; European market of tourism is in continuous changes and the offensive the states from East Europe perhaps demand reorientation to the other touristic destinations [CP06].

In this context, the Romanian tourism has an increasing evolution with 24% for number of companies, 26% for number of employees and 40% for average turnover per employee (see table 1), but average of contribution of tourism sector in GDP decrease with 41%.

Table 1
SYNTETHIC INDICATORS OF ROMANIAN TOURISM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of companies</td>
<td>15459</td>
<td>19229</td>
<td>124%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>8197</td>
<td>103722</td>
<td>126%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution in GDP/ employee</td>
<td>Euro 122.35</td>
<td>72.14</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnover of companies/ employee</td>
<td>euro 111.1</td>
<td>155.9</td>
<td>140%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source data: calculated data from Romanian Yearbook 2006*

The concerns related to the analysis of tourism stability are very important on the context of increasing the economic integration of Romanian tourism services on the European economy, as effect of the reform process. This is why there are used various methods for dissemination and light-up the tourism indicators evolution.
Based on the statistics (see figure 1), in the period 2000-2006\(^1\), the Romania’s offer of tourists capacity had different evolutions: hotels and motels decrease from 170 places per unit to 143 places; camping, touristic bungalows and school camps decrease from 72 places to 62 places and touristic inns and chalets (decrease that average with 1 place). Urban and rural touristic boarding houses (11 places to 14 places), and hotels for youth and hostels had a little increase (4 places).

In according with these offer, is interesting to analyses the indicator *touristic accommodation capacity in function* calculated like an average per unit (tourism company) – see figure 2.

Figure 2 show that only touristic inns and chalets (from 11.3 to 11.72 thousand places) and urban and rural touristic boarding houses (from 2.78 to 3.64 thousand places) had increase. In rest the other decreased – hotels and motels (with 3.74 thousand places), hotels for youth (with as about 4.01 thousand places), camping, touristic bungalows and school camps (with as about 1.67 thousand places).

\(^1\) for 2006 data are estimated from author
These dynamics had an influence to indices of net using the touristic accommodation capacity in function.

MUTLIPLE FACTOR ANALYSIS

Multiple factor analysis is a category of complex statistical analysis, which implies many variables. Component of these category canonical analysis [WK07] try to investigate the relationship between two sets of variable named Criterion Variable (X) and Predictor Variable (Y). In according with scheme from figure 3, canonical analysis utilize a group of methods which involve solving the characteristic equation for its latent roots and vectors. It describes formal structures in hyperspace invariant with respect to the rotation of their coordinates. The process is designed to obtain maximum (canonical) correlations between the predictor and criterion canonical variates. In the process, similar with the factor analysis for each canonical correlation (root) is calculated an characteristic set of communalities, eigenvalues and eigenvectors. The process solved with program “STATISTICA “99 Edition”.

They are known applications of canonical analysis in the field of Sociology [RM07 and VSZ06], Psychology [GV07], Competitive Performance and International Diversification [BLT07] or Management [CL07]. The present paper is an application of canonical analysis in the field of tourism.

ROMANIAN TOURISM CASE

The hypothesis concerning Romanian tourism is how to determine the improvement of indices of accommodation capacity in function per historical region by the indicators of regional economy [AIM06 and BC06]. The indicators utilized are in table 2.

Table 2  INDICATORS OF CANONICAL ANALYSIS *)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion (independent) variable – Regional Indicators</th>
<th>Predictor (dependent) variable – Indices of net using accommodation capacity in function (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X1 Average Number of employees on the tourism company</td>
<td>Y1 Hotels and motels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X2 Regional Gross Domestic Product calculated per company average (€)</td>
<td>Y2 Touristic inns and chalets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X3 TURNOVER (average) of tourism per companies (€)</td>
<td>Y3 Camping’s, touristic bungalows and school camps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X4 GROSS INVESTMENTS average per company (€)</td>
<td>Y4 Urban and rural touristic boarding houses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Y5 Hotels for youth and hostels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Y6 Others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*)Data utilized are calculated for years 2003-2006 and for eight economic regions in according with Romanian National Institute of Statistics data.
Based on these data are calculated (see figure 3) matrix of correlations between variable (see table 3), that is a symmetric matrix with diagonal values equal with 1.

Table 3 MATRIX OF CORRELATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion Variable</th>
<th>Predictor Variable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X1</td>
<td>X2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X1</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X2</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X3</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X4</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y1</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y2</td>
<td>-0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y3</td>
<td>-0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y4</td>
<td>-0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y5</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y6</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: trends are structured on years 2003-2006 and for eight economic regions in according with Romanian National Institute of Statistics data

Table 3 show that all criterion variables (C_x) have the same trend of development, the relation intensity is positive one, between 0.82 and 1. From predictor variables (C_y), except with Y1/Y2 (correlation indices of net using capacity in function between Hotels and Motels and Touristic Inns and Chalets), all correlations are positive. Matrix C_{xy} show a heterogeneity between the trends of all indicators, with values between -0.93 and +0.40. Based on this matrix was calculated the three significant Canonical Correlation Coefficients: 0.999, 0.782 and 0.651. First commentary is that selections of correlations extracted are independent one.

The first canonical correlation coefficient was 0.999, significant for a probability near 0. Among them, the canonical weights of criterion variable can explain 93% of variance of independent variable in hierarchy X1, X3, X4, X2. The redundancy coefficient in independent variables stands for that the 92,8% of the total variance of regional indicators can be explained by indices of net using accommodation capacity in function through predictor variable consider that canonical group. The predictor variable can explain 93% of variance of dependent variable in hierarchy Y4, Y5, Y6. The redundancy coefficient in dependent variables stands for that the 92,8% of the total variance of indices of net using accommodation capacity.

Note: means the canonical correlation coefficients exceeding 0.3 could be viewed as important variables

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accommodation capacity in function can be explained by regional indicators through predictor variable consider canonical group. The second canonical correlation coefficient was 0.782 significant for a probability equal with 0.0006. For this canonical root resulted after first extraction, the canonical weights of criterion variable can explain as about 2.9% of variance of independent variable in positive hierarchy X3, X4. The redundancy coefficient was 1.8% and explains at low level of the influence of indices of net using accommodation capacity in function.

In this case, the predictor variable can explain 12.7% of variance of dependent variable in hierarchy Y4, Y5, Y6. The redundancy coefficient in dependent variables stands for that the 7.8% of the total variance of indices of net using accommodation capacity in function can be explained by regional indicators through predictor variable consider canonical group. After two extractions, the program calculate the third residual root 0.651 for a significant probability 0.0538. This extraction explain only 1.5% from variance of criterion variable in which, only X3 had a positive influence and only 7.6% from variance of predictor variable in which only Y4 and Y5 had a positive influence.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis result for this research can concluded as below:

• Variations Regional Indicators caused significantly influence on variations of Indices of net using accommodation capacity in function. Is necessary to complete analysis with a component that show the direct influence of regions specific aspects;
• The analysis of canonical criterion and predictors variate is necessary to develop of same indicators of regional analysis;
• Canonical analysis can to apply on efficiency of the tourism services considered as priorities in the efforts towards economic promotion;
• For the applying the multifactor analysis is necessary to develop specialized management information systems [GI06];

The impact statistical methods – has it been evaluated in terms of economic development and international trade and tourism relations

There are many concerns related to a progress in terms of international tourism flow favorable to the general economic development, framework in which international economic cooperation gets a higher importance.

Another conclusion is that Romania has some specific natural resources and highly trained specialists that could facilitate, through policies structured mostly on efficiency criteria, the country's performances as a robust EU-type business partner.

The EU integration process is the first step towards global economy required alignments and aspiring countries, more or less in competition among themselves, have to design quite accurately their future role and actions on the world market(s).

The mark-up strategies used by companies are, for the time being, more related to national prospective than to the global environment.
REFERENCES


PROJECT OFFICE – A NECESSITY IN A COMPETITIVE COMPANY

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Abstract: This paper introduces the concept of Project Management Office and its role and applicability in a mature, evolved company. The main components of the paper consist in: Introduction, Project Office Rationale, Project Office Roles, Responsibilities and Functions, the Project Information System (a Tool in Support of Project Office) and Conclusions. Project Management has been around for decades or even for centuries. Although we have heard so much in the past years about the Project Management Office, the idea of an organizational centre for project management was way out on the fringe. Project management wandered rootlessly throughout the organization for about a quarter century before it became fashionable to build it a home in the Project Office (PO). Discussion of expected outcomes: In modern organizations strategic management plays a vital role. The major dimensions of strategic management are responding to changes in the external environment by allocating resources of the firm to improve its competitive position. Constant scanning of the external environment for changes is a major requirement for survival in a dynamic, competitive environment. The second dimension is the internal responses to new action programs aimed at enhancing the competitive position of the firm. The nature of the responses depends on the type of business, environment volatility, competition, the organizational culture and the existence of good project management practices. Thus, the Project Office is a must for an evolving enterprise, because as a business grows it gains complexity and it needs change and adaptation.

INTRODUCTION

In modern organizations strategic management plays a vital role. The major dimensions of strategic management are responding to changes in the external environment by allocating resources of the firm to improve its competitive position. Constant scanning of the external environment for changes is a major requirement for survival in a dynamic, competitive environment. The second dimension is the internal responses to new action programs aimed at enhancing the competitive position of the firm. The nature of the responses depends on the type of business, environment volatility, competition, the organizational culture and the existence of good project management practices.

Project Management has been around for decades or even for centuries. Even if we have heard so much in the past years about the project office, the idea of an organizational centre for project management was way out on the fringe. Project management wandered rootlessly throughout the organization for about a quarter century before it became fashionable to build it a home in the Project Office (PO).
PROJECT OFFICE RATIONALE, CONCEPT AND TYPES

**Project Office Rationale** – Today, companies are managing many aspects of their business through projects. The result has been a vast amount of project management information surfacing from all areas of the company. This information focuses on best practices in the project management, the usefulness of an enterprise project management methodology, the benefits of project management in enhancing the profitability of the company. As companies begin to recognize the favorable effect that project management has on performance, all project management knowledge is treated as intellectual property. Emphasis is now placed upon achieving professionalism in project management using the project office (PO) concept, where the project management office (PMO) becomes the guardian for the project management intellectual property. Project office is a must for an evolving enterprise, because like any organism, as a business grows it gains complexity and it needs change. As the organization grows in complexity, projects begin to interrelate and impact each other in more subtle ways, ways that might not be understood until each project is well under way, and suddenly, a conflict or dependency emerges usually as an unpleasant surprise.

In conclusion, the PMO is a must for every modern organization because it takes care of many of the changing characteristics of the enterprise: resource coordination, schedules, quality, change control, human resources, communications, procurement, training etc. Additionally, the PMO also helps define how projects fit into organization. The concept of a PO or PMO could very well be the most important project management activity in this decade.

**Project Office Concept** - Management by projects or strategic management is a system that integrates all project activities within an organization and links them to organization-wide strategies, priorities, and resource pools. The most common infrastructure to support management by projects is the project office.

A *project office* (PO), or *project management office* (PMO) is an organizational unit to centralize and coordinate the management of projects under its umbrella. A PO oversees the management of projects, programs or a combination of both. The PMO focuses on the coordinated planning, prioritization and execution of projects and subprojects that are tied to the parent organization’s or client’s overall business objectives.

The *project office* is a function designated to facilitate the management of projects on one level and to improve management of the entire enterprise via project portfolio management at a second level by linking projects to corporate strategy. By doing more than establishing an office and creating reports, a PO is infusing a cultural change throughout the organization.

An undeniable reality of organizational behavior is entropy; this means that, if left to themselves, policies and processes will decompose and return to their natural state. What follows then, is that if nobody is responsible for project management practices, including portfolio management; the whole idea will likely fade away and be chalked up as one more management fad. The last component of an enterprise project management model, therefore, establishes responsibilities for the continued support of standards, practices and technology that define project management for the organization. This role is increasingly known as the *project office*.
“You can not manage what you can not measure”, the old saying goes, and unless all the projects on the table can be held up to the light and compared to each other, a company has no way of managing them strategically, as there is no way of making intelligent resource allocation decisions, no way of knowing what to delete and what to add. The only way to have a global sense of how company’s projects are doing is to have some sort of projects focus point: the project office. Project office goes by many different names – Center of Excellence, Project Support Office, Program Management Office or Project Office – and is a must for organizations to move from doing a less-than-adequate job of managing projects on an individual basis, to creating the organizational synergy around projects that adds value, dependably and repeatability. The forms of project office are new and evolving, and the names for the different models are by no means standard. The names, however, are not as important as the concepts. What important is, is how responsibilities and authority are handled in each model.

**Types of Project Offices** – In Harold Kerzner’s opinion there are three types of POs commonly used in companies:

- **Functional PO**: this type of PO is utilized in one functional area or division of an organization, such as information system. The major responsibility of this type of PO is to manage a critical resource pool, that is, resource management. The PMO may or may not actually manage projects.

- **Customer group PO**: this type of PO is for better customer management and customer communications. Common customers or projects are clustered together for better management and customer relations. Multiple customer group POs can exist at the same time and may end up functioning as a temporary organization. In effect, this acts like a company within a company. This type of PMO will have a permanent project manager assigned and managing projects.

- **Corporate or Strategic PO**: this type of PO services the entire company and focuses on corporate strategic issues rather than functional issues. If this type of PMO does manage projects, it is for cost reduction efforts.

Companies can champion more than one type of PO at the same time. For example, there can both a functional PO and a strategic/corporate PO that work together.

**THE PROJECT OFFICE ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND FUNCTIONS**

Not all projects offices are created equal, although almost any form of PO will jumpstart incremental process improvements in organizations that have nothing at all in place. Basically, a PO is an “office” staffed by project management professionals who serve their organization’s project management needs. It also serves as an organizational center for project management excellence. A PO may exist at any of three levels in the organization – or project offices may exist at all three levels concurrently.

**Levels of Project Office**

- **Level 1 – The Project Control Office**: This is an office that typically handles large, complex single projects. It is especially focused on one project, but that one project is so large and so complex that it requires multiple schedules, which may need to integrate into an overall program schedule.

- **Level 2 – Business Unit Office**: At the divisional or business unit level, a PO may still be required to provide support for individual project but its challenge is to integrate a large number of multiple projects of varying sizes, from small short-term initiatives that
requires few resources to multi-month or multi-year initiatives that require dozens of resources, large dollar amounts and complex integration of technologies. The value of the level 2 PO is that it begins to integrate resources at an organizational level. And it’s at the organizational that resource that resource control begins to play a much higher value role in the payback of a project management system.

**Level 3 – Strategic Project Office** - In case of an organization with multiple business units, multiple support departments at both the business unit and corporate level and ongoing projects within each unit, the level 2 project office would not have the authority to prioritize the projects from the corporate perspective. Only a corporate level organization could provide the coordination and broad perspective needed to select, prioritize, and monitor projects and programs that contribute to attainment of corporate strategy – and this organization is the Strategic Project Office. At the corporate level, the Strategic Project Office serves to de-conflict the need for competing resources by continuously prioritizing the list of projects across the entire organization.

How the Project Office is staffed is determined in large part by the role an organization expects it to play. If the PO is to play the central role in guiding project management in the organization (a Level 3 Strategic Project Office), staffing is complex. The project office director position within the organization should be equivalent to that of a high-level functional manager—even a vice-president, in some cases. The SPO director at this level is supported by large numbers of professional associates and administrative personnel. In case that the project office has been established to serve a support and facilitation role, the office staff may be composed of an experienced project office director, a few professional associates with project management skills, and a clerical specialist to handle office functions. The chief function of this simple configuration may have to operate in ad hoc fashion to address project management issues within the organization as they arise. If the project office is equivalent to a project team, the project manager is also the project office leader, and full- or part-time team members form the office staff. If the project office acts simply as a repository, or storehouse of methodology and lessons learned, project mentors, project management methodology experts, or a project librarian may be sufficient as dedicated staff. Typical project office sizes range from five to twenty; in very large organizations, there may be hundreds of project managers linked directly or indirectly to the project office.

Some of the positions and titles within Project Offices include: project office director, project manager, project mentor, project controller, project planner, methodology expert, librarian/documentation specialist, relationship manager, administrative support coordinator, communications coordinator, issue resolution and change control coordinator, risk management coordinator, and software guru.

**Functions of the Project Office** - There are six primary components to any project office and they grow in capability and complexity as the PO takes on more strategic responsibilities:

**Project Support** – which is a significant element of project office that implies project planning, project scheduling, cost control, administration, controls, and other detailed technical task (the science of project management) and a much more important segment of the project manager’s work that deals with areas like leadership, negotiation, motivation, incentive creation (the art of project management). Project Support performs the project Documentation, is critical to Change Control Process, entails keeping a Project Repository, maintains issues tracking, includes Risk Management, maintains a Resource Repository and keeps track of Costs, and finally handles all issues surrounding the Project Management Software.
Software Tools - The PO centralizes the establishment and maintenance of project-related software tools. With that also comes establishing and maintaining project management standards, which will lead the organization into establishing common coding structures so that project schedules can be integrated and rolled up for management level resource, cost and schedule reporting.

Processes, Standards, and Methodologies - The project office is also responsible for developing and maintaining processes and methodologies pertaining to the management of projects. It serves as a central library for these standards and is the expert on their deployment. The project office also incorporates lessons learned on projects nearing completion into the PM methodology.

Training - The project office is the central focus for project manager and team training. It identifies competencies needed by high-performing project managers, and for executive awareness and team member participation. The project office participates with a specialized project management training vendor, in tailoring standardized courses around the culture and methodologies that apply to the organization specifically. It identifies the appropriate training that is required and participates in selection of the trainers. The project office also identifies the required levels of knowledge and competency and the required segments of training that are necessary in order to achieve maximum performance.

Consulting and Mentoring - The entire organization should view the project office as a source of specialized experts who have focused concentration and ability in project management. The role of project mentors and consultants is to transfer the knowledge they have developed to project managers and project teams to enable them to perform better on current and future projects. Mentors and consultants from the project office are the logical personnel to do the project assessment or audits. They develop the project audit process and checklists, help determine the timing of the assessment and conduct the audits. Following the audit of a project in trouble, the auditors might themselves be the most logical experts to help the project manager get back on schedule or within budget.

Project Managers - The PO maintains a data base of project managers, their skill sets, capabilities, specialties, experience, and technical skills. Using this database, the project office steering committee discusses the needs of new projects and in consultation with the director of project office, recommends assignment of specific projects managers to specific projects.

Since major projects usually cross all organizational divisions, the most effective use of the project management expertise resident in the project office will be made if the PO is integrated into activities such as project prioritization, budgeting, and cost allocation at the corporate level – where the strategic decisions are made as to how to allocate resources.

PROJECT INFORMATION SYSTEM, A TOOL IN SUPPORT OF PO

Given the fact that PO is now the guardian of the project management intellectual property, there must exist processes and tools for capturing this information. This information can be collected through four information systems: Earned Value Info System, Risk Management Info System, Performance Failure Info System, and Lessons Learned Info System, each information system can be updated and managed through the company intranet.

The Earned Value Measurement Information System is common to almost all project managers. It provides sufficient information to answer two questions: where is the
project today? And where will the project end up? This system either captures or calculates the planned and actual value of the work, the actual costs, cost and schedule variances, the estimated cost at completion, the estimated time at completion, percent complete and trends. The earned value measurement information system is critical for a company that requires readily available information for rapid decision making.

Risk Management Information System (RMIS) provides data on risk management, it stores and allows retrieval of risk-related data, it provides data for creating reports and serves as a repository for all current and historical information related to project risk. The PO will use the data from the RMIS to create reports for senior management and retrieve data for the day-to-day management of projects.

Performance Failure Information System - The PO may have the responsibility for maintaining the performance failure information system (PFIS). The failure could be a complete project failure or simply the failure of certain tests within the projects. The PFIS must identify the causes of the failure and possibly recommendation for the removal of the causes. The causes could be identified as coming from problems entirely internal to the organization or from coordinated interactions with subcontractors.

Lessons-Learned (Postmortem Analysis) Information System - Because some companies work on a vast number of projects, and each of these projects provides valuable information for improving standards, estimating for future bidding, and the way business is conducted. This tool is necessary to capture this information for future use. Lessons learned review is one way to obtain this information. Through this the company try to answer to 4 questions: What did we do right?, What did we do wrong?, What future recommendation can be made?, How When, and to whom should information be disseminated?

With the advanced made on the software industry, a new type of system have emerged – the Enterprise Project Management System. These enterprise level systems have combined the functionality of previous separate systems into one, for a better data integration and control. These systems cover at various levels of performance all functions of project, program and portfolio management.

There are many products (software) available on the market. Although they were used primarily for IT projects, there is a strong trend of introducing these systems in other industries. The leading and most visionary products available on the market are: IBM RPM, NIKU, PLANVIEW, PRIMAVERA, COMPUWARE.

CONCLUSIONS

A company faces competitive pressure to improve the overall project delivery performance. Maybe projects are consistently over budget or/and have chronic late finishes. The result is the same – customers are not happy and the company is losing business. The prescription of the ‘90s is to turn to a project management approach by implementing a project office to improve performance and regain market share.

Research shows that establishing a project office is predictive of success in IT projects: the Gartner Group states that companies with a PO will experience half the delayed and cancelled projects as compared to companies without a PO. There are also other challenges the organization will face - changes in organizational culture including new information systems, altered communications channels, and new performance measurement strategies.

The complexity and magnitude of the effort of developing, designing, and developing a full PO is too often underestimated - so many people will think “just tell me
how I can set up this administrative structure and I will go deploy a PO”. They believe the project office is a clerical function, or they can bring small staff to bear to do administrative functions and they have project management. Unfortunately is not that simple, because POs are dealing with people, with changing culture, building new processes, creating new approaches, integrating these elements across business units, and coordinating with teams of all sizes, technologies, complexities, and business interests. It is a worthwhile goal but by no means a simple one to achieve. It is a tremendous challenge to deploy and effectively apply these systems. Our work is cut out for us on so many fronts – both in system deployment and the educational arena – in order to get the best results from a project office.

Dr J. Davidson Frame, PMP, of the University of Management and Technology in Washington, DC has performed research that identifies the “traits of competence” exhibited by successful organizations: top management understands project management basics, activity-based costing systems are in place, effective order processing systems are in place, effective training programs are in place, up-to-date tools are provided for staff, clear project management systems and processes have been established. At the same time, a research study sponsored by PMI and the University of California at Berkley identified the following organizational benefits: improved coordination of inter-group activities, enhanced goal focus on the part of employees, elimination of redundant or duplicate functions, centralization of expertise, a standardized management approach.

There are two ways to demonstrate the immediate value of the project office: through short-term initiatives and project mentoring. The short-term initiatives provide solutions for immediate concerns and take care of issues surfaced by key stakeholders. These are items that can be implemented quickly, while at the same time they can take care of organizational top-priority concerns. Examples include support for new projects in need, an inventory of projects summary reports and metrics, informal training lunches, project planning or project control workshops, templates.

In conjunction with the short-term initiatives, project mentoring is an excellent way to provide immediate project management value to projects that are in the initial start-up phase or are in need of support, without waiting for the implementation of formal training programs or process roll-outs.

Already the existing research tells us that without proper project management, failure is in the forecast. The implementation of a project office takes the successes of managing projects properly a step further by standardizing project management throughout an organization – one of the hallmarks of mature project management capability.

REFERENCES

Approaches of Communication Culture in the Economy Based on Knowledge

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Abstract: The economy based on knowledge is a business economy, including all types of businesses build around the Internet in relation with other large and with impact processes like innovation, globalization and lasting development. The pylons of this economy are: the information, the connection of the information and the communication. More than that, the complexity of the processes which are developed within the economy based on knowledge and also their structural changes set off the increased polyvalence and ambiguity regarding both the information and communication. This is because the economy based on knowledge not only limits the horizons but it contributes to the development of the content and complexity of communication. The approach of communication within the economy based on knowledge can be made from at least two perspectives: the information and the integration. Today the world has been conquered by communication, and the communication culture has become a familiar subject for many individuals.

Communication and Culture

There are a lot of reasons why “communication” is studied, reasons that justify the interest of theorists and managers regarding this subject, in fashion today. As a proof, the many articles and editorial publications focus on the concept of communication. In a dynamic environment, emphasized by deep changes, people find hard to act appropriate and adapt to these changes.

In this way, the individuals have three main options regarding the attempt of controlling the incertitude of the environment and its potential impact: to adapt the environment elements, to try to influence the favorable character of the existing environment and to change the field of activity. However, all these options cannot be successfully followed if men don’t take into consideration the competences and the community of communication. Communication is the only thing that helps the people identify the changes, offering them the possibility to adapt to the environment.

In the same time, the culture of communication seems to be the main subject of some academic and professional manifestations. This is because the communicational behavior is responsible for all the institutional, organizational and social deficits from Romanian society. More than that, the development without precedent of electronic communication means in the economy based on knowledge has determined a generalization of the social-economic evaluation of communication acts. [7].
Culture

The analyses of culture, with all its aspects, can contribute to the increase of understanding capacity of the complex evolutions of communication as science and art.

Culture represents the basis of thinking, feeling and individual actions, organizational and national. Etymologically, the term “culture” comes from Latin. The root of the term is the verb “colere” which means in the first place “to cultivate” certain things, with the meaning of “taking care” in order to increase their quality and productivity. Horatiu used it with the meaning of cultivation of the spirit, and Cicero as „agorum culture” and „animi culture”, with the meaning of an educational effort with a great effect for the soul, educational effort that includes both the educational process and the personal experience of each individual[1].

Later, in 1871, E. B. Taylor, the English anthropologist said: „The culture is a complex that includes the knowledge, beliefs, art, moral, laws and all the other dispositions, attitudes achieved by man as a member of society”[2]. For Taylor culture means” any complex that includes knowledge, religion, art, moral, law, habits and all capacities and customs which the individual achieves as member of society”[2].

G. Rocher considered culture as “the total ways of thinking, feeling and acting, more or less formal, which are learned and become commune to many persons and are used in a symbolic and subjective way to develop some persons in the social community”[1].

Other two great anthropologists, Malinowski and Boas, include in culture the manufactured products, goods, processes, techniques, ideas, customs and values[9]. In their concept culture expresses both the symbolic and morphologic order[8].

Culture is not just an immaterial version of the universe of objects and people’s souls; it also includes “the material equipment”, the supra-individual reality, techniques, processes, institutions[19]. This combination gives to the community its own cultural identity.

Culture is not just an accumulation of artistic, literary and scientific knowledge; it includes also practices that were inherited, accepted beliefs, judgments and emotions. Through these ethnologic, sociologic and anthropologic meanings, cultures reduces to the cultivate individual in a restrained meaning[6]. The way of seeing, drinking, eating, reuniting in a society is part of culture in a sociologic meaning.

An important role in improving the meanings of culture is the romantic tendency, through the extension of popular culture, the art and custom’s tradition of people that will create, in time, an authentic nucleus of national cultures as specific and original manifestations of human spirituality.

More than that, according to S. Freud, one of the founders of modern psychology, culture includes on one hand „the total science and techniques achieved by man with the purpose of controlling the nature forces and satisfying the human needs” and on the other hand “the necessary institutions regarding the establishment of human reports and especially the distribution of accessible goods”[3].

The history of relations between culture and communication is amply. For example, for Hall the hidden dimension denotes the implicit culture of conducts. This is because the culture represents the assembly of the conducts created in time in a society. More than that, to an organizational level Hall identifies three levels in which all the “systems of received messages” can be demonstrated: the formal level – the concepts are learned basing on perception and persuasion with some conceptual and/or conduct patterns; the informal level uses new conduct patterns, more creative; the technique level is transmitted using explicit
terms. These three levels are presented in any context at the same time. The culture can be characterized starting from the context in which it appears and it manifests. People consider, consciously or unconsciously, which gives a meaning and a structure of the world that helps them in their actions. Usually, people consider some things and ignore others; they make a selection of certain things. Therefore, the context issue is very important not only for the identification of the characteristics of a culture but also for the analyses of its impact on the activity of the respective organization, because the action is strictly related and influenced by a certain context. The selection level of any individual is influenced by the subject or the activity one is developing, the situation, the position in the social system, the experience and the culture itself [4]. The context of any individual is formed based on two processes: the interior and the exterior one of the individual. Usually, the interior process develops to a cerebral level and it’s based on the experience of the subject and the structure of the nervous system. The exterior process is influenced both by the situation of the subject (place, the events etc) and the manner of perception: as an answer to his own actions or caused by the internal characteristics (for example the personality). However, the signification both on individual levels and organizations contains: communication, internal context and external context.

Communication

The term of communication has several meanings because it has been developed by a series of different sciences like: philosophy, history, geography, psychology, sociology, ethnology, economy, politic sciences, biology, linguistic, cybernetic, cognitive sciences, etiology etc. Therefore, each knowledge field has definitions that stress one meaning or another of term communication: case, exchange, transfer, energy, information etc. The seemingly contradiction of terms that exist in present is caused by the fact that most of the definitions are elaborated from a perspective and a certain field and therefore, each definition is reported to a system proper to that certain field.

Therefore, communication - the field of social sciences - presents many situations, generated by a fully specialized literature which uses in a different way this notion. Communication is essentially a phenomenon, a process, an art and a necessary science of men. Many times communication is reduced to a smile (the famous source of Gioconda), to a meaningful look sent to another man or another flower or to a whisper, till the obsession of a song or a definition [5].

The individual is the one who communicates, voluntary or involuntary, and develops his skills and communication abilities on one hand, and on the other hand he changes his behavior in a positive or negative way. Man is always meaning and never object, non-communication is impossible, the same way as without the cultural space created in a miraculous way by man, it cannot be defined by itself and concept as humanity, humanism won’t have any meanings. Communication is determined culturally and the human existence is a cultural existence.

In present, there are different material and immaterial means of communication, the science and technique offer plenty possibilities of communication. Even if there isn’t a definition unanimous recognized by specialists regarding communication, fact which obviously generates controversies, communication is necessary. More that that, communication represents the interaction of humans and it focuses on the interaction process.
The term communication is closely used with the following terms: signs and symbols, language, code and language, behavior, information. The first two terms are often used as equivalents and sometimes there is a clear different meaning. Each term receive new significations if it’s associated with a specific attribute. Therefore, communication can be verbal or non-verbal, interpersonal or intrapersonal etc. The language can be national or international. The language can be verbal, non-verbal and Para verbal. It can also be artistic, mathematic, philosophic, economic, emotional etc.. The behavior can be positive or negative, verbal or non-verbal. Any behavior has a major communicative value, which can be considered in the human process of communication. In modern terms, information means: news, knowledge. The information offered and received are juridical, technological, managerial, political, journalistic, electromagnetic, biological, linguistic etc..

By adding the term of culture to the term of communication it generates a new concept which operates both in theory and practice: the culture of communication or the communicational culture. This concept can be approached and defined both in a restrained meaning and in a general one. Obviously, in a general meaning, the cultural of communication refers to the cultural processes, the communicational processes attached to the modern culture (brand, logo, advertising speech, advertising banner, corporate image etc.), the forms of met communication, objects, types, structures, communication instruments (typical and not-typical), Internet, communication institutions communicational behavior patterns, techniques and communication strategies. In a restrained meaning, communicational culture represents the professional culture of communicators (journalists, PR people, spokesmen etc).

ASPECTS REGARDING COMMUNICATION IN A SOCIETY BASED ON KNOWLEDGE

To a first sight, in a society based on knowledge and in which the three pylons are information, the connection of the information and communication, we can affirm that the definition and the meaning of the term “communication” can be easily understood and everyone can tell what communication or information means. However, the complexity of the processes that develop in the new economy and also the structural changes underline the complex and the increased equivocal regarding both the information and the communication. This is because the new economy not only limits the horizons but also contributes to the increment of the content and the complexity of communication.

In an informal society, the communication approach can be made according to two perspectives: the informational one and the integration one[5].

The approach of communication, from the information perspective in the economy based on knowledge is absolutely necessary but it’s not adequate to define and understand all the meanings taken into consideration. The information represents in the new economy an important production factor, more important than work. Today, people that work in a sustained way and have a cult of work are not the one rewarded but the ones that have the information and who generate the information.

Although new specialists consider information as a mathematic term in which the cognitive value of information is irrelevant, the important thing is the choice and the quantity of information; however, information is an ontological factor (next to material and energy) and, implicit, a production one.
In 1990, the biologist and physician T. Stonier (Information and the internal structure of the Universe) affirms that „people are the expression of the natural evolution of material, energy and information organization”.

In another meaning, the information is the creator of life and also its engine. The information is the fuel that alimented any live structure. To support this idea, we mention the definition from Siveco dictionary according to which the information defines a material signal, capable to enable a reaction of a system. In another words, the information is the one that enables reactions both to the receptor and the issuer, therefore it contributes to their development.

However, in the actual context of globalization, the most important individual and social resource of people is the information. The proof is the appearance and the development of a branch of management: the management of informational resources.

More than that, in an economy of networks, the information is vital because it gives a meaning to the existence of networks.

Therefore, in a global and digital economy, the communication process represents the interconnection of several agents till then isolated, and the communication result is the creation of new constructions with a superior level, that presents new characteristics in report with the other components. Therefore, the definition of the new economy is the networks or communications economy.

In a period of globalization people are dynamic connected through different communication means, generating networks that represent in the content and relation plan more than the sum of individuals that compose them and this is because of the interpersonal communication between the network members. Communication produces effects on the members of the network that generate evolutional behaviors for each individual within the network (the development of the individual produces by communication). The individual dynamic is found first in the network dynamic.

Therefore, the logical affirmation is that the networking was, is and will be one of the concepts that give a meaning to the human development. This is because most of the people understood that it is better and easier to be connected in order to communicate, to find and establish necessary solutions for the individual, group and society development. The facile way to generate and develop inter-human relations through Internet leads to the increase of its importance but also to the need of solving the problems generated by the existence of this global network.

PERSPECTIVES IN THE APPROACH OF COMMUNICATION CULTURE IN THE ECONOMY BASED ON KNOWLEDGE

Within the digital economy, communication reaches new horizons and unlimited possibilities of achievement. Today the world is led by the communication. According to that, the major result of the new economy is the tyranny of communication. People are forced to communicate in order to survive and develop. The appearance of the new communication means forces the individuals to adapt to the new exigencies of communication. Today a professional orator must know how to use the techniques and technologies of modern communication because the oratory without audio and video technique looses its efficiency.

In present, there is a proper quantity of information that circulates through different media supports. It is know the fact that in any communication there are losses
because of the channel structure, the lack of knowledge transparency, language specific etc.

Therefore the communication process presents several specific characteristics. In the period of communications, because of the quantity of information, the communication process presents the following components: source; transmitter; message; channel; receiver; context; sender; noise source. The researchers from psycho-linguistic field stress the idea that the concept is created in a way that includes also the signification, therefore the receptor receives the productive germs of the meaning. The visual communication can combine the verbal stimulus with non-verbal ways of expression – iconic signs or indicial means of representation.

The reception of the message tries to recreate the signification of the issuer, process which is easier or harder put into function by the quantity of information transmitted.

Therefore, in order to realize a more efficient communication, that permits the understanding without difficulties of a written content, it becomes necessary to respect the following conditions (that will be considered for achieving and/or using the textual communication competences) [10]:

- The knowledge and the appreciation of the value of punctuation signs and the other graphical means;
- The distinguish between essential and accessory in a written text; the control of The question formulation techniques;
- The usage of work techniques based on written information – dictionaries, books, graphics, folders etc.;
- The perception of several abstract levels of different types of language;
- The understanding of the reports between lexical and phrase;
- The correct appreciation of the contextual values etc.

The Internet is the participation support of all individuals to the development of the economy based on knowledge through global communication, that are not developing in one way but in a communicational circle.

In this context, the communication culture in an economy based on knowledge can be approaches from a semiotic perspective. The semiotic approaches define culture as a system of signs (rules, institutions, tools, technique, practices, traditions, conducts, norms, language, texts, myths, beliefs, images, ideas), therefore the assembly of symbols and languages (verbal, iconic, gesture or conventional), which intervenes the understanding of life and assures the communication between humans. The universal capacity of culture to function as a system of signs is manifested in various historic, sociologic and practice patterns. From the perspective of signs meaning, like the valuable accents given by the relation between the world of things and the world of signs, comparing, there are four patterns of culture communication that can be built. These categories of cultures are organic associated with historic and topologic patterns of life. The differences between them can be easily made according to the variable signification given to real conducts of rules, basic languages or meta-languages, the message of the code. Therefore, with the help of the two dimensions of the culture: syntactic and semantic, by their presence or absence, we can distinguish four types of possible combinations, four types of culture patterns of communication: semantic-a-syntactic culture or semantic culture (symbolic) which offers priority for semantic relation, the sign being more important than the realities it expresses; a-semantic-syntactic cultures or syntactic that denotes the convention character of symbols, rituals and ideal values, in order to give an interest to the subordination of signs and human
regarding the entire social system (organization) from which they obtain signification; a-
semantic-a-syntactic cultures, which rehabilitate the stagnant realities (nature, life, bread,
water, sincerity), refusing the values that are intense semiotic (honor, reputation, positions,
money, uniforms, symbols, social conventions, caste traditions); the synthesis cultures,
semantic – syntactic, are specific because there are a lot of tendencies and codes that
interfere, an amalgam of contradictory orientations regarding the communication.

Also, the communication culture can be approached from the historic perspective,
because from the historic perspective the culture communication has two meanings: a
specific culture of professional orator’s community and one specific to the society in which
the community develops its activity. The historic evolution of the culture communication is
produced also because of the historic evolution of the respective society. Therefore, the
culture of communication is determined by historic societies that have appeared, developed
and manifest. More than that, the culture of communication has a national and zonal
character, which reflects the relation between a culture, the laws of the culture (its
structures and genesis) and the historic experience or nation thanks to its classes, groups
and historic periods.

The operational approach of communication culture aims the identification of the
new elements of the communicational process and also of one communication conduct
against other but especially the definition of communication culture according to some
operational characteristics, very important in any cultural research. Any culture of
communication can be processed with some appreciation criteria, each criterion
representing a number of levels of each characteristic in report with their complexity level.
Of course, each level can present one or more possible variants. Also, each criterion
presents a proper established level of the characteristics and their development variants.

The culture of communication is itself a system, it contains different subsystems that
can be analyzed and studied in order to give a proper image of the entire structure. From
this perspective, the culture of communication is defined by its subsystems. The structure of
communication culture mustn’t been seen as something static, but mobile, because the
structure parts are moving in a small of large level according to the influence factors,
internal or external.

CONCLUSIONS

In present, communication means power, because those who control the influence
techniques and the communication competences can change the way they perceive the
world, and also the way they are perceived by the others. The development of a
communication culture, determined by the revolution of the Internet and the development
of communication means and also the evolution of the communicated object demonstrates
that the achievements made in the communication field have a strong impact on the
conducts and representations of the individuals. More than that, it’s remarkable the fact
that, approached in a systemic manner, the culture of communication offers information
regarding its subsystems which can constitute necessary vectors in order to predict the
implications of communication against the individual and organizational development.

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THE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF THE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM CORRESPONDING TO AN ORGANISATION THROUGH THE EVALUATION OF ITS RISKS

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Abstract: In the context of increasingly stringent legislation, the development of economic policies and other measures that foster good occupational health and safety practices are increased concern expressed by interested parties about occupational health and safety issues. The occupational health and safety assessment must be developed in response to customer demand for a recognizable occupational health and safety management system standard against which their management systems can be assessed and certified.

The requirements of the Occupational health and safety management systems standard has been developed to be compatible with those of the Quality and Environmental management systems standards, in order to facilitate the integration of quality, environmental and occupational health and safety management systems by organizations.

In Europe generally there are various legal requirements for occupational health and safety that apply to the potentially harmful effects of work activities and which extend beyond the workplace to those affected by workplace activities.

It is essential for the organization to take the matters addressed by these legal requirements into account in establishing, implementing and maintaining its occupational health and safety management system and in particular when identifying hazards, assessing risks and determining controls.

Now it has been given greater emphasis and importance of health.

Many organizations are concerned with achieving and demonstrating sound occupational health and safety performance by controlling their occupational health and safety risks.

To be effective, the organizations must provide that its performance will continue to meet its legal and policy requirements and this is the reason for they need to be conducted within a structured management system that is integrated within the organization.

The requirements for an occupational health and safety management system help the organization to develop and implement a policy and objectives which take into account legal requirements and information about occupational health and safety risks.

The success of the system depends on commitment from all levels and functions of the organization and especially from top management.

A system of this kind enables an organization to develop the occupational health and safety policy, establish objectives and processes to achieve the policy commitments, take action as needed to improve its performance and demonstrate the conformity of the system to the requirements of the standard.
The overall aim is to support and promote good occupational health and safety practices, in balance with socio-economic needs.

Many organizations manage their operations via the application of a system of processes and their interactions, which can be referred to as the "process approach".

Since the methodology Plan-Do-Check-Act can be applied to all processes, this is considered to be compatible to the "process approach".

The labour health and security represent nowadays one of the most important sectors in the field of social policy within the European Union. The European Union is the most active organisation in the field of multi-sector integration, aiming at taking action in the economic, social, political, citizenship rights and external relations of member states.

Starting from 1980, when the first framework-directive was elaborated, namely 80/1107/CEE, referring to the protection of workers against exposure to labour risk involving chemical, physical and biological agents; the directive was supplemented by several similar actions, connected to the exposure to particular risk factors which were considered to be extremely sensible for human health (metallic lead and its ironical compounds, asbestos, industrial noise).

Knowing the necessity of relaunching the integration efforts for creating a true and functional common market, the European Commission published in June 1985 a White Book, entitled “L’achevement du marche interieur” (The accomplishment of the internal market), which comprises 300 legislative proposals accompanied by an adoption schedule, one having a special mention on “The New Approach”.

Following the adoption of the Unique European Act in 1987, which implies an important modification to the Treaty of Rome (through the introduction of articles 100A and 118A), a new action program was elaborated in the field of labour health and security (third program of this kind), which was considered a very useful framework by the Counsel to start the application of article 118 A to the Community level.

The Program tackles five major aspects: the security and ergonomics within the work place; health and hygiene upon the work place; information and training of workers; small and medium sized companies, social dialogue.

An important step towards the elaboration of the European legislation in the field of health and security is the adoption on 12th of June 1989, of the Framework Directive no. 89/391/CEE regarding the application of measures aimed at promoting improvement measures for the worker’s health and security at the working place, according to article 118 A from the Treaty of Rome. Its objective is to cover all aspects related to health and security upon the work place and to ensure a high level of protection and equal rights for workers from all member states. It represents the juridical act based on which it was developed and continues to support the entire elaboration of particular directives concerning specific fields of activity.

The European Commission has declared in 1992 the European Year for Security, Hygiene and Health at the Work Place, in order to be able to draw some conclusions on the third action plan and for making a point a larger number of persons regarding the security and health issues upon the work place of ordinary individuals.

The European Year has determined an increase interest among the workers, business owners and national authorities for the health and security upon the work place, bringing new insights for the future community policies.
In February 1992, the Treaty of Maastricht was signed, implying the setting up of the European Union, entering into force on 1st of November 1993. An important Treaty article makes reference to the extension of Social Europe, through the introduction of a Community Book containing fundamental social rights of workers; this document was adopted in 1989, containing a chapter which discusses the issue of health and security upon the work place.

For applying these provisions, the European Counsel has decided at the Brussels Meeting on 29th of October 1993 to create the European Agency for Labour Security and Health. This institution has the responsibility of collecting and distributing information related to this subject, of promoting the exchange and dissemination of research results and offering technical and scientific assistance to Community institutions, as well as to member states. Furthermore, it has tight connections with competent services of the European Commission and cooperates with EU bodies.

Within the association agreements of the Community and the countries in the Central and Eastern Europe, taking into account the future integration perspectives within the European Union, the EU Commission has the obligation, in the field of security, hygiene and labour health, to monitor the execution of the program aimed at regulating the labour protection, especially by applying specific measures that will surely improve the labour security, based on the existing community legislation in force. Furthermore, the partnership and cooperation agreements between the European Union and the respective states offer a special attention on the application of all agreement elements referring to the labour health and security.

The health directive concerning the products derived from article 100 A on Treaty of Rome are oriented towards the protection of users against the risk which may emerge following the use of particular products.

The main objective of the European Union was the creation of a Single Market, without internal commercial barriers, maintaining or imposing, if it is the case, of some common security and health levels, which may permit the free movement of labour force.

Article 118A, adopted in 1987, stipulates that “Member states have the obligation to promote, to a large extent, the improvement of the labour environment, so as to protect the health and security of workers, having as objective the progressive harmonisation of existing conditions in this field of activity.” For avoiding any reduction encountered in the security level of developed states, the above mentioned article offers unrestrained freedom to countries that wish to impose more severe legislation than the provisions of Community Law. This is the reason why the institutionalized legislative system contains „minimal prescriptions”.

After the adoption of the Unique Act, the third action plan was adopted in 1987 in the field of labour health and security, which was acknowledged by the Counsel as a useful framework for the start of using article 118 A at the Community level.

As a result, in December 2001, the Consultative Committee for Security, Hygiene and Labour Health Protection issues (CCSIS), including here social partners, has formulated its opinion regarding the adoption a new Community strategy for labour security and health. This opinion is based on setting comparable common objectives, containing an action plan for enforcing the implementation process, of the control and evaluation means oriented at the existent directives, including additional legislative initiatives in case of insufficient risk and covers new employment situation, encouraging the risk analysis as part of a preventive approach.
The Counsel decided in the Stockholm meeting in the spring of 2001 to introduce the concept of "labour quality". The concept was detailed in one of the Commission press statements, adopted in June 2001. This document involves a strategy based on the issue of "labour quality", which depends on fragile equilibrium between creating work places and adequate social protection. This strategy can not be separated from the subject of general social quality.

The "quality" concept has represented a major innovation of the Commission proposals referring to the guiding lines of labour force for the next years.

The objective of Community policy in the field of labour security and health must be the continuous improvement of the labour wealth fare, this concept including physical, moral and social dimensions.

The promotion of labour wealth fare can not be accomplished through an unique health and security political mean. - this assumes tighter connection with the design mode of labour equipments, hiring policy, with the policy existent especially for disabled persons, as well as other policies, as it is the case of transport, and of course, the general preventive and curative health policy.

The labour quality – objective of the European Union, promulgated by the European Counsel upon the Lisbon meeting in March 2000 – has as main elements the health and security upon the work place, considering that a proper labour organisation, a healthy and secure working environment represent performance factors for the economy as a whole, and for companies in particular.

Using the documents of European Union in the field of labour health and security, the Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family, as well as the Ministry of Health, have set the policy for labour security and health for the period of 2004-2007, having the following objectives:

- The adoption of the acquis communitaire in the field should be completed by 2006.
- The development and consolidation of the institutions with a role in implementing the legislative procedures concerning the labour health and security.
- The development of prevention activities for work accidents and professional diseases by forming courses on prevention of professional risks and by clearly delimiting theoretical elements from practical ones.
- The development and enlargement of social dialogue structures in order to involve to a greater extent the social partners, both at decision making level, as well as at the implementation stage.

The political, economic, social events from our country have determined in the last years the re-evaluation of the labour health and security field of activity, for which a new legislation was put into forced according to the European Directives, observing the conventions and recommendations of World Labour Organisation. The new legislation has introduced or developed concepts which provide modifications to the approach method corresponding to the labour health and security assurance.

In other words, the new legislation imposes the intensification of the efforts for ensuring qualitative technical equipments, for replacing and even eliminating dangerous products and substances, for the ergonomic organisation of work places, for increasing the training level of workers and for ensuring the participation of workers to the policy.
elaboration and decision making processes related to work protection and for monitoring the health of active workers.

These efforts are supported by the current economic context, characterized by an increase in the quality of products, implying the extension of security dimension and the multiplication of organisations and corporations interested to conceive and use techniques and instruments, methods and procedures aimed at facilitating the continuous improvement of quality, evaluation methods for the security level.

The harmonisation action corresponding to the national legislation, including the provisions for European directives and also conventions and recommendations of International Labour Organisation, launched simultaneously with the appearance of Labour Protection Law no. 90/1996 and of other normative acts, represents a continuous process which must be adapted to the specific conditions of the countries. Currently, Law no. 319/2006 is in force - the law of labour health and security, law which was abrogated through law no. 90/1996.

The second level of the legislative harmonisation in the field of labour security and health is represented by the new Labour Code which presents in Title 5 the general regulation related to labour health and security, establishing the obligation of the employer to take all the necessary measures for protecting the life and health of employees.

The provisions of Labour Code are supplemented with the content of special laws, applicable collective labour contracts, as well as with preventive labour protection norms and normative. Labour Code establishes the general rules referring to the Labour Health and Security Committee.

The normative act based on which the entire health and security activity is performed in Romania is the Law of Labour Security and Health no. 319/2006. In other words, this legislation has the role of a fundamental law for ensuring the labour security and health, from this point of view being a fundamental generator for all normative provisions related to labour security and health, regardless of their inclusion in the component acts of fundamental or connective legislation (with the exception of provisions for Labour Code and Constitution).

Taking into consideration the general objective the adoption of the Conventions and Directives of International Labour Organisation and of European Union, but also due to other reasons as well, for example: the accomplishment of labour security with the most reduced cost possible; ensuring the competivity of products on external market; the right establishment of the liabilities of both levels. User and producer, imposing the delimitation of regulations concerning the products and specific activities. This is how the National System for Labour Security Standards has emerged. This documents have a juridical character, regulating the aspect related to labour protection, oriented towards the products, and more specifically: terminology, constructive principles, requirements and measuring methods.

According to the current legislation in force, the labour protection activity in Romania is structured on two level - national and corporate level.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and the Ministry of Health, through their specific central and territorial bodies, organise, coordinate and control the labour protection activity. The two ministries represent the speciality bodies of the central administration which apply the Romanian strategy and program in the field of labour security and social protection.

The speciality body within the central public administration, subordinated to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection is Labour Inspection, which was set up and
organised through Law no. 108/1999. The Labour Inspection body has 42 territorial labour inspectorates.

Practically, each organisation must establish its organisational structure of the labour protection activity, according to:
- the dimension of the organisation;
- the risk level for accidents and professional illness which is the result of the risk level evaluation based on various workplaces;
- the territorial organisation of the activity.

Although there is no international standard approved for labour and health security management system, the efforts for ensuring a managerial approach in this field of activity existed even from 1996.

Sustained by the success of quality and environment management systems, various national and international bodies have proposed models for the management systems aimed at labour and health security; nowadays there are several variants for these systems, being copied, to a large extent, from the environment management system.

The main documents and journals which comprise formal and essential aspects related to the activity of labour health and security are established through law and normative acts.

The documentation is another important element which permits a particular organisation to successfully implement a personnel security and health management system. The documentation is regarded as a minimum requirements for obtaining efficiency and effectiveness.

It does not establish absolute requirements for occupational health and safety performance beyond the commitments to the prevention of injury and all health and to continual improvement.

The extent of documentation and the resources devoted to it depend on the scope of the system, the size of an organization and the nature of its activities, products and services, and the organizational culture.

Economic incentives aim to stimulate enterprises to invest in management of occupational safety and health (OSH) by making it more financially attractive. They are potentially strong instruments in driving companies towards safety and health excellence because they reinforce the link with profitability.

By 'speaking the language of business', economic incentives are effective in drawing the attention of companies’ management to safety and health issues. Furthermore, economic incentives allow companies themselves to find the most cost-efficient way of improving safety and health.

To be considered successful, incentives must in general stimulate actions by the company that are both beyond what is already required by law and would not otherwise have been carried out. However, assessment of their effectiveness is not straightforward in practice and systematic empirical assessments of existing incentives are rare.

The need for greater understanding of the effectiveness of economic incentives in promoting safety and health has grown more apparent following the European Commission’s call for a ‘more systematic application of economic incentives’ as an important ‘innovative approach’. Economic incentives are considered an approach that ‘encourages the various parties ‘to go a step further’” and to associate all the interested parties in achieving the overall objectives of the strategy’.
REFERENCES

FOOD LABELLING AND NUTRITION AND HEALTH CLAIMS

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Abstract: In January 2007, Regulation 1924/2006 on nutrition and health claims made on foods, was published and will apply in EU Member States from 1 July 2007. This is the first piece of specific legislation to deal with nutrition and health claims. Its aims are: • To ensure a high level of consumer protection by guarding against unsubstantiated, exaggerated or untruthful claims about foodstuffs. With the new legislation, consumers can rely on clear and accurate information on food labels, enabling them to be properly informed on the food they choose. • To harmonize legislation across the EU by providing food producers and manufacturers with clear, harmonized rules that will enable fair competition to help protect innovation in the food industry, by ensuring that manufacturers make genuine health and nutrition claims and are not competing with false or inaccurate claims. The Regulation will apply to any health and nutrition claims made on food or drink products produced for human consumption to be sold in the EU/Member States’ market, including all commercial communications, generic advertising and promotional campaigns. It is also applicable to foodstuffs for particular nutritional uses and supplements. EU regulation 1924/2006 on Nutrition and Health claims made on food is the first piece of scientific legislation to deal with nutrition and health claims and aims to provide a higher level of consumer protection as well as harmonize legislation across the EU to facilitate intra-Community trade. The Regulation requires the European Commission to establish nutrient profiles as criteria that foods must meet to bear claims.

INTRODUCTION

EU has adopted a general labelling requirement for foodstuffs (originally Directive 79/112, but now replaced by Directive 2000/13), labelling requirements can be found in many different places in EU legislation. Early vertical controls included labelling requirements which have been retained to this day. Nutrition labelling has been adopted as a separate control. Weight and volume legislation specifies requirements for the labelling statements. Detailed controls have been adopted on the use of various words (e.g. ‘organic’). Some Regulations adopted under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) contain quite detailed requirements (e.g. the controls on spreadable fats which specify both compositional standards relating to the use of certain names and the requirement to specify the fat content of the fat spread).

In January 2007, Regulation 1924/2006 on nutrition and health claims made on foods, was published and will apply in EU Member States from 1 July 2007.
The General Food Labelling Directives

Many of the requirements have been adopted as Directives and have therefore been incorporated into national legislation. However some of the requirements are contained in Regulations and are therefore often harder to identify. In this lecture, consideration of the EU requirements will only be of those controls applicable to most foodstuffs and will not look at the more detailed specific requirements applicable to only a few foods.

In 1979, the European Community adopted its main legislative document relating to food labelling - Directive 79/112. The Directive established general requirements for food labelling and, in addition, specified certain specific requirements for certain types of food. Gaining agreement in 1979 was difficult, not least because unanimous agreement was required for the Directive to be adopted. It therefore incorporated several 'derogations' which allowed countries to maintain slightly different requirements in their national implementing provisions. As part of the moves to create the Internal Market (1985-1992) it was recognised that these derogations would have to be removed. This was agreed in 1989.

The concept of the internal market, where products manufactured in one country could be sold in any other member state, also raised another issue. It was known that some products were manufactured in certain countries according to defined recipes (national compositional standards). These standards do vary and so a product (e.g. a 'sausage') could meet the legal requirements of one country but not meet the legal requirements for that product in the importing country. This could lead to confusion for the consumer and, to overcome this, additional detail was thought necessary to allow consumers to clearly identify the key differences between similar foods. The result was an amendment 79/112, agreed in 1997, which requires quantitative ingredient declarations (QUID) on many products. The actual requirements go beyond those products which were the particular concern of the Internal Market.

At the same time as the internal market program was being completed many countries were introducing legal requirements relating to nutritional labeling. These were recognized as creating a further potential obstacle to trade and the Commission developed proposals for a European control. A Directive relating to this were agreed in 1990 (Directive 90/496). This however was an additional Directive and not an amendment to 79/112.

In 2000, the Directive (79/112) was replaced by a new version which incorporated the various amendments - a process known as 'consolidation'. No changes were included - it just made the legal requirements more obvious. This is a Directive number 2000/13.

The following account is based on the new consolidated text which provides the present requirement of the Directive.

The key legal requirements are set out in Article 3. The following are listed as compulsory elements on the labelling of a foodstuff:

- The name under which the product is sold
- The list of ingredients
- The quantity of certain ingredients or categories of ingredients
- In the case of prepackaged foods, the net quantity
- The date of minimum durability or, in the case of foodstuffs which, from the microbiological point of view, are highly perishable, the 'use by' date
- Any special storage conditions or conditions of use
• The name or business name and address of the manufacturer or packager, or of a seller established within the Community
• Particulars of the place of origin or provenance in the cases where failure to give such particulars might mislead the consumer to a material degree as to the true origin or provenance of the foodstuff
• Instructions for use when it would be impossible to make appropriate use of the foodstuff in the absence of such instructions
• For beverages containing more than 1.2% by volume alcohol, the actual alcoholic strength by volume.

The labeling of allergens. There is an apparent increase in the number of people who suffer allergic reactions to certain foods. One of these is an allergic reaction to nuts and nut products - for some people this type of reaction can be very severe and even fatal. Other more common allergenic reactions are to milk products, fish and to gluten derived from wheat. With the increasingly complex nature of the food chain, it can be surprising where certain ingredients are used. It had been suggested that a warning statement should be required on those foods which contain ingredients derived from a designated list of allergens. In the White Paper however the suggestion was relaxed and the Commission stated: 'For ingredients that are known allergens, but where only the name of the category needs to be indicated, an indication as to the presence of such allergens will be considered in order to enable susceptible consumers to avoid such allergens.' This covers ingredients such as 'starch' where it had been possible to make no reference to the source of the starch.

The new requirement is that all ingredients which are on the list of allergenic ingredients (or derived from one of these allergenic ingredients) will have to ensure that they are listed in the ingredients list. The final agreed list was:
• Cereals containing gluten (i.e. wheat, rye, barley, oats, spelt, kamut or their hybridised strains) and products thereof
• Crustaceans and products thereof
• Eggs and products thereof
• Fish and products thereof
• Peanuts and products thereof
• Soybeans and products thereof
• Milk and products thereof (including lactose)
• Nuts i.e. Almond (Amygdalus communis L.), Hazelnut (Corylus avellana), Walnut (Juglans regia), Cashew (Anacardium occidentale), Pecan nut (Carya illinoiisies (Wangenh.) K. Koch), Brazil nut (Bertholletia excelsa), Pistachio nut (Pistacia vera), Macadamia nut and Queensland nut (Macadamia ternifolia) and products thereof
• Celery and products thereof
• Mustard and products thereof
• Sesame seeds and products thereof
• Sulphur dioxide and sulphites at concentrations of more than 10 mg/kg or 10 mg/litre expressed as SO2.

A major complication for many years has been the issue of claims used on the labels of certain foods to promote the product (e.g. low fat, high in polyunsaturates). Certain countries have adopted national provisions to cover these claims and it has been the ambition of the Commission to adopt a common European set of requirements. Despite several attempts, the discussions had never led to a detailed proposal. The issue is difficult with different parties (for example, industry and consumers) taking opposing views. The
Commission however indicated in the White Paper that it would: 'consider whether specific provisions should be introduced in EU law to govern "functional claims" (for example claims related to beneficial effects of a nutrient on certain normal bodily functions) and "nutritional claims" (such as claims which describe the presence, absence or the level of a nutrient, as the case may be, contained in a foodstuff or its value compared to similar foodstuffs).

NEW REGULATION ON NUTRITION AND HEALTH CLAIMS

Nowadays more food labels contain nutrition and health information that gives us useful knowledge about the food we buy. It can help us to understand the contribution different foods make to our health and well-being and to choose a more balanced diet.

In January 2007, Regulation 1924/2006 on nutrition and health claims made on foods, was published and will apply in EU Member States from 1 July 2007. This is the first piece of specific legislation to deal with nutrition and health claims. Its aims are:

1. To ensure a high level of consumer protection by guarding against unsubstantiated, exaggerated or untruthful claims about foodstuffs. With the new legislation, consumers can rely on clear and accurate information on food labels, enabling them to be properly informed on the food they choose.
2. To harmonize legislation across the EU by providing food producers and manufacturers with clear, harmonized rules that will enable fair competition to help protect innovation in the food industry, by ensuring that manufacturers make genuine health and nutrition claims and are not competing with false or inaccurate claims.

The Regulation will apply to any health and nutrition claims made on food or drink products produced for human consumption to be sold in the EU/Member States’ market, including all commercial communications, generic advertising and promotional campaigns. It is also applicable to foodstuffs for particular nutritional uses and supplements.

The whole notion about what a claim is, and is not, will become a significant factor not only for the enforcers of the legislation but also for those looking to navigate it. At present, claims cover three distinct areas and under three articles:

1. **Structure & function claims** (Article 13 of the rule primarily, however may include article 14 claims for children under 3 years): Related to how an ingredient works within the body, i.e., maintains healthy cholesterol.
2. **Disease risk reduction claims** (Article 14 of the rule): Related to how an ingredient works to reduce the risk of developing a disease, i.e., reduces blood pressure.
3. **Comparative claims** (Article 9 of the rule “Annex”): These are the only permitted claims and relate to increased, reduced and light claims on selected micro and macronutrients.

These first two categories of claims are very important for the future of how the industry will market food products to consumers. In a recent presentation, the British Retail Consortium highlighted that this regulation should apply to all nutrition and health claims made in commercial communications, including, among other things, generic advertising of food and promotional campaigns, such as those supported in whole or in part by public authorities.

In essence, this covers claims made on front of pack, in-store magazines, leaflets, online and advertisements. Of these, one of the most interesting affected claim formats is the way a “front of pack” message is delivered to the consumer. Marketers can split a claim
into two parts: those made through text and overt claim, and vague claims made through image, brand name or logo.

Three types of claim will be allowed to be made on foods throughout the European Union:

- Nutrition claims, which state, suggest or imply that a food has particular beneficial properties due to its composition (regarding energy or a particular nutrient). Examples of this type of claim will be: ‘source of’, ‘free of’, ‘high’, ‘low’ or ‘reduced’ in calories or a particular nutrient.
- Health claims, which state, suggest or imply that a relationship exists between a food or one of its components and health. This type of claim mentions the physiological function of a constituent such as ‘calcium can help build strong bones’. The claim must be based on generally accepted scientific data and be well understood by the average consumer.
- The third type are ‘Disease risk factor reduction’ claims. They are a specific type of health claim, which state that a food or one of its components significantly reduces a risk factor for human disease. For example, phytosterols can help reduce blood cholesterol, thereby reducing a risk factor for cardiovascular disease. For the first time, mention of disease will be allowed on food, but only after approval by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).

NUTRIENT PROFILES AND NUTRITION AND HEALTH CLAIMS

Nutrient profiling refers to Article 4 of Regulation 1924/2006 on nutrition and health claims, which indicates the EC must establish specific nutrient profiles (i.e., conditions regarding the nutrient content of foods), that foods or certain categories of foods must respect in order to bear nutrition and health claims. How does this relate to potential health claims and their approval?

The big issue is that Article 13 submissions are all but closed, although an established nutrient profile list is not expected until January 2009. So while it may be possible to claim cocoa polyphenols from chocolate may be heart healthy, it is likely these polyphenols are delivered in a delivery form high in sugars and fats. It is therefore likely chocolate will be defined as unhealthy in regards to its nutrient profile, meaning a company could not use the approved claims for chocolate based on its content of polyphenols, even if the claim was granted. The fallout across the EU could be major, as each member state has a different view on what is and is not the right way to profile.

One food/ingredient group currently under fire from the new EU regulations is PARTNUTS foods. These are foods for use in situations of “intense muscular efforts,” i.e., sports foods and drinks. Many of these products include high doses of nutrients such as sodium and sugar for purposes of hydration; yet, under nutrient profiling regulations these products may be classed as “nonhealthy.” This would still be the case regardless of the huge volume of evidence demonstrating PARTNUTS foods as vital for well-being during intense exercise.

Finally, there is the Human Medicinal Products (Pharmaceuticals) Directive (Directive 2004/27/EC), a key directive sometimes referred to as the “pharmaceuticals directive,” controlling the use and sale of pharmaceutical products across the EU. The big issues here could be the inclusion of ingredients such as glucosamine or fish oils if their use is deemed to be medicinal following review by EFSA. As such, applications for additional
product/marketing licenses will have to be applied for, increasing costs to large and small businesses alike.

Claims are used to present products as having an additional health or nutritional benefit. In most cases, consumers perceive products carrying certain claims to be better for their health and wellbeing. However, at the moment, a food which is high in fat, salt and/or sugar, can still use claims such as “rich in vitamin C” or “high in fibre”, even if the overall health and nutritional benefits of the product are low.

The Nutrition and Health Claims Regulation aims to protect consumers from being misled, by controlling nutrition and health claims. In the case of Health claims, this will be achieved by establishing a positive list of claims, which will be generated in three steps. Member States will first send the list of the claims they consider are valid, based on generally accepted science in their country (by January 2008). Then EFSA will evaluate those claims received within two years. Finally, the accepted list of Health Claims will be in the public register. For new Health claims, a file with the supporting evidence will need to be submitted to EFSA, by the company wishing to make the claim on a food or drink, and the approval procedure followed. For disease risk factor reduction claims and claims on children’s health, more elaborate procedures have been foreseen.

The Regulation requires the European Commission to establish nutrient profiles as criteria that foods must meet to bear claims. The nutrient profiles will be based on the scientific opinion of the EFSA. Within 24 months of the Regulation entering into force, the Commission will consult the relevant stakeholders, and present proposals for nutrient profiles to Member State experts. If they support these proposed nutrient profiles, they will be adopted by the Commission and used as a condition for making claims.

In order to facilitate the application of this measure, a derogation (exemption) was agreed which will allow nutrition claims to be made if just one nutrient is higher than the required profile. However, the high level of this nutrient must be clearly marked on the label, close to and with the same prominence as the claim. If two or more of the nutrients exceed the limit, no nutritional claim can be made.

CONCLUSIONS

As EU regulatory harmonization of foods, beverages and dietary supplements pushes forward in 2008, the fall-out over nutrient profiling and product claim assessments are sure to bolster or break innovation and front-of-pack marketing potential. While many within the industry try to wrap their head round the current legislative changes and their impact on sales, decades of member state debates have clearly passed, and the regulations are already set to take their toll.

EU regulation 1924/2006 on Nutrition and Health claims made on food was published on 18 January 2007. This is the first piece of scientific legislation to deal with nutrition and health claims and aims to provide a higher level of consumer protection as well as harmonize legislation across the EU to facilitate intra-Community trade.

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QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN THE 21ST CENTURY - THE KEYS OF SUCCESSFUL CHANGE

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Abstract: Brown and Eisenhardt (1998) noted that developing technology, the changing needs of stakeholders and economic pressures all contribute to the need for organisations worldwide to significantly modify the way they do things. Major organisational change requires huge investments in energy, time and resources, but our own experience has shown that many change programmes fail to meet expectations. Published estimates of success levels can be as low as 10%, although other authors often quote a 30% success rate as an average from organisations' experiences³. The literature is full of models and frameworks offering solutions. Research by Bain and Company revealed that, having employed more than three new tools or techniques annually for the previous five years, the typical company was planning to adopt another 3.7 in the coming twelve months⁴. As succinctly put by Schaffer and Thompson (1992), ‘Most improvement efforts have as much impact on company performance as a rain dance has on the weather!’

THE ASPECTS OF SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS CHANGE

Our review of the literature examining the drivers of successful change identified five main themes. These were Leadership, Project Management, Processes, People and Learning.

Leadership and its role in change

Leadership has a key role to play, both in setting direction, inspiring change throughout the organization and ensuring that change is implemented. In achieving world-class performance, leaders have a role developing a number of critical competencies related to helping to focus individual attention on organisational mind-sets, facilitating strategy implementation and building change capability⁵.

An important ingredient in the right cultural mix for successful change is an atmosphere of open communication, participation, and cross-training⁶, which is driven by the leadership style. Executive and departmental (or business-unit) levels should be aligned in support of the change. There appears to be two focal points of power and leadership that need to coordinate their efforts: the executive leadership at the enterprise level and the middle rank of leadership at the department, division, or business unit level. Executives control strategy

³ Higgs and Rowland, 2000; Smith, 2003.
⁴ Ghoshal and Bartlett, 1997.
⁵ Higgs and Rowland, 2000.
and resources, while middle management coordinates deployment of the resources to accomplish the strategic objectives\(^7\).

To quell likely pockets of resistance, an organization's "vision" for change must be embraced throughout all levels of the organization, especially by those functional and middle-level managers affected by the process change\(^8\). To achieve this requires continuous articulation and communication of the value of reporting results and how each individual contributing and accountable to the overall company's change effort.

The role of the sponsor is pivotal and the sponsor should be versed in developing support for the change among key executives, organizing the project's infrastructure (for example, appointing a capable and dedicated project team), positioning the change initiative with stakeholders, protecting project commitments from other organizational priorities, and demonstrating continued support for the effort in ways that are visible to stakeholders.

Communication throughout the project is critical to developing and maintaining stakeholder support. As mentioned previously, the sponsor needs to communicate his or her support for the change, and progress should be tracked and publicized. It is also important that people understand what they had to do to make the change successful. Conversely, failed efforts were characterized by vague goals and poor communication\(^9\).

There tend to be strategic "stimuli" ranging from financial pressures, continued market leaderships, customer dissatisfaction and/or organization inefficiencies that trigger firms to undertake business change\(^10\). The stimulus itself is not necessarily a determinant of success, but organisations attempting to change performance radically seem to require some "sense of urgency" in their business situation, which translates in turn into a compelling vision that is espoused throughout the organization.

**Project management**

Second, and related to leadership, is the need to identify and define the change that is required. This is often linked to financial pressure. A project management approach is the most successful approach when implementing such change, with a need to define clear success measures being important.

Given the dismal rate of success, it seems reasonable to provide for the contingency of recovering from barriers that stymie a project. Tactics for revitalizing stalled projects should be defined. Planning should emphasize keeping the change manageable. The challenge is to achieve the change objectives without jeopardizing other strategic interests. There are tactics to accomplish this, such as:

- phasing the change effort across business units;
- cascading the change down the management hierarchy;
- successive approximations whereby the change is viewed as a learning curve with intermediate targets that gradually lead to the desired end state\(^11\).

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\(^7\) Smith, 2003.
\(^8\) Kaplan and Norton, 2001.
\(^10\) Guha, Grover et al., 1997.
Execution is the real difference between success and failure. The implementation plan should provide for replacement of key players given the time span associated with process change and the normal turnover rates for senior and middle managers.

**Processes**
A well-defined process management approach should include a documented methodology of change, use objective and quantified metrics showing the value of change, continuously communicate process metrics to senior management, and possess a well-documented rollout of the new process design. Process mapping is the mechanism used to map and understand complex business processes. The systematic nature of the process mapping methodology keeps people focused and acts as a rallying point. Moreover, process mapping provides a common language for everyone involved in the project. Process improvements should be aligned with business objectives. Process mapping, failsafeing, and teaming should be based on what the business needs to change to become more successful. In this case, effective communication of ideas from top management throughout the enterprise is imperative. Change is continuous and is never over.

**People**
Managing change also has its softer side. People are the essential contributor to successful change, and managing change within the culture of an organisation is important. As already noted, good communication is also vital. Once a team perceives that they "own" a project, they tend to want to make it work. It becomes "their" project. In addition, management should encourage people to be dissatisfied with the way things are currently done. However, punishing people for complaining about ineffective work processes is an effective way to promote the status quo. While support from the top is critical, actual implementation should be carried out from the bottom-up. The idea of empowerment is to push decisions down to where the work is actually done. Process mapping and failsafeing are two systematic and proven methodologies that help support empowered teams. Business processes are complex, but process mapping offers a comprehensive blueprint of the existing state. The blueprint enables systematic identification of opportunities for improvement. People are unpredictable. They cannot be modeled or categorized universally. However, people do the work and therefore must be trained, facilitated, and nurtured. Balanced consideration of the social, technical, and business value elements should be maintained throughout the project.

**Learning**
Organisational learning is key to managing change successfully. Some organisations see the involvement of external consultants to be important when managing change. They provide industry expertise, skilled resource, and change management knowledge and experience to the project. Once the change has been completed, organisations also capture the learning both at a project and at an organisational level.

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12 Paper, Rodger et al., 2001
These five areas, Leadership, Project Management, Processes, People and Learning, formed a basic framework for our research. The main aim of the research was to identify the factors that were reported as being critical to managing change successfully within both public and private sector organisations. The research addressed strategic change, step change and continuous improvement approaches, identifying the barriers to change and how to overcome them.

THE KEYS OF SUCCESSFUL CHANGE

A number of key insights have been identified and each of these is discussed in turn.

The plans for change are driven by external events
All the organisations were reacting to shifts in their external environment when introducing their change programme. Many of these could be traced to an external event, such as a regulatory change or increased competition. Even when internal reasons were given for the need to change, these could be related to some form of external pressure on the organisation.
In some cases the changes made by the organisation were proactive in that action was being taken to prevent a future performance problem. Scanning the external environment and taking action in advance to be ‘ahead of the game’ could possibly improve an organisation’s ability to implement improvements.

Leaders set a clear direction and manage risks
The leaders identify and select priorities for change. One feature of successful change programmes is that before making the decision, alternatives must be considered, but in the end some leaders made a definite decision to change something and stuck with it, accepting that there were risks associated with any decision. Once the decision was made leaders set success criteria and communicated the need for the change, often using storytelling as an approach.

The need for change must be aligned to the operational issues
The external event that triggers the change forms part of the strategic context of the change. But the need must be translated into an operational context so people in the organisation understand how they will be affected and what must be done to address the challenge. As an example, if there is a need to become more competitive or react to a government initiative, the strategic need can be translated into quantifiable efficiency and effectiveness improvements that are understood at an operational level. This link is a central role of the leadership of the organisation as they set direction. If the link is broken between the strategic and operational issues there is a risk of misdirected effort leading to no or limited bottom-line benefits or the change will never get off the starting blocks.

A process approach is central to successful change
The previous observation, the need for leaders to translate the high level strategic change into operational terms, explains why process management sits at the heart of a successful change programme. Process thinking is a vehicle to understand and review the work actually performed within the organisation. It also enables full participation in the change process and a way of establishing current and future performance levels. In essence, process
thinking provides a hands-on well proven approach to deliver improvement. The processes need to be understood, measured and improved.

**Performance measurement has a key role in supporting change**
We can identify four sub-themes in ‘Implementing the change’ theme. These are the processes at the centre of the change, organisation and resource, systems and controls, and behaviours. The first of these sub-themes, processes, has just been discussed. A second component identified from the systems and controls sub-theme that played a critical role was performance measurement. Performance measurement is seen as critical to assessing the levels of performance both before and after the change, and to providing a control during the change. Good performance measurement also allows target areas for improvement to be identified and has a key role in communication.

**A project-based approach increases the chance of success**
A common theme is the use of project management to deliver change. Project management includes the activities of planning, communication, establishing targets and learning from the change. This is an area where there is scope for improvement within many organisations. In particular the area of setting clear measurable objectives for the change and evaluating their achievement may be singled out for attention.
Two other areas were learning from change and the need stability and to keep a focus on the project right through to completion so that all the potential benefits are delivered.

**External support adds value in managing change and the transfer of knowledge**
It was perceived that organisations would avoid using external consultants unless absolutely necessary, but it was generally recognised that lack of technical and project management expertise proved to be barriers to successful change. Some organisations realised that the only way to gain access to such expertise was through the use of consultants. Consultants had to be selected wisely, however, only choosing consultants who were prepared to transfer their knowledge to the organisation during the duration of the programme.

**Aligning the culture to support changes in peoples’ behaviour**
At the end of most change programmes there is a need for people to do things differently. The final insight relates to the change to the behaviour of the people, which impacts the culture of the organisation. This was most effective where the proposed change was aligned to the existing culture. For example, where there was a need to improve customer service in a customer focused organisation. Where the culture is judged to be a barrier to the change, steps are taken to try and minimise resistance, for example, through the use of internal marketing and through the action of leaders.

**Continuous review**
Successful change requires leaders to continually negotiate all aspects of the change approach. For example, they need to challenge the priorities, structure and programme metrics to ensure they are driving the desired behaviours and delivering the required benefits.

**Summary**
A number of insights have been identified from the literature review, and these are the basis of the Organisational Change Framework. Given the common nature of the themes that were identified during the research it is believed that this will provide a valuable framework
for organisations that are undertaking, or plan to undertake, either an incremental or large-scale change programme. It identifies two main constructs of change management consistent with the thoughts of others, which can be better understood within the overall framework for change as shown in Figure 1.

The change framework has two interacting cycles\textsuperscript{15}: \textit{Readiness for change}, and \textit{Implementing change}.

The experiences of many organisations that have launched change programmes, such as six sigma, is that the first part – readiness – is not at all well understood or developed. This often results in a rush into implementation, with huge emphases on training programmes and projects. Even managers in the General Electric, who are famed for their six-sigma programme, have admitted that they have found themselves going round and round the lower circle without engaging the strategic alignment offered by the upper one.

The implementation of change is a rich tapestry of potential failure – a minefield for the unsuspecting. Worse than that, most managers tend to find they have entered the minefield at the wrong point. Trying to change behaviors, for example, is a frequent starting point for many “programmes”. These programmes include such matters as attitudes and empowerment, without bedding these things in the reality of the business.

World-class organisations are doing all of these things. They have implemented their version of the framework and are achieving world-class performance and results. What this requires first, of course, is world-class leadership and commitment. It is often difficult for managers to stand back and view their work on change in a holistic fashion. Personal agendas can lead to a push on Human Resource issues or Information Technology issues, preventing the holistic view. This is where an external view can be so helpful.

\textsuperscript{15} Carnall, 1994

\textit{Numar special} ? \textit{Noiembrie 2008}
CONCLUSION

This paper was set out to identify the factors contributing to successful change in organisations. The five themes identified from the literature review were supported by empirical data collected through interviews. The analysis led to the development of an organizational change framework, which proposes a two-cycle approach with the readiness for change centered on the top cycle, and implementing change on the bottom cycle. The two cycles are linked through processes and we can say that the organizational change framework has practical implications for all organisations, no matters if they are Romanian or not.

REFERENCES

PERSONAL TOUCH OF THE COMPANY’S IMAGE
BY DESIGN AND AESTHETICS

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Abstract: Under the conditions of the world – wide competition, it is essential for the companies to have a complex offer adapted not only to their present position, but also to the one they want to achieve on the market, depending on the image they intend to make known to the public. Related to this issue, the identity of the companies consists in the way to communicate the followed main elements: “What is their present position?”, “What are their targets?” and “What is the approach they need to follow to succeed?”, presenting a visually unified image to the customers, and in large organization, to employees as well. Corporate identity is derived from the visual style of an organization, a factor that affects the firm’s positioning in the market. A company’s identity emerges primarily through what people see. Advertising, logos, signage, uniforms, buildings and ambient, packaging, products, vehicles and machines, all contribute to creating corporate identity. When a company maintains a consistent and recognizable appearance, the visual equity is established. Corporate identity focuses on three major areas: products and service, ambient, communication. More and more managers are aware of the fact that they can substantially improve their competitive position, if they apply to design and aesthetics as far as the development of their company is concerned. In this context, design and aesthetics become advantages in the fight against competition, elements to really differentiate offer, irrespective of their nature. In fact, corporate identity considers public’s perceptions. Each company interested both in market and customers has found a definite power point of difference using design and aesthetics to make positive general impressions. This research paper tries to establish the arguments in favor of promoting of a company’s personalized image via design and aesthetics.

INTRODUCTION

The public aspect of an organization and of its brands is expressed through a variety of identity elements: seals with corporation brands and bond certificates, visiting cards and invoices, letter heads and press releases, uniforms of employees and vehicles, workshops and working rooms, shop-windows and Internet sites, printed and TV advertising, the products and services as such, the packing and presentations at the marketing sites etc. The list of the identity elements is very extensive and has to be structured subject to the activity specifics of the company, their importance degree for the image of the organization, as well as competency and responsibilities of those involved. What is certain is that not even the big corporations do always succeed in integrally exploit all the possibilities of aesthetic manifestation.

The companies have created identities to themselves and –within them- symbols and logotypes that expresses their qualities and personality, and from that perspective, design takes a central place, this being the way in which the aim and the policy of the
corporation become visible. Besides the identity of an organization or brand, there are also other activities that contribute to the image (sponsoring, public relations). In contrast to these, the identity management refers to the visual components or which aim at other sensors. And, as the sense of sight is predominant, it is also acquired the best part of the memory. This way an identity is built, trying to create an association, in the visual memory of the client, between the products and services offered and the company in itself, and its presence in the market.[1]

BUILDING AN ATTRACTIVE IDENTITY OF THE COMPANY

Any organization has its image, no matter whether its coherent and systematic projection was used or not. Often, a company promotes several brand images and there are cases of brands spread by several companies. The global image of the company obtained, as a rule, by applying the corporation design, represents the visual expression of the corporation identity.

Many think that the identity of the corporation simply refers to the design of a logotype. Others think that design is an expensive cosmetic product, meant to hide the ugly face of a business.

The reality is that the identity of a company is, first of all, rendered by what the clients “see”: advertising, logos, uniforms, buildings, products and services that contribute to the perception of the company’s reality. In this context, design and aesthetics are not added or optional ingredients, but represent a vital force through which perception on the company becomes intelligible. Aesthetics is an extremely rich source, strong for the impressions the clients have about an organization or brand. A strong identity based on aesthetics must represent the starting point, not the remains of an effort meant to win or keep the clients.

With ever more similar products, the companies find other ways of differentiating themselves. Very simply, one can say that identity means to just demonstrate the difference. But what renders sense to difference and makes it more than a superficial cosmetic difference is the quality of the vision on the corporation.

Any present or potential consumer is faced, through its feelings, with numerous sensorial inputs. It is known that a variable of psychological nature that influences the behavior of the consumer is perception, that is the process through which it reacts, selects, organizes and interprets stimuli from the environment, rendering them a certain significance. Such psychological significance derives from consumer’s experience, from his memory, from the predisposition and motivations caused by the primary needs and superior needs.[2]

In a world in which the majority of the clients have their basic needs satisfied, satisfying their experimenting needs, their aesthetical needs easily ensures the value. The “hedonistic” approach ensures the possibilities to the organizations to address the clients through a variety of sensorial experiences, which brings benefits, both to them and to the organizations. Any company, in any field of activity, for any basis of clients may benefit from the use of design and aesthetics.

Nowadays, an excellent company must find a balance between quantitative management, humanistic management and aesthetical management. In other words, the corporation must be economic machinery that supplies aesthetical and social values, but also profits. The organizations that can synthesize these values will attain the competitive advantage in the future.
The management of an identity requires the defining of a careful strategic vision, of aesthetical nature in order to generate sensorial stimuli, as well as the conception of some creation teams made of industrial designers, architects, interior designing specialists, copywriters, plastic artists, artistic directors that fulfill the role of “shaping” the renovation projects of the visual identity at company level. To create new image standards and to use all the means of communication towards consumers, the organizations do not limit themselves only to graphics, company letterheads, product or packing design. Any product form of the corporation is perceived as having potential to confer aesthetical and value and satisfaction that is differentiating potential of the company and its products/services against its competitors [3].

This way, a new image means a good cooperation between the specialists in different departments: economists, designers, technicians, quality specialists; in the absence of this convergence of interests, the image will be inconsistent and will not transmit the desired message to the public. **A unitary image of the organization consists in the way of transmitting to consumers, and ideally, to the own employees, collaborators inside and outside the company who you are, what you produce, how you produce and what is the direction you are moving.**

A unitary and consistent image is, at the same time necessary. But, equally necessary is the constant adapting of the identity of a company to the social-economic and cultural changes in the environment. To maintain a strong market position, a company must permanently adjust and modernize its image, stimulating clients’ imagination and obtaining corresponding emotional effects.

The identity term of the corporation was used, for the first time, during the reconstruction period after the Second World War, becoming more and more popular as the companies were growing. But the embryo of the term can be found around the years of 1850, when competition between a few British railway companies compelled them to try and differentiate themselves through an identity and uniformity not only in the architecture of the railway stations, but also in the furniture inside the trains and in certain graphic expressions. The railway companies were, thus, trying to make the travel more pleasant and to attract more clients.

The first company in the 20th century that employed a single designer to create a cohesive design was AEG. In 1907, Peter Behrens was asked to develop a well-defined corporation identity that could be recognized by the buildings, the products and by their advertising. This initiative was not immediately adopted also by other companies, probably because its significance and importance was not yet acknowledged.

**The identity of the corporation is expressed in three main areas: products and services, ambient and communication.** The nucleus of the visual identity is the creation of a corporation or brand aesthetics that should express its “character” by attractive identity elements. These corporation expressions generate some satisfactory impressions meant to build the foundation of the trust and durability of the relations with the clients.

In a uniform manner, a company may use the same aesthetical elements all over the world or it may adapt itself to the local environment, because of the perception differences and subject to customers’ preferences. To understand the consumer’s needs and to meet them has become a challenge both for the manufacturers, and for the traders, as well.

It is certain that the **products and services** are essential in order to make a good impression to clients. Irrespective whether it is about the buying of a sandwich or of a piece of art, the companies are successful if they offer a memorable experience, using design and
aesthetics as a useful instrument.

Material goods, services and immaterial goods, in general (persons, ideas and feelings) can become an exchange object on the market. All above represent the contemporary commodity. The time, environment and cultural conditions to be registered at a certain moment make it possible that this concept become a real one. To have a long life on the market, any commodity must „persuade” based on its physical aspect, must „last” based on its characteristics, and must „seduce” based on its style.

"A detailed examination of each object reveals concretely the level of intelligence, of ability and artistic comprehension of that people who created it. It could also reveal the climate, the religious belief, the governmental system, natural resources, the economical and cultural achievements.” This is the remark of an American designer, Richard Latham, regarding the way in which products made in different countries are in a strong relationship with the social-cultural influence of the ambient, social group, fashion and the other influences that the designer suffers, and the development stage of culture and general and individual aesthetic education.

Sometimes it is difficult to set boundaries between "national styles", especially in a period like contemporary one when the intense flow of values has accelerated the process of interlacing and even of globalization of styles (but this phenomenon didn't fade away the importance of the national culture as the main condition of the further globalization of values). So that, the markets' globalization leads to a design in which the differences linked to the origins and cultures are gradually reduced, the differences that come up corresponding to some strategic peculiarities of the companies [4].

Ambient is another way in which people come to know a company. It is one of the elements that shape the image of spaces, possible to be defined as sensorial effect created through design and aesthetics.

The ambient design would include the activities regarding the arrangement and setting in order of the architectural spaces, the grouping of the points of economic/social/commercial interest with all their inventory: interior and exterior furniture, lighting equipment, other endowments, recreational spaces, gardens and parks, green areas that represent a major attraction through their nature, form and location.

The specialists are of the opinion that a “theme” helps the focusing in organizing the physical arrangements. The attraction of the theme mobilizes all the five senses, strengthening the emotional link with the brand.

The visual forms of communication are numerous, and their design is identified with the area of publications, of advertising graphics, of orientation signs and services.

To be efficient, the printed material must be written and specially designed for the reader, and the way of presentation has to please. The designer is the one that establishes the format, the cover, the arrangement of the text in the page, the achieving of the harmonious composition of text/illustration that should make a useful information transmissible.

Certainly, advertising is an essential means of communication through television or radio. But posters, emblems, labels, symbols and logotypes are graphic forms functional by excellence, the aesthetical presentation of which is subject to the need to transmit a certain information, an identification message, a sign of recognition or appreciation.

For an easy decoding of the information, in the case of the different signs of orientation, one usually resorts to the stylizing of the human attitudes and gestures, of the various objects characteristic for the indicated situations, activities or services.

The more creative, the more rigorous, the graphic design traces, through the
elements of visual identity (graphic symbols, logotypes, type of letter, chromatics, relation principles and rules of their applying), the brand trajectory [5].

The client, sensitized by the image of a company, by the attention given to him by the increase in the quality of the products and services, be they new or already known, by the improvement in the behavior of the personnel and the fluency of communication is a client easier to attract, to convince, to satisfy.

CONCLUSIONS

• The visual landscape is invaded by a diversity of brands, images that reflect the specifics and personality of the companies. The complexity and significance of these graphic images -- logotypes and symbols -- are of great importance for the creation of a strong visual identity.

• The visual elements, the visible part of the corporation identity, play an important role, this being the immediate and direct means of knowing a company. Their construction is equally based on an ideate and creative step.

• The identity of a corporation is shown in three major areas: products and services, ambient, communication. The new approaches to identity show that they must have in mind the people’s perceptions towards these problematic areas.

• Design could assist the implementation of consumers’ aesthetic needs and that is why design is fundamental to the personalized image of the corporation.

• The innovating and creative activity is not the exclusive prerogative of the designers and of the concept specialists. The entire organization must become aware of the importance of design and aesthetics and learn its language.

• The need for the companies to make known their business has stimulated the interest of the managers for the image of their company. The establishing of an image is a compulsory condition for the success of a company. On a long term, the perfecting of the image and of its expressing will vitalize the company and help it grow [6].

REFERENCES

THE FUTURE OF ALIMENTATION –
BETWEEN INTERNALIZATION AND TRADITIONALISM

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Abstract: In industrial nations, the evolutions from the last 50 years, in technical and social field, also brought alimentary behavior changes. Thereby, the consumers focused on easy and fast cooking food. Food industry has adapted to these mutation, offering products that incorporates technical progress and which are accessible to the public, leaving on the second place the nutritional and health consumer’s interests. In the paper has been identified and analyzed the dominant features of the present-day alimentation – sophistication, genetically modification and internalization – through relieving the advantages and disadvantages of each of them. Regarding the future alimentation, numerous scenarios had been made, some of them being even fantasists. Nutritional experts affirm that the future diets will be made function of the human genotype and the illness predisposition. Thereby, we will have an intelligent alimentation, which emphasize healthy food and nowise on the voided food or pills synthesized food. A hypothetical innovation source for future intelligent alimentation consists on a better valorization of the biodiversity and a more efficient exploitation of the traditional „savoir-faire”.

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, human kind had been marked by the alimentary incertitude. There have been abundance periods, which crossed penury and even crisis periods.

The III millennium begins with major inequities in the alimentation field. Food abundance in industrial nations it is accompanied with obesity illness, while in underdeveloped countries the population suffers of diseases provoked by the lack of food.

In industrial nations, the evolutions from the last 50 years, in technical and social field, also brought alimentary behavior changes. Thereby, the consumers focused on easy and fast cooking food. Food industry has adapted to these mutation, offering products that incorporates technical progress and which are accessible to the public, leaving on the second place the nutritional and health consumer’s interests.

Last decade has marked a turnout characterized, in a more and more degree, by the consumer’s orientation toward the traditional and ecological products.

THE DOMINANT FEATURES OF THE PRESENT-DAY ALIMENTATION –
SOPHISTICATION, GENETICALLY MODIFICATION AND
INTERNALIZATION

Products proposed today by the food industry are more and more sophisticated (semi-prepared or even cooked food, ready to use dressings, easy to manipulate packaging).
Food sophistication is not possible without using food additives, chemical substances incorporated in different phases of the production process for the modification of nutritional and sensorial properties and for the long term preservation.

In our days, explosive debates took place on this subject which becomes more and more controversial. The researches relieved numerous negative consequences of the constant consume of alimentary products with food additives. In effect, in some industrial nations, a series of suspect food additives had been forbidden and in other nations the maximum admissible dose had been decreased.

We have notice nowadays also demarches of international organizations involved in food problem to reevaluate the food additives. Codex Alimentarius Commission, which sets the safety food standards in EU, realizes demarches for reducing the numbers of food additives and for limitation of their usage.

Codex Alimentarius Commission initialized a project of which goal is to verify the harmful effects of some food additives, for their withdrawal from the market.


The scientific and technological progress accomplished in the last years had a powerful impact on agricultural and food sectors from all over the world. Innovating methods of production revolutionized numerous traditional systems, and also the capacity of producing the food for a continually increasing population. These events generated numerous changes in the economic and social organization, but also in our planet’s resources administration. The natural environment had been overturned by the technological progress that allowed not only to obtain genetic improvement through selection, but also to create new genetic combinations, in order to get more resisting and productive vegetables, animals and fish.

Genetically Modified Organisms, created and cultivated on a large scale in the USA, accepted by many countries of the world, suspiciously received by others and vehemently rejected by the ecologist organizations, became at this moment a very controversial subject. The genetic engineery is, therefore, a new technology which implies genes manipulation. Due to the universal language of genes (the genetic code), the scientists can transfer genes among different species which are not related (animals, plants, microorganisms). Through techniques of genetic engineery, the specific genetic material is being moved from the donor to the accepting organism, to obtain organisms with new, helpful characteristics. For example, the genes of one fish can be moved to a tomato or a strawberry to confer them increased resistance to very low temperatures. Just because of this universal language, the plants obtained through such techniques of engineery are determined to produce the chemical substances of the fish, substances produced by fish in a natural way to survive in the cold water. Another example is the one referring to Bt corn, which had been transferred the gene of a bacteria (Bacilus Thuringiensis). Thereby, Bt corn becomes a corn type which identifies with an insecticide. This is due to the fact that each cell of the plant is modified to produces Bt, a natural bacterial toxin and if a corn worm eats each part of the plant, will die.

Through these new technologies there had been created numerous genetically modified plants having a major importance in alimentation, such as maize and potatoes.
resisting to insects, bean and soy tolerating the glyphosate, the tomatoes raping lately and containing a high level of solid substance [2].

The transference of genes is also used in conventional agriculture, but, unlike the genetic engineering, it takes place among individuals of same species or between related species. The high diversity of plants and animals species existing today shows that there had always been changes in their genetic code. But all these changes were determined gradually, during long periods of time, and, a fact to be underlined, without human interference [3].

Many experts are afraid that the genetic engineering would generate biodiversity loss, removing the barriers which protected species’ integrity in the course of time. Their studies demonstrate that the massive introduction of the genetically modified or transgenic, resistant to herbicide plants into the agricultural circuit would generate the disappearance of some beings which feed themselves with seeds from grass and weeds.

Although it could not be proved that the products obtained from genetically modified organisms represents the best solution to the food problem, these products tend to occupy a bigger room on the markets of many countries, especially on the markets of the developing or underdeveloped ones. However, taking into account the declared risks of toxicity and allergy, the following question comes to our minds: what kind of mutations the long consumption of genetically modified food can produce in the human organism? [4]

Fast-food alimentation crystallizes the fear regarding the internalization and standardization of food and also those referring to the ascendant of American culture over the entire world [5].

Fast-food represents one of the most spectacular culinary innovations from history, a type of alimentation for everybody, no matter the age, sex or culture. It is a product born from the American melting-pot and which have a series of essential features.

First of all, the products are projected in such manner that to be consumed by hand, without cutlery, which contribute to a more olfactory stimulation of consumer. This powerful stimulus combined with an important mobilization of tactile and visual sense leads to a conclusion that fast-food products addresses to all the senses, trying to satisfy them in a more degree [5].

If the fast-food products can be characterized by an increased sensorial value, these products are considerate by the nutritionist very unhealthy, because of their high content in saturated fat, sugar, salt, and also, of their low content in vitamins, minerals, alimentary fibers.

❖ Fast-food products are not fresh, because, before being delivered to the consumer, the ingredients are dehydrated, frozen or bottled. These processes decrease the nutritional value and denaturalize the taste of food.

❖ Fast-food products contain a big number of food additives, many of these being considered dangerous: Colorants – which make the food very attractive, even more attractive like in reality; but, it was demonstrate that these chemical substances can affect the digestion; Artificial flavors – which enhance the taste of food, making the consumer dependent of fast-food products; Preservatives – which are used to prolong the availability term of fast-food ingredients.

❖ Fast-food products has an excessive retrieve of fat (French fries, meat, process cheese); fat, especially in association with salt, makes all the aliments agreeable to the hard palate and the presence of these components in every fast-food products explain their universal success.
Fast-food products have an excessive retrieve of salt – the salt content of a fast-food menu is more high than the recommended quantity of salt for a lunch (approximately 1.8 g in conformity with the Suisse Society of Nutrition recommendations).

Fast-food menus often propose edulcorated beverages, which can be preserved long time. That treatment leads to a retrieve of inutile calories from sugar.

The rolls, hot-dogs, hamburgers are realized on the base of refined product, which are lean in alimentary fiber, a very important elements for the organism.

Fast-food products are poorly in vitamins and minerals, because the menus contain small and fix portions of fruits and vegetables.

In most fast food restaurants the menus are generally made from processed ingredients prepared at a central supply. Then, the ingredients are delivered to the fast-food restaurants where they are reheated, cooked and assembled in short time. This process ensures a constant level of product quality and eliminates labor and equipment costs in the individual stores [6]. But, this way of eating presents the risks of a high energetic retrieve and variety deficiency.

McDonald's is the largest fast-food company in the world and it was founded as a barbecue drive-in in 1940 by Dick and Mac McDonald. This brand is mostly associated with the term “fast food” [5]. Next McDonald's, Burger King, Taco Bell, Pizza Hut, and Kentucky Fried Chicken are the most popular brands all over the world.

USA adjudged the first place for the fast-food consumption. Over 25% from USA population eat daily in one of the 300000 fast-food restaurants and that fact has as consequence a real epidemic obesity. Statistics show that over 37% from the children and adolescents are over-weight and almost 75 mil Americans suffer from obesity and almost 184 mil Americans have over-weight [7].

INNOVATION SOURCES FOR THE FUTURE OF ALIMENTATION

Regarding the future alimentation, numerous scenarios had been made, some of them being even fantasists. Some authors predicted the III millennium alimentation as pills of energetically, vitamin and protein concentrated. But all these myths had declined.

Nutritional experts affirm that the future diets will be made function of the human genotype and the illness predisposition. Thereby, we will have an intelligent alimentation, which emphasize healthy food and nowise on the voided food or pills synthesized food.

A hypothetical innovation source for future intelligent alimentation consists on a better valorization of the biodiversity, especially of the products from the tropical and subtropical regions and a more efficient exploitation of the traditional „savoir-faire” [5].

In this way, their will permit of these country to distribute, in a more measure, of the internal products, such on the local markets, but especially on the international markets. Besides, the biodiversity will be administrated more efficient at the international level.

Some tropical products can be found for a long time in actual systems of alimentation from developed countries. This is the case of coffee, thee, cocoa, vegetable oils (especially palmer oil), cane sugar, tropical fruits and sea products, which represents just a small part of the variety of products from these zones.

A big number of such local products, having especial sensorial properties, increases nutritional value and appreciable technological potential, are not enough known and valorized, because their own country have not the necessarily instruments for the market promotion or for the scientific researches. Also, it could be done a biggest attention...
of tropical cereals (millet, rice corn, quinoa, fonio), roots and tubercles (manioc, ignama, patata) and legumes (Angola pease, nere), oil plant (butter three) [5].

To live healthy, mankind must discover the aliments his organism requires in nature. But, the progresses in alimentary technology only created a distance between man and aliments, which systematically turn into an abyss culminated with real alimentary crisis, a result of some breakings of natural order (mad cow disease, GMO).

*The last decade marked a turnout characterized by consumer’s orientation, in a more and more degree, toward ecological and traditional products. Although these are not yet accessible to the mass, because of their high price, they are in condition to satisfy the consumer’s demand for naturalness, authenticity and safety.*

*Traditional aliments (Ethno Food)* are a group of aliments which includes a larger range of products (condiments, beverages, cooked food) particularly to a country or a touristy area. The beginnings belong to the Italians when in the ’50s opened the first pizza restaurants. “Particularities” of different geographical areas with who peoples was getting in contact through their journeys, publicity, advertisement and their own experiences contributed to the knowledge, appreciation and repetition of those products. There is no news anymore that the products with Italian particularity as pizza, Turkish – Kebab, Hungarians – goulash, Russians – stolianca, French – croissant or different Asian beverages – sake, Mexicans – Tequila, Greeks – ouzo or Romanians – tuica [8].

**CONCLUSIONS**

In the last 50 years, in the developed countries, the evolutions in technical and social fields brought alimentary behavior changes.

Last years has marked a turnout characterized, in a more and more degree, by the consumer’s orientation toward the traditional and ecological products.

Regarding the future alimentation, some authors predicted it as pills of energetically, vitamin and protein concentrated. But all these myths had declined. Nutritional experts affirm that the future diets will be made function of the human genotype and the illness predisposition. Thereby, we will have an intelligent alimentation, which emphasize healthy food (like traditional and ecological food) and nowise on the voided food or pills synthesized food.

The supervision of the quality and safety of food for the alimentation of future to prevent the affection of the people’s health or life and environment quality must be dealt with maximum responsibility. The consumer should remain the main concern of the qualified authorities.

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A NEW APPROACH CONCERNING FOOD CONSUMPTION RESEARCH IN ROMANIA IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC MUTATIONS

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Abstract: This paper is a fundamental research which has the major aim to relieve some important directions in the study of food consumption and consumer’s behavior in Romania in the context of social and economic mutations. The development of the ranges of food-goods, determined by the social and economical dynamics, has generated significant changes in the structure of consumption with regard to the balance of each food group in covering the nutritional demands. Food-goods are not just simple use values that are trading objects on the economical market, but they represent products with specific characteristics, meant to be achieved on the “metabolically market”. The consumers become more and more segmented with various needs and desires; this research pursues the estimation of consumption real characteristics for various types of consumers with different ages, social levels and cultures. The profound concept and criteria mutations in the consumer’s behavior direct the research towards the identification of models regarding the food consumption, taking into consideration the main determining factors: the production and trade capacities; the consumption capacity; conditions exterior to consumption; social and cultural models. The detailed analysis of these factors with a static and dynamic significance will allow the identification of the dominant consumption model as a result of converging forces and of the social differentiation of the society’s consumption models, at a given time, their changes during a period of time as a result of the divergent forces. Also, the stimulation of economic agents is wanted in view of supplying complete, correct and precise information regarding the quality and safety of the goods they produce and/or sell.

INTRODUCTION

Today, the consumer has evolved in the central axis of all of the economical activities that converge to the deepest fulfillment of his needs, this satisfaction being the essence of the carried out economical actions. The key point with which the actors that operate on the food-goods market is the correct conjugation of two attitudes:

• understanding of the food product sold at a batch level, but also as an entity, as a bearer of energy and substance, satisfaction and information, innovation and economical value in a systematic vision;

• the necessity to ensure its quality for achievement on the economical market but also in the metabolic one of the human organism for obtaining a:
  o maximum integration of the elements of the man-environment relationship;
  o maximum economical, social and nutritional efficiency;

We consider that the efforts in this direction are meant to increase the production of food goods and to determine the obtaining of sustained competitive advantages.
OBJECTIVES

In the last decades, on a global scale accentuated by the globalization phenomenon, an increased development of the range of food-goods has been possible; this generated a series of significant changes in the structure of the population’s food consumption from the point of view of the balance of each food group in the covering of nutritional demands. This range expansion is defined by the appearance of higher and higher nutritional value food leading to profound concept and criteria mutations in the alimentary behavior.

Internationally, these mutations are best highlighted by the American researcher Walter Willet from the Harvard School of Public Health that lead to the development of a new food pyramid in 2003 which brings important changes compared with the structure of the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) pyramid from 1992.

From this point of view, the most relevant changes introduced by Walter Willet consist in placing at the bottom of the new pyramid of food obtained from integral cereals and from vegetal oil whose sanogenetic potential has been proven while the refined glucydes (obtained from white rice, white bread, potatoes, pasta) have been placed in the top of the pyramid.

On an European scale the concern of the Regional Committee for Europe of the World Health Organization is worthy mentioning, this targets the elaboration and implementation of an action plan for the development of food and nutritional policies with the purpose of correcting the major imbalances of food consumption and to improve the health status of the population. Taking into consideration the positive results recorded after the application of the first Plan of Action regarding the Alimentary and Nutritional Policies (2000-2005) a second plan has been elaborated in 2007 for the 2007-2012 period.

In the spirit of European orientations, there is a project for a National Plan of Action regarding the Population Alimentation and Nutrition elaborated by the National Committee of Alimentation and Nutrition in Romania. For a wider coverage would be necessary to be supported by the Romanian Academy, by its medical and agricultural sciences departments. The purpose of this plan is to contribute to the improvement of the population’s health state especially in the vulnerable population groups, by preventing and eliminating the diseases generated by food and alimentation.

In this context, the research general objective is identification of a model regarding the food consumption, taking into consideration the main determining factors: the production and trade capacities, the consumption capacity, conditions exterior to consumption, social and cultural models. Also, another objective is to produce an innovative product that consists in a model system regarding the evaluation of the food consumption in Romania, based on an informatics program. By implementing and operating this system of models, high quality services will be supplied for solving complex problems related to the modeling of the population’s alimentary behavior in accordance to the principles of balanced nutrition.

The will allow economical agents interested in the development of a food-goods offer in accordance to the consumer requirements to get food-goods with a high nutritional value and safe for consumption.

Also, the paper will be useful to central and local administration authorized institutions in the elaboration of alimentary and nutritional policies whose implementation
will have as an propagated effect the creation of wise consumers in an economy based on knowledge and, implicitly, the improvement of the general health state of the population.

Finally, the research will determine an increase in the competitively and creativity in the scientific research activity in specialized institutes and in superior education units, as well as the development of the organizational culture for the economical agents in agriculture and in the food industry.

In this way, the paper will contribute to the transfer of knowledge in the field of food quality and safety respecting the principle of durable development, with the purpose of increasing the food security of the consumers.

Generally, the implementation of the solutions supplied by this research will lead to the improvement and modernization of the food production and of obtaining food-goods in accordance with the principles of healthy alimentation, food security and durable development.

An important contribution of the research to the development of knowledge in the field is represented by the change in food consumption habits and the encouragement of consumers towards a balanced diet and a healthy life-style.

Taking into consideration the various cultural characteristics of the consumers, another contribution of the research is the identification of barriers in communication with regard to the supply, by the producers and traders, of the relevant information regarding the nutritional values of the food as well as the risks that the lack of knowledge of the principles of a balanced alimentation pose to the consumers health.

Also, the stimulation of economic agents is desired for the supply of complete, correct and precise information regarding the quality and safety of the goods they produce and/or sell.

A step leading to these desires is the urgent elaboration and promulgation of the “Food Law” and of the “Codex Alimentarius” regulation collection, the first being meant to regulate the production of alimentary goods and the second being meant to offer precise information regarding the quality and safety of food-goods existent on the Romanian market.

The novelty degree of the paper is represented by the research of the consumer’s alimentary behavior and the elaboration of a dual model system regarding the food consumption, taking into consideration the cultural differences and needs of the various target groups (elderly, youths, babies, consumers with special food necessities etc.)

The European consumers become more and more segmented into diversified groups with varied desires for the various types of food products. Thus, the research targets the estimation of the real characteristics of the consumption in various sub-groups of consumers with different ages, social levels and cultures.

The originality and complexity of the paper consists in the revision of the types of studies/researches that will allow the evaluation of the consumers perception regarding food and nutrition and the identification of consumer groups with different ways of understanding the relationship between the objectives of healthy alimentation and their own consumption desires, with the purpose of balancing the relation between physiological needs – food share.

The research is also based on the highlighting of the best nutritional information communication and dissemination techniques for food products, including the nutritional education assisted by computer based on a comparative analysis of the risks and advantages of choosing food.
RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

In our acceptation, the study of food consumption in the context of social and economic mutations should aim the following research directions:

- **Study on the characteristics of the food-goods offer**
  - Characterization of the food market
  - Research of the food-goods market compared to the current consumption necessities
  - Availabilities and distribution of nutrients in a global scale

- **Research of impact factors for the demand of food-goods**
  - Moves in the food and nutritional policies
  - Highlighting the role of nutrition regulations in the balancing of the demand-offer ratio
  - Characterization of the current food behavior on consumer groups with the highlighting of social and cultural determinants, based on standardized questionnaires
  - Evolution of the nutritional value concept – expression of the food’s quality

- **Study on the relationship between food safety - consumer protection**
  - Analysis of the current regulations in the field of food innocuousness assurance
  - Identification of the main forging activities carried out on food-goods
  - Highlighting of the risk factors in the food logistics
  - Food products safety management

- **Research regarding the food behavior of the consumer**
  - Human anthropogenesis and alimentation
  - Identification of the general coordinates of the food behavior by a quality research
  - Quantity research regarding the food consumption habits
  - Identification of the influence factors for the consumer’s food behavior

- **Design and elaborate a real/optimum dual system of models regarding food consumption in Romania**
  - Foundation for the model system on the basis of research results regarding food behavior
  - Identification and quantification of the variables that are the base of model designing
  - Elaboration of the dual model system

- **Dissemination of obtained results**
  - Publishing the research results in field magazines and in the volumes of scientific manifestations
  - Organizing some scientific manifestations on this theme and organizing periodical work-shops
  - Elaboration of a principle and rule guide for the development of a rational food behavior for the consumers, related to their health state
  - Designing a web site

CONCLUSIONS

The results of our efforts are meant to give to the authorities’ viable support elements for the correct and permanent evaluation of the alimentation and nutrition level of...
the population and for the elaboration of specific policies with positive social and economical effects to the consumers, production and trade.

Taking into consideration the various cultural characteristics of consumers, another contribution of the paper is the identification of communication barriers with regard to the supply, by the producers and traders, of the relevant information regarding the nutritional values of the food as well as the risks that the lack of knowledge of the principles of a balanced alimentation pose to the consumers health.

The research is also based on the highlighting of the best nutritional information communication and dissemination techniques for food products, including the nutritional education assisted by the computer based on a comparative analysis of the risks and advantages of choosing food.

The importance of this paper resides on:

**The technical impact** is as follows:
- To set up abilities to produce and trade food products with high nutrient value and consumption safe;
- Superior put into value of material and human resources in the production and trading of food products;
- Achieve a dual model system to evaluate food consumption.

**The economic effects** manifest in different directions, as follows:
- Superior put into value of agro-alimentary resources;
- Upstream and downstream development of related product and services chains due to multiplication effect of the direct investment;
- Reducing the costs generated by nutrition diseases treating.

**Social effects** that reflect at individual level as well as at collectivity level, and points to:
- Improving the public health state and the population’s life standard;
- Consumers nutrition education;
- Establishing a connection between existing social services and the development of new social services.

**The impact on environment** reflects on the following aspects:
- Creating the possibility to attract funding resources from the European Union in view of preserving the environment;
- Preserving a durable ecologic balance by promoting new non-degradable technologies (non-polluting and non-aggressive).

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BEHAVIOUR AND MORAL VALUES IN COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

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Abstract: Many of 'the actors performing on the business stage' believe that the morality in business is reduced to one principle: 'obey the law!' What else might business people be asked for? Why should they have different or more rules to respect than the ones true for anyone? However, it is not that difficult to make a clear distinction between law and morality in business. Obeying the law is, essentially, a moral duty. The intrinsic morality of the business background requires the existence of the same corpus of rules for all economic agents, otherwise we can not speak about a fair competition. Briefly said, the business milieu has its own moral rules, meant to guarantee a fair competition in which all participants obtain a maximum profit by efficiency, not by theft, fraud or other dishonest ways and means. In this respect, laws, sometimes, sanction certain moral rules of behaviour spontaneously established in the business milieu.

Business people are, in their great majority, too busy to have a philosophical view on their activity, which does not mean that they are not interested in business morality. Their convictions and beliefs don’t have a solid philosophical basis, however. Some refer to the Christian morality or, simply, to common sense, but most of them tend to cultivate what the philosophers usually call ‘an enlightened self – interest’. One of the most visible business features is competitiveness. Business means competition and anyone can realize its advantages inside the market economy: better and more varied products and services at lower costs and prices, innovation, diversity, progress and development etc. Many business people do not really understand the true nature of economic competitiveness and its necessary connection with cooperation; being mainly preoccupied with getting a maximum profit inside the laws, they ignore any moral responsibility towards their clients or customers regarding it as an idealistic or humanitarian fantasy which prevents a good business development and reduces the profit. This simplistic perception implies the idea that, because of the competition, a good manager has, in the market economy, no other option than to buy as cheap as possible and sell as expensive as possible. They agree (without much enthusiasm) to a legal system which must be respected, but only to this; inside this legal frame everything is permitted in order to achieve the one and only reason for business: maximum profit.

Materializing commercial objectives implies the raise of ethical problems at the level of the firm or company, of the competition, of the customers and personnel getting to an interface between all the organizations and the clients of the groups of interests. In a study on ethical problems, Chonko and Hunt (1985) identified the main preoccupations of the people involved in commercial activities, establishing the following order according to the frequency with which they encounter them:

1. The bribe – presents from the outside suppliers, ‘under hand’ money, doubtful commissions and discounts.
2. The lack of honesty – it is the manipulation of people in order to convince them to take or accept services they do not really need, thus creating a conflict between the interests of the company and the personal interest of these potential clients and customers.

3. Dishonesty – it is the hiding of the truth about the quality of the offered products or services, by using lies in order to make the people buy them.

4. Unjustified prices – it is the change of the prices according to the situation, either by lowering them under the market level used by the rival firms or by raising them on false reasons such as a better quality etc.

5. Unproper products – those products which are presented by the sellers as being of parameters of performance superior to the real ones and which break the rules and norms of security in exploiting them causing in this way serious disadvantages to clients or customers.

6. Problems of personnel– it is the breaking of the ethical standards of employing, firing or evaluating the employees.

7. Problems of confidentiality – they manifest in the attempt of obtaining secret information about the activity of rival firms or companies.

8. Problems of advertising- the situation in which the customers/clients are misinformed by exaggeration or fraud.

9. Data manipulation – it is an unfair use of information by distorting or falsifying figures.

10. Problems of acquisition – it is when an acquisition which the customer/client needs is conditioned by the acceptance of products or services they don’t need. The idea that the pursuit of the personal interest might, sometimes, be disadvantageous, leading to unwished results, lies at the basis of social dilemmas. Inside such a dilemma, what is good for one, it is bad for the other. If everyone wants the highest benefits for himself, then everyone gets the lowest benefits. The analysis of these conflicting choices concentrates on the relationship of the aims followed by the individuals and evaluates the competitive or cooperative nature of their behaviour, as well as the conflicting or harmonious relationship between them. This type of relationships can be studied in its most abstract form by ‘games’ with two or more competitors.

What the customers or clients consider to be the most important thing in selling is trust. It is very frequent that people buy a certain brand because they trust it. Taking into account that the moral reasons prevail, one can frequently hear in public opinion the sentence: ‘give me somebody who is reliable’. The activity of selling is a process which must take place for/together with the customer/client and should not be seen as a process imposed to them. Therefore, the understanding of the moral behaviour criteria in business is very important as new organizational structures generate new complications related to the circulation and administration of information inside work groups and the whole organization, and for which there are not traditional procedures.

Recent currents in the managerial theory and practice, such as Total Quality Management, give a deeper and consensual meaning to the importance of ethics and morality in business. In the modern corporations there are corporate ethics officers together with a number of independent consultants on business ethics. According to Robert C.Solomon, there are several levels of business ethics:

- the micro-ethical level, referring to the rules of the fair exchange between individuals;
- the macro-ethical level, referring to the institutional or cultural rules of commerce for a whole society (“the business world”).
- The moral level of the business ethic which is focused on the basic unit of commerce, the corporation.

The business micro-ethic is a large part of the traditional ethics; the nature of promises and obligations; the nature of the varied individual rights, the intentions; the act and fact consequences and other implications of individual actions. One of the characteristics of the business micro-ethic is the notion of fair/equitable exchange and together with it the notion of the equitable salary, of fair negotiation, as well as the idea of ‘good business’ for both parts.

The macro-ethic deals with the major problems referring to justice, legitimacy and the nature of society, that is to themes embodying the political and social philosophy of business.

The molar level of the business ethic is compatible to questions about the role of the corporations in society and of the individual in the corporation. The molar unit renders the problem of the social responsibility each member of the corporation has - that is the role of the corporation in a larger society, and, in the same time, the problem of the limited responsibility at the work place- that is the role of the individual in the corporation.

The main concept of a large part of the business ethic is that of social responsibility, a concept which, according to Milton Friedman, was transposed in the famous statement: ‘the social responsibility in business is to increase profits’.

In the modern view, the concept of social responsibility in business, seen as a key concept in business ethic, is a moral notion coagulating both the idea of some particular virtues involved in this part of life ( honesty, reciprocity, mutual interest, utility ) and the idea that there are social abilities and competence the corporation itself posses.

The favourite and superficial topic of the business ethic are financial scandals and ‘overnight richness’, but the true and significant themes are more varied.

In this context, Richard T.De George makes a distinction between micro-moral and macro-moral problems maintaining that the problems of the business ethics taken in a given frame and in relation with a certain economic system, as the contemporary capitalism, for example, could be divided into six categories:

- The determination of the correct distribution of resources, action which touches the fundamentals of the distributive rightness (the resource/income distribution is to be made on merit, needs, effort, ability etc).

- The second set of problems views the principle, clearly stated, of rightness in particular cases. That means that certain ‘difficult cases’ raising moral problems could be solved by discussions and debates.

- The third category of moral problems in the business field refers to the conflict between values (liberty, justice, equality, welfare, personal security, productivity, merit, efficiency etc.)

- The fourth category of moral problems appears as a result of the development of the moral intuition and of the task to apply it to the task previously anticipated. Thus, the racial segregation and discrimination in the work based on racial and or sex criteria, are now considered immoral and were not evaluated in this way long time ago.

- The fifth category of moral problems is the one consequent to the appearance of the new technological products, including the techniques of the informational society and those of the genetic manipulation. We face, nowadays, the danger of damaging the humankind and the natural environment at such a degree that they can never be the support for the next generations. In business, there is the danger of exhausting the natural resources.
The sixth category of micro and macro-moral problems refers to the way in which generally accepted moral values are applied and to the necessary interdictions in managing business and enterprises. In this category are included: theft and lie, bribery and other types of behaviour which are considered immoral.

Richard T.de George emphasises: ‘that does not mean that we are to encounter only immoral acts in business, and where the ethic is not self-imposed it must be imposed from outside using proper strategies to protect the general good and welfare.”

Businesses need consumers. What is the use of making a new product if there is no one to buy it? Or a service no one is interested in? Businesses and consumers or customers are together in a symbiosis: the public depends on the offer of goods and services necessary to everyday life, offer the companies and firms produce continuously for the market; at their turn, the producers depend on the uninterrupted consumers’ request and need of goods and services for their firms to develop and survive.

There is a dialectic relationship between businesses and consumers. On one hand, the production creates the consumers’ needs. The producers and the consumers are not two distinctive categories or species; specialized in one economic activity, each producer is, at the same time, a consumer - both in his professional life (where they consume utilities, energy, technology, rough materials, know-how, consultancy etc) and in their private life.

Theoretically speaking, the enterprisers’ and consumers’ interests are convergent. Under ideal circumstances, the market economy offers to consumers who are fully informed about all the goods and services the possibility to buy the most convenient (for them) products, making them avoid to waste their money on unsatisfactory offers for them. The economic reality is never as reasonable as it seems in theory, the consumers’ and producers’ interests never fit each other. The role of the market is, however, fundamental in obtaining a balanced relationship, or, on the contrary, a deeply unbalanced one between producers and merchants on one hand and consumers on the other hand.

In an economy ‘under command’ as it was the Romanian economy under the communist regime, the producers hold a stronger position than the consumers, who are, actually, at their ‘good will’. Led, step by step, by a bureaucratic administration, the monopolist economy under command offers an extremely fragile freedom of choice; the consumers are forced to accept the goods and services which are offered by the producers and sellers, even if they are insufficient or scarce, expensive and of an inferior quality. Aware of the consumers’ lack of freedom, the producers are not stimulated to increase or vary the offer of goods and services, to make them better or lower their price.

The relationships between enterprisers and consumers are much more complicated in the market economy system, based on offer/request. On the free market, the producers are in a sharp competition of attracting consumers, offering goods and services of a higher quality at good prices for them. The freedom to choose the products and services which they buy gives the consumers a much stronger position since they are not obliged to buy what the enterprisers and produces impose on him; on the contrary, consumers can refuse the products they don’t agree with or don’t like so that the enterprisers and the producers have to choose between being bankrupted or satisfy their customers/clients.

On another hand, on a sophisticated market offering products and services of a great complexity, the consumers need a large amount of credible information to make a reasonable choice, from their point of view; lacking the information or their own capacity of receive and process it, the consumers risks to be tricked or cheated by a producer or seller who is more informed or trained.
Therefore, in the free market economy, consumers are sovereigns as they decide which producers or enterprisers remain on the market but very often they do not take the right decision because they lack competence. In other words, in spite of holding a strong position on the market, consumers might be or even is in inferiority by their own inability to perceive or bar the subtle manipulating strategies used by the producers or merchants whose higher ability give them a clear advantage.

Starting from this ambiguous position of consumers in the free market economy, the specialists in the fields (Sorell si Hendry) maintain that „the rhetoric regarding consumers offers two antagonistic images. In one of these images the consumers have discrimination, are choosy and ask to be pleased. From here, the slogan ‘the customer is the master’ and ‘the customer is always right’.

Sometimes, consumers are potential victims who need to be protected by law, by catalogues of the individual firms, programmes for consumers’ protection, by press and television.

Although the two images are contradictory, both feed a rhetoric in favour of the consumers and the enough sophisticated individuals know to take full profit from the ambiguity of this status, being either in the position of ‘the customer is our master’ or a helpless victim of a swindler.

In certain circumstances, giving to your customer everything they wish could be harmful or dangerous. In this respect we mention some legal activities which are debatable from an ethical point of view (pornography, alcohol and tobacco industries etc.)

The practical life has demonstrated that ‘our master, the customer’ is not always right, either because they are not aware of the consequences of buying and using a certain product, or because they judge with the wrong moral measure those consequences.

But, as the moral reasons usually prevail, those cases are rare enough.

The most part of the ethical problems regarding the relationship between business and consumers are to be found in the instruments of the marketing policy known as ‘the technique of mix marketing – the policies concerning products, advertising communication, prices and practices of distribution’.

CONCLUSIONS

The existing norms ask for the producers to have ‘the necessary concern’ and to guarantee that all measures be taken to assure that their products do not have any defaults of conception or realization and that consumers can make use of them without any risks for. Naturally, it is difficult to define or explain what this ‘necessary concern’ means, but the law wants to prevent neglect or carelessness, sanctioning any enterpriser who proved to have been without respect, on purpose or not, for the protection of consumers. In other words, it is for the producers to guarantee that the products are in good function, are not dangerous and if they are, the producer is responsible for all and any unwished consequence in using their products.

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CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING THE EDUCATIONAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT

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Abstract: Latest trends at national and global level focused the necessity to build a national management and quality assurance system. At the European Union level exists concerning to define principles, standards and quality indicators expressed in terms of continuous trading or linguistic services quality standards. The whole process is slowly and difficult due to differences between member and candidate countries, concerning: the concept definition; educational policies and strategic emphasis in education development; status and context in which function the European educational systems. In order to orientate the education to quality all the items linked to quality assurance (criteria, indicators, standards, and descriptors) must be understood and used in a unitary manner. The approach of structuring a coherent system of implementation, pursuit and evaluation of education quality, corresponding from the conceptual and methodological point of view with the European and international ones, become a necessity for Romania.

INTRODUCTION

The quality assurance issue represents at this moment a constantly concerning in order to make more efficient the educational services at all training levels (Universities from Romania).

The quality insurance policies and strategies of the national teaching system of Romania have as marking the permanent correlation with the orientations and actions promoted at European and global level, in consense with the recommendations of the Superior Education Quality Insurance European Association, recommendations which have been taken by the Bergen Ministerial Conference (19-20 May 2005).

CONTENT

Romanian Universities cross at the present a deep adaptation and changes in conformity with the international academic education trends.

Following the European and international evolutions, defined by the increased emphasis put on the “academic products” relevance, Romanian universities must formulate a distinct position concerning their mission on long term and the type of relevance (national, regional, European or international) to attend, maintaining or gradual giving up their specific.

Thus, the university activities optimization needs, in order to make compatible the education system and to implement an efficient management to assure quality, lead to the intensification of the research in the field, the adoption of reference organizational models and the defining of several performance evaluation systems.
The Romanian education system adjustment to the new requirements don’t presume yet the ad litteram copying of some European models, but the respect of some modern economies specific requirements, the critical observation of examples and the building of some own systems, taking into consideration both external conditions and the national socio-economic context.

At the moment, the quality approach in the Romanian universities become necessary because could permit:

- A more efficient control of the individual and joint service;
- Continuous improvement of the processes and activities;
- Potential deviation prevention;
- Responsibility increase;
- Growth of the whole staff involvement.

Thus, the quality assurance aims to create the clients and other university partner’s trust, concerning the capability and disponibility of the institution to satisfy needs and expectations, as follows: to train graduates asked on the work market; to solve in good conditions, by the research and consulting activity, the different issues of the socio-economic environment contributing in this way to the regional or national economic development; to create a life and work climate adapted to the performance. The two procedures to attempt this desideratum are: the internal evaluation (study programs, scientifically research, and consulting) and the external evaluation of the measure in which the internal organization correspond to the quality assurance objectives.

In this respect, it become imperious necessary the existence of some organisms, standards and institutional procedures in order to fulfill the external evaluation and in addition, the university to be capable to present proofs through the conformity of the own quality management system (QMS) with the standards or models adopted.

Generally speaking exists two types of models:

a. “Lightly” – based on a requirements and usually with improvement recommendations;
b. “Structured” – based on a requirements and criteria system which allows an objective evaluation.

Whatever the model choused, the decision to adopt a certain model must be the own decision of the institution, a QMS having the same basic elements, like:

⇒ Orientation to obtain the customer satisfaction;
⇒ A proactive attitude of the top management concerning the issues of the quality assurance;
⇒ Creation of a climate adequate to performance;
⇒ Approaching quality in strategic terms: mission, values, principles, politics, strategies, objectives etc.;
⇒ Maintaining the control and continuous improvement of the institutional procedures;
⇒ Involvement and responsibility of the employees;
⇒ Identification of some quality relevant indicators and introduction of certain internal mechanism to evaluate them the indicators choused;
⇒ Creation of the possibilities to furnish objective proofs to induce trust in the adopted system.

It must be mentioned that the main factor to condition the success of a QMS implementation program in a university is, no doubt, the human one, that’s why: it must exist and function a promovation and recognition system to motivate the performance.
Education represents a conscience, whose quality depends in a good part not only on
the future welfare of the respective nation but, at the same time, the power, influence and
even its existence as a distinct entity in the regional and global configuration.

Through law, the education's quality is defined as being the ensemble of
characteristics of a study program and its supplier, through which the beneficiaries' expectations are fulfilled, as well as the quality standards.

The education's quality constitutes a priority, being an indispensable condition for the lowering of the professional occupation, of the social cohesion and economic competitiveness.

The superior education is the one, which generates specialists, which will lead, in the near future, the Romanian society and economy thus it, will have to permanently align to EU requirements.

For this, the entire activity of the university must be oriented to the growth of the competitiveness of the institution at a national and international level through insuring a high quality offer level, respectively of the activity's results: a good management; a financial policy adequate to the rational use of the resources and attracting new resources; the strengthening of the international dimension of the activity; the encouraging of a responsible attitude to all the personnel.

Aside from the orientation to performance and the growth of competitiveness, which are the generic requirements, need the introduction of quality management in the university teaching is determined by concrete and immediate requirements:

- The requirement of the society to the efficient and transparent use of public and extra-budgetary resources given to the superior studying;
- The creation and development of a quality culture in the university, as well as for the personnel and students;
- The insurance of the standards and practice of the European teaching institutions in the quality management domain, condition for strengthening the university's international dimension;
- The insurance of the good preparing of the graduates for living up to the high standards of the current market economy and perspective economy from Romania;
- The increase of the Romanian society's belief that they will satisfy the need and the expectations, explicitly and implicitly regarding the superior teaching institutions' work.
- The identifying of the deficient links and the avoiding of the nonconformities which can appear in the university work;
- The increase of the international community's trust in the capacity of the Romanian superior teaching to show a good activity;
- The improvement of the efficiency of the activities in all the fundamental competence domains', of organizing and functioning of the university;
- The continuous improvement of the university quality work.

A superior teaching institution, is conceived as a systematic evaluation process and
continuous improvement of the university education quality, the defining of the long term actions' directions, of the quantifiable objectives such as the strategy development and the giving of resources adequate to the accomplishment of these objectives, being based of the principal which states: “A high quality university education can be realized only in an environment in which all the implicated parties take responsibility for the quality of their contribution to its mission's accomplishment”
In the majority of superior education institutes in our country, there has been made a specialized department for problems in insuring the quality in the education/teaching act and there have been initiated acts, which are based on the following principles:

- the performance standards are clearly defined and documented;
- there has to exist a continuous and active preoccupation for the development of a institutional culture and quality at all teaching levels;
- the value is promoted and the performance in all domains is encouraged thus the high qualification human workforce is attracted and maintained;
- the continuous improvement is actively followed.

The introduction in the superior education of quality systems presumes an internal institutional development, at the university's level, which will give a certain guarantee on the education process quality.

Romania is interested in the implementation of the European policies, in making the Romanian superior education compatible with the European one. Moreover, in the Romanian Position Document, at chapter 18 regarding the introduction of the community Acquis, it is stated that it is necessary to fully adopt the legislation and directives in the education domain, which demonstrates the desire of our country to perfectly integrate in the European academic education space and to actively help in its construction.

The national strategy of the Romanian superior education in the 2004-2010 period states:

- “The increase of responsibility of the leadership of the universities in the decisions taken at the respective institution's level. The rectors must effectively assume the responsibility for the mode they use a superior education institution, and in the case of serious breaking of regulation, they must know the repercussions they are exposed to. The assuming of responsibility does not only have a declarative character, but they have concrete implications on the one who has adopted a wrong decision, with unwanted effects for the respective institution or for the who superior education system.”

- “The creation of external and internal evaluation, as an instrument for reaching a new quality level. The auto-evaluation at the level of universities must be instituted as being compulsory in each year or once every two years. In the auto-evaluation process, the students must have a ponder between 30-50%. It will be instituted as compulsory the external evaluation made by MECT, ARACIS etc., by other specialized institutions from the country or abroad. There will be a search of concrete ways for a permanent evaluation of universities, on whose base there will be made a performance hierarchy in the quality of the didactic and research process.”

- “The correlation of the changes in the superior education system with the triad: tradition-social-economical reality and culture. The following action directions are punctuated:
  - The curriculum's flexibility, through the permanent adaptation to the inputs, which come to the university and extra-university environment.
  - The stimulation of the student's thinking and less of his capacity of containing information;
  - the accentuation of the post university studying in the superior education system;
  - The association of universities, their association with other institutions and enterprises for realizing common objectives.”

The recommendations of the European Commission for the mutual reconnaissance of the quality systems in education refer to:
the instituting of **internal quality insurance mechanisms** and promoting a **efficient and effective quality management**;
- the realization and applying of a **common set of standards, procedures and directive lines (guides)**;
- the establishment of a **European Register of Quality Insurance Agencies**;
- **the total autonomy of the superior education institution** in choosing of a quality insurance agency registered in the European Register;
- the obligation of the members states of the Bologna process to accept **evaluations effectuated by any agency registered in the European Register** and to validate its results.

Keeping in view these recommendations, as well as the other European and international norms, for the year 2007 it has been and still is kept in view the necessity that the superior education institutions to continue/plan the following activity types:
- the finishing of the Quality Management Department;
- the finishing of the Quality Manual;
- the establishment of the Quality Insurance Commission;
- the development of the communication interface specific with the socio-economic and cultural environment;
- the persuading of the faculties' leadership for the implementation of the activity evaluation system to the teachers from the students, in conformity with the Law project of education quality;
- the Consulting Activity for making the documents forwarded to the Romanian Superior Education Quality Insurance Agency (ARACIS);
- auditing activities;
- the positioning of the interest center of the auditing activities towards the student;
- the making of the activity compatible with the latest law modifications in the domain;
- the specific training in the quality management domain;
- the global analysis of the study programs (license cycle and post university cycle).

**CONCLUSIONS**

Quality assurance represents a necessary answer for the negative trends registered in the whole national education system. Without real interventions in this field, some study programs or even certain universities could no more be corresponding to minimal national qualitative standards and less to the international ones.

In the meantime, universities are directly responsible with the assurance of human resources needed for the social, cultural and economical development of our country.

Following the globalization and integration processes, Romanian universities produce no more specialists for the internal work market but for the European and extra-European market.

University ignoring this reality risks to be eliminated from the educational market, whatever their tradition, because they do not take into account the expectation of the present and future development.

In order that all these problems to be solved, a new conception and a new strategies of the Romanian education system is needed, at every joint of the system on long term and at national level, including a minimum political pact in this field. The setting up of a national and institutional quality assurance system is needed also, as well as the European level
compatibilisation of the study programs, training universitary systems and the setting up of certain standard evaluation and accreditation mechanisms, all contributing to the academic education system quality increase in our country.

REFERENCES

THE ROLE OF MARKETING IN THE REAL ISO 9001:2000 QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

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Abstract: The massive increase of ISO 9001 – quality management system certifications number world wide in the last years led to a “fashion” of having an ISO 9001 certificate in the organization. In Romania, the amount of ISO 9001 certificates issued until present exceeds 12 000 and the question that rises naturally is whether these certificates truly reflect an existing and functioning quality management system. Mostly, the visions of the managers and employees about the quality management system they have in the organization orbit the same one word: “bureaucracy”. That is because ISO 9001 is still not understood as it should be: a guide for creating a management system where processes are developed and improved so that the client may be continuously satisfied and, though not clearly stated in standard – indirectly, that the efficiency and the performance of the company grow. In the end, the purpose of any management system is maximization of company’s benefits, using the most effective methods. ISO 9001 speaks about managing the quality – as the main road to success.

INTRODUCTION

Reviews and analyses of International Organization for Standardization (ISO) brought with them concerns about the loss of the confidence in this standard. Studies have shown that in their desire to obtain fast and easy the certificate – the very paper that proves the existence and the continuous functioning of the quality management system, organizations seek for less severe, professional consultants and less impartial, professional certification bodies.

The risk in applying this strategy for obtaining the certification of ISO 9001 quality management system is that the pseudo-quality management system certified, will work against the organization itself in the end. The risk is that, having a fake quality management system, there will be no other benefits unless the certificate, the paper. But so many other competitors of the organization have also a certificate, so where is the difference? It is very often heard in the world of people who get in contact with ISO 9001 that having a quality management system consists only of having a set of specific documents, a quality manual and procedures written in a specific way. But papers do not create a management system, and surely not a quality management system. Creating procedures and a quality manual just for showing them to the auditor is useless bureaucracy. And useless bureaucracy always works against the organization, it is resources consuming. It is vital to understand that ISO 9001 describes a management system client oriented, and not papers oriented.
THE CONNECTION BETWEEN MARKETING AND ISO 9001

It is very likely that immediately after reading the title of the article, question marks have risen about the connection between marketing and ISO 9001 – the international standard for quality management. Question marks that are natural, because ISO 9001 does not mention anywhere along its reading the word “marketing”.

Then, where exactly this process interferes in the quality management system and what is its impact on the good functioning of the quality management system?

Unfortunately, there are still many companies in Romania who consider marketing as a simple activity consisting of designing and spreading brochures, advertisements, participating to some fair exhibitions, events etc. Briefly, this large number of companies places the equal sign between marketing and image, brands, products promotion. However, the real marketing process in a company is - should be, much more complex. There has been given many definitions to marketing along the time, one of them – belonging to
Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) stating that: “marketing is the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably.”

Marketing process interferes thus before planning the product/service, when the market and the economical environment are analyzed. It interferes when the product/service is ready to get into the market, in order to support the sales force – and this is where it comes the promoting part. It interferes after the product/service is launched in the market by monitoring consumers and clients reactions. Looking once again at the definition given by the prestigious British Institute, the connection between marketing and quality management can be already perceived as quality is defined in ISO 9001 as „conformity with client requirements”. Thus, management of quality is the management of understanding correctly and applying the requirements of the clients, is the management of placing the client in the center of the activity.

From its very beginning, when referring to the area covered by the quality management system, ISO 9001 clearly states that quality management implies continuously satisfying the requirements of its clients. And because ISO 9001 is about a management system, it becomes obvious that the most important role in making this system function is reserved to the management. Indeed, everything starts from the management, but this is not all. It is the management of quality system ISO 9001 is about, and the term „quality” is essential for understanding the core of this international standard.

It is indeed the responsibility of the top management to make sure that the requirements of the clients are determined in the most appropriate way, in order to increase the clients’ satisfaction. This implies defining responsibilities for the persons capable to determine the clients’ requirements, approving strategies for achieving this goal and setting budgets too. All this information about clients feedback is must in the periodical top management reviews, as states the ISO 9001 standard. And this „must” is because the information about clients’ requirements, about the market is essential in the decisional process of the top management. But are the results of these reviews always the right decisional choices? If the information about the market and customers is not objective, accurate, true, then the decisions based upon it are likely to be wrong. And continuing the thread of reasoning: how could ever wrong decisions lead to continuous improvement of the activity, of the products/services— another core belief of quality management philosophy?

Going further into the standard, ISO 9001 continues with the human resources management. It is widely accepted the idea that the most important, adding value resource in an organization is the human resource and referring to this resource the quality management system international standard states that the personnel who is involved in activities that influence the quality of the product has to be competent. So far, it is nothing unusual. But beyond this prosaic appearance of the statement there is hidden a common problem: has the management really defined all the activities, the processes which influence the quality of the product/service. Definitely the processes of production/the processes of providing services are essential in the activity of the company and the personnel involved here is required to have the technical and the specific abilities. Supposing that these processes are perfectly accomplished, because the personnel are really qualified and the products/services are delivered according to their planning. All these products and services created are useless, unless people who contributed to their designing, planning and improvement were indeed able to understand the requirements of the clients, the trends of the market and to subtract the very essential. Unless people dealing with understanding what clients want – people of marketing, have the true abilities for this, the efforts of the

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company are unprofitable, the products and services will not be competitive in the market. In trying to implement a quality management system is thus important that the persons responsible for “marketing” to have the skills for what marketing really means: aptitudes for linking to the client, for analysis and synthesis of the key aspects in the market, and not just for designing and placing the product in the market. This is the reason why ISO 9001 moves further on in the following chapter insisting very much on the relation with the client: determining its requirements, communicating – solely in the purpose of continuous improving the activity of the company, the products/services, the customer level of satisfaction.

CONCLUSIONS

Looking back along the thread of quality management system international standard ISO 9001 it is visible that the entire system of quality management is built on the pillar of satisfying clients requirements and the marketing process is critical for its inner resistance structure. A frail structure, inadequate to this vital pillar will certainly lead to the crash of the quality management system, to the collapse of the business.

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QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN PUBLIC SERVICES

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Abstract: Quality represents one of the most important aspects that have to be considered for public services, as well as it is for common ones. This is strongly reflected in the customer satisfaction and determines its behavior. The service quality could be measured by a set of indexes according with the type of service and the customers’ expectations. The particularities of the public services rise up the necessity of establishing a similar set of quality indexes. Firstly, this will contribute to improve the quality and to obtain a better fit with the customer expectation. At the same time, an analysis of how quality affects the customer satisfaction could be a start up point in redesigning the public services. The first step of the process to determine the effects of quality in customer behavior is to identify all the elements that contribute to customer satisfaction. Secondly, it has to be assessed the quality degree of influence on customer satisfaction as against other elements. Thirdly, it could be done a comparison of the quality degree of influence on common and public services, effects and customer reactions.

The customer behavior represents, for the companies trading goods and services, a bench mark for adjusting their goods and services and planning their production. The customer behavior is important and, therefore scrutinized, as the way a customer takes a decision to buy represents an important parameter in designing the marketing mix. Thus, it is useful to know the factors that influence the customer behavior. These can be classified as follows:
- condition factors;
- behavior factors.

In the following table these factors are shown, in detail:

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<th>Condition factors</th>
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The customer behavior represents, for the companies trading goods and services, a bench mark for adjusting their goods and services and planning their production. The customer behavior is important and, therefore scrutinized, as the way a customer takes a decision to buy represents an important parameter in designing the marketing mix.
We shall try to focus especially on the behavior factors connected to the offer, and the marketing mix, implicitly proposed by the offered, and its components.

Thus, we consider that there is a link between the product quality, the client satisfaction and his subsequent behavior. The product quality, in our case the public services, is pointed out in the product component. Before pointing out the bond between the quality and the customer behavior one has to clarify the difference between needs and desire as a starting point.

Consumers have both needs and desires, and it is very difficult to make a precise distinction between them. From this point of view, those being aware of their needs and considering anything above this level as desire have a realistic perception of the way their needs are satisfied. The consumers that mix the needs with their desires have a distorted perception and a low degree of satisfaction.

The public service has the role to serve and satisfy the public need. This can be identical with the individual need or it can be, often, under its level, which is, as we have shown, very difficult to define from desire.

The desire is based on the entire complex of above mentioned factors and it brings about a certain type of behavior. An eloquent example is the distribution of water: in the case that in a rural place, without current water distribution, such a system is achieved, based on the free fall of water (with no pressure in the pipe), the flow of water being dependent on the climate fluctuations (rains/droughts) and thus an irregular distribution of water, this would be looked upon as a serious shortcoming of the quality under the conditions of an urban place with drinking water available with constant pressure 24 hours in 24.

The most public services represent solutions to the social matters and needs. Their cost is sustained by the consumer or the state, but in a minimum level. They have also a cost assessed as a profit for society. From this perspective a part of the clients can be frustrated as they cannot pay more to get a better service. Mostly, irrespective of the purchasing power, the customer is not content with the quality of the offered public service.
The satisfaction of the public services users, according to a number of authors is:

\[ \text{Satisfaction} = \text{perception} - \text{expectations} \]

Another form of representation, proposed by Mudie Peter, Pirrie Angela for the user satisfaction is shown in figure 1, and the forming of the expectations is according to figure 2.

Forming the expectations has an important component that depends on previous knowledge, information received from other consumers, remarks. Usually, the negative connotations have a higher impact than those positive. Correct and complete information can rule out the risk of very high expectations against the supplier performance and implicitly the birth of a state of unsatisfaction.

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**Fig.1 Model for determining the satisfaction**

**Fig.2 Forming expectations**
To determine user’s expectations and their perception, marketing studies are needed. The user expectations are, mostly, higher than what the public authority can offer. These have been divided in 4 categories as follows:

- unrealistic
- unlucrative
- unachievable
- unreasonable.

A comparison between the public sector consumer approach and that of the private one can be so summarized: „The private companies exist for achieving sales and profit. The client satisfaction is a vehicle to this end, not the end in itself. This justifies the higher manipulation of consumers, than expected (under normal circumstances) in the public sector. But the category of citizen as consumer ignores a lot of delicate aspects coming from the marketing practice of the private sector companies.”

During purchasing process the consumer takes a series of secondary decisions as the following:

1. decisions regarding the brand /quality;
2. decisions regarding the seller;
3. decision on quantity;
4. decisions regarding the time of purchase;
5. decisions regarding the way of payment.

Out of these, in purchasing public services only the quantity decision remains for the consumer, the other ones represent preestablished conditions by the public authority and the service supplier.

The consumer has different forms to claim the improvement of the service quality, the settlement of the problems or even compensation in the case of prejudices, as a consequence of poor quality, late supply or incomplete services, etc.

Companies, in their turn, can resort to a large range of ways to compensate the prejudices caused and to diminish the degree of unsatisfaction, especially they try to determine the grounds that caused the client unsatisfaction.

The suppliers are concerned by creating the most interesting mixes for attracting a bigger number of client and afterwards are concerned to maintain them. The service quality is one of the most frequent aspect in debate and analysis to see if it meets the clients hopes. From this point of view, consumers are activated to express their opinions on the services and the ways of improving them. Solving the consumers unsatisfactions represent the way of keeping them in the clients portfolio.
A quality of a service under any expectation determines the exclusion of that company from the list of the potential suppliers under the purchasing process of decision. It is not the same with the public services, where the change of the supplier of services is very difficult or even impossible. The supply of public services creates a relationship mechanism as in the scheme proposed by fig.3.

The supply of a public administrative service can be done on a previous request of the beneficiary, as for instance the medical service or, it is supplied and than used, as in the instance of roads and parks maintenance. Their quality can be denounced by the consumer but the late will have no individual and immediate feedback. It is also true that the claim and unsatisfaction of the consumer depends on the way this determines the degree of unsatisfaction in comparison with the need and desire.

The payment mechanism of a public service can be direct or not, often having a difficult way of achievement through financing from the public budget, even when it is direct and based on price lists approved by law by the public authority.

As there is a strong link between the price and quality, the purchasing decision being taken mostly based on a multicriterial analysis, where the relation price-quality has
the central place, the consumer unsatisfaction is greater when it is brought about by both elements, not only the quality. Thus, it is often set forth the fact that one pays for unsupplied services “we don’t know what we pay as we get nothing” or one pays for a doubtful quality “we pay a lot of money for... you see what...”.

All these lead to the conclusion that the level of quality represents an essential element for the customer unsatisfaction regarding the public services, connected, very often, with the price level.

Finally, the public services suppliers have to pay a greater attention to the quality of their services, to the ratio quality-price but also, to a campaign for the identification of the public needs and the consumers expectations, in view of establishing and informing the citizens which is the quality level of the supplied public service.

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LEADERSHIP AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

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Abstract: This paper centers on leadership and planning as the basis of all managerial activities relating to total quality management. Leadership is the „driver” for an effective TQM focus. A basic understanding of leadership concepts and their importance is vital for manager and workers at every level in a TQM focused organization. Strategic planning and management has become more important in organizations that aspire to high quality levels, so leaders must understand how to „deploy” plans and quality efforts throughout the organization.

INTRODUCTION

The Japanese approach planning in a much different way than in the West. They may spend 60 - 70% of the total time related to a project on planning. This frequently allows them to perform the task in a relatively short period of time, with much less effort absorbed in correcting mistakes and redesigning products.

Employees should be encouraged to focus on what to do, how to do it, and how leadership must actively be involved in doing it as they look at strategic quality planning and management. Key objectives for this goal should include:

- To define leadership as the right to exercise authority and the ability to achieve results from the people and systems under one authority. Leaders create clear and visible quality values and integrate these into the organization’s strategy.
- To discuss the five core leadership skills of: vision, empowerment, intuition, selfunderstanding, and value congruence.
- To study the five major perspectives from which leadership research has been developed: the trait approach, the behavioral view, the contingency approach, the role approach, and new perspectives such as transactional theory. These contemporary theories are based on contingency approaches, and include Fiedler’s model, Vroom and Jago’s model, and a variety of others.
- The emphasize that a critical role of leadership is strategic management. Strategy is the pattern of decisions that determines and reveals a company’s goals, policies, and plans, and is determined through strategic planning.
- To define the process and content of planning for quality in organizations. Steps in strategy formulation begin with determining the organization’s mission,
vesion, and guiding principles. These lead to goals and strategies that set the direction for achieving the mission.

- Key practices for effective strategic planning include active participation by both top management and lower-level employees, a strong customer focus, supplier involvement, and well-established measurement and feedback systems.
- Deploying strategy effectively is often done through a process called hoshin kanri, or policy deployment that emphasizes organization-wide planning and setting of priorities, providing resources to meet objectives, and measuring performance as a basis for improving it.
- The seven management and planning tools help managers to implement policy deployment and are useful in other areas of quality planning. These tools are covered in the paper.

CONTENT

The mission and extremely detailed management principles seem to fit the basic requirements for a TQM focus, including customer focus, employee involvement and continuous improvement. The first and last of those TQM principles are included in the mission statement. The middle principle (employee involvement) is spelled out in the management principles under the sub-category of „For our associates”.

Strong leadership helps to keep the company focused. The first item under the subcategory of „For our associates” is: „we will strive to have management lead by example”. Obviously, when Gault met with the trucker on the trucker’s schedule, that sent a message to managers and other employees in the company that he was serious about empowerment and quality.

Executive leadership contributes to the management principles in the various categories in the following ways:

- **Consumers** – leaders must provide resources for the search for newer and valueadded products and must take the lead in standing behind every product.
- **External customers** – leaders must see that products are designed in a way that will meet the needs of the ultimate consumer so that they will provide viable markets which customers (wholesalers and retailers) can tap. In addition, customers must be listened to and heard and company policies must be set to benefit these direct customers.
- **Suppliers** – long-term partnerships and objective, ethical dealing with suppliers is not possible without leadership from the top.
- **Associates** – Listening, learning, empowerment, and reward structures cannot be changed without the active involvement of leadership.
- **Communities and governments** – communities and governments generally look to top management of an organization to be the „spokesperson” and „figurehead” for the firm. By acting ethically and being corporate good citizens, leaders can promote a positive image of the corporation in the community.
- **Shareholders** – it is interesting to note that the traditional shareholder interest in return on investment and timely communication of performance not mentioned until the last two items on the list. The earlier items cover development of human and wise use of other resources, as well as leadership depth and strategic direction. If executive leadership is to keep shareholders happy, shareholders must
understand and support the long – term vision of managers and see the payoffs in the form of ROI and market share growth.

- **Everyone** – executive leadership, as stated earlier must set the tone and be an example if integrity and high ethical standards are to be upheld.

Leadership is the right to exercise authority, and the ability to achieve results from those people and systems under one’s authority. Strong leadership is necessary to successfully implement a quality process. Leaders may seek to motivate employees and develop enthusiasm for quality with rhetoric, but taking strong, decisive, and personal action to implement quality changes makes a bigger impression on employees.

Leaders are visionaries, anticipating and striving for the future, not reaching back into the past. They empower and encourage employees to participate in quality improvement efforts, and develop cross-functional teamwork and customer-supplier partnerships. They must be willing to follow their own intuition and make difficult decisions that will help the organization to be successful. They must be able to identify their own strengths and weaknesses, and understand their relationships with employees and within the organization. Value – congruence occurs when leaders integrate their basic assumptions and beliefs about the nature, mission, and relationships of the organization into the company’s management system. Specifically, values include trust and respect for individuals, openness, teamwork, integrity, and commitment to quality.

The leading practices of the top managers in TQM-based operations include:

- Managers create a strategic vision and clear quality values revolving around customers, both external and internal, that serve as a basis for business decisions at all levels of the organization.
- Managers set high expectations, and motivate employees to do things they (the employees) do not believe they can do.
- Managers demonstrate substantial personal commitment and involvement in quality, often in a missionary-like fashion. By “practicing what they preach”, they serve as role models for the entire organization.
- Managers integrate quality values into daily leadership and management.
- Managers sustain an environment for quality excellence.

A strategy is a pattern or plan that integrates an organization’s major goals, policies, and action sequences into a cohesive whole. Formal strategies contain three elements:

- goals to be achieved;
- policies that guide or limit action;
- action sequences, or programs, that accomplish the goals.

The leading practices for effective strategic planning include:

- Top management and employees all actively participate in the planning process.
- They use customer wants and needs to drive the strategy.
- They involve suppliers in the strategic planning process.
- They have well-established feedback systems for continuous measurement and reevaluation of the planning process.

The vision statement is a statement of guiding values, principles, and direction of expected growth of an organization or some segment of it, and is generally developed by key managers and others who are responsible for planning and carrying out that vision. Vision statements may be developed at any level within the organizational hierarchy from
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top to bottom. This is a very worthwhile activity, as long as the statements are coordinated so as to fit with those of the next higher level and the overall organization’s vision.

The purpose, or mission, of the organization is a statement of “why the organization is in business”. In the past, the purpose of the organization was frequently stated in terms of products or services produced or profitability to stockholders. TQM focused firms are now stating their purpose in terms of their customer focus and their commitment to strive for higher levels of quality.

Values, or guiding principles, guide the journey to that vision by defining attitudes and policies for all employees, which are reinforced through conscious and subconscious behavior at all levels of the organization. The mission, vision, and guiding principles serve as the foundation for strategic planning. They must be articulated by top management and others who lead, especially the CEO. They also have to be transmitted practiced, and reinforced through symbolic and real action before they become “real” to the employees, and the people, groups, and organizations in the external environment that do business with the firm.

CONCLUSIONS

Competitive products evaluations and industry forums provide information about the competitive environment, which are communicated to appropriate strategy teams and management by Market Research and Competitive Assessment Groups. However, the company does not seem to proactively anticipate future competitive issues.

Each Strategy Team analyzes supplier capabilities needed to support their activities. Teams include representatives of critical suppliers. This helps ensure that supplier capabilities are indeed available.

Involving many individuals and units in the planning process paves the way for smoother deployment of plans. All managers are involved, and top managers hold small group meetings to include every employee to obtain feedback. Communication to suppliers is accomplished in various ways. The key method of deployment is the translation of SQP to TQP via individual goals and measurements. This helps to ensure alignment throughout various levels in the company. Apparently there is ongoing commitment of resources to the SQP, however, it is not clear how lower-level resources are committed.

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**DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT DRIVER OF CREATIVITY LEADING TO INNOVATION AS A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE**

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**Abstract:** Nowadays, considering the fast moving market and the strong challenge of the competition, the ability to react fast and to adapt to changes are very important for the organization’s success. The innovation is becoming part of the firm’s strategy and represents an important competitive advantage. Consequently, the management team will hardly try to stimulate innovation through a creative work environment, as “Creativity is a necessary precondition for successful innovation” (Bassett-Jones, 2005). Managing innovation requires the ability to work with different people and implies encouraging personnel involvement and understanding the organization’s mission, vision and objectives. It was noticed that members of personnel with different backgrounds, skills and behaviors are prolific for idea generation and for maintaining a creative work environment that would result in a high rate of successful innovations. From another point of view, diversity may also lead to conflicts and damage the cohesiveness inside the teams. Consequently, maintaining an efficient climate in order to stimulate creativity and to detain innovation as a competitive advantage is difficult to manage. Therefore, some organizations prefer stability and a more homogenous workforce, ensuring high personnel retention and low turnover rate. The human resource department has an important considering the recruitment and development of people coming from diverse setting in order to enable them to work together and to cooperate for a common objective. The aim of this paper is to reveal the importance of diversity in the workplace and the link with creativity, leading to innovation as a strong competitive advantage for the organization.

**INTRODUCTION**

As each person has its own unique characteristics, inside every organization there are people more or less different, coming from different backgrounds and having different capabilities and skills. According to the individual knowledge and characteristics, each employee can fit best inside a certain department, so every member will try to find the most appropriate position for best expressing its qualities. It is very important to match with the others when working inside the same team, in order to work together efficiently, and of course the personal preferences will be according to the compatibility between their behavior, character and skills that define the personal style. For composing a high performance team, the members have to not only manage to complement each others, but also to develop trust and ensure a proper balance inside the team, so they could easily solve conflicts, manage risk and produce the best outcomes. Is not easy to group together different people with different perspectives, determine them to cooperate for the purpose of delivering the organization’s main competitive advantage – innovation through creativity.
VALUE IN DIVERSITY

Some managers try to adopt a high-commitment orientation, to keep their staff more homogenous in order to create more cohesiveness inside the teams. This would result in better relationships, less conflicts and misunderstandings between colleagues, consequently a low turnover rate and high personnel retention during time. Generally, inside these kinds of organizations the management is more focused on maintaining a stable climate and a peaceful working environment. Working in teams and sharing responsibilities are some of the best results of this kind of management.

From another perspective, there are organizations inside which there can be noticed a high degree of diversity among personnel. Each member of the staff comes from a different background, studied different fields, acknowledged different skills and this reflects in different views and attitudes. Consequently, most of the times they may not share the same opinions, so misunderstandings can easily transform into conflicts. In spite of all this, in order to stimulate creativity, some managers prefer to compose their teams out of different people that could turn great ideas into successful innovation. These managers include innovation into their firms' strategy and by developing it they transform it into their main competitive advantage. Managing diversity is difficult and requires a lot of talent, but when is done right it become a valuable strength for the organization and it stimulates creativity and therefore, innovation. Being a difficult task, often times the management may fail, consequently the diversity can become a real burden. According to this, Moore (1999) has established four types of responses to the challenge of managing diversity: diversity hostile, diversity blind, diversity naïve and diversity integrationist (figure 1). The first three types refer to the organizations that prefer not to deal with diversity at all, or that ignore it completely, while the integrationist type refers to the management that includes diversity into the day to day activity with the purpose of obtaining the best results possible. However, the experience shows that just the simple existence of diversity inside an organization does not automatically leads to positive outcomes, and because this has to do a lot with the way management handles all the different people and motivates them to work together.

Figure 1. The Four Types of Responses to the Challenge of Managing Diversity
Source: Based on Moore, 1999

The idea of diversity at the workplace was promoted in some organizations as a starting point to give everybody an opportunity and not to create disadvantages for some social groups, but in time, with good management techniques and skills evaluation, good outcomes resulted and the organizations realized that this diversity was something they would gain from. Therefore, this has become a strategy adopted by many organizations that wanted to benefit from the diversity of skills, knowledge and behaviors in order to deliver
high rates of creativity and achieve innovation as their main competitive advantage. The human resources department has a very important role for recruiting people with the right skills and abilities needed for the organization and that best suit its features. They have to know very well the management's interests and requirements in order to be able to select people accordingly. The HR department has to organize training programs together with periodical performance appraisals to ensure employees’ fitting into the firm vision and to upgrade their skills and knowledge and developed them according to the strategy of the organization.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATIVITY, LEADING TO INNOVATION

Each member of the organization has to participate to the creation process and bring its own input, but everybody has to follow the same final target. Otherwise, the result will be a disaggregated complex of ideas, not suitable to be merged and transformed into a feasible innovation. Accordingly, each participant to the innovation process has to be stimulated to contribute from its unique perspective, but to keep in mind the final goal of the organization. A good communication system is crucial for the success of the innovation considering the compatibility of the ideas, as the participants have to constantly consult with the other members of their team. While working together, the members of the staff should combine their personal strengths and weaknesses for optimal results; based on trust they can create a connection between each other in order to be able to solve problems and build a collaborative climate.

An environment characterized by diversity may lead to stimulating creativity, the first step towards innovation. When managed carefully, diversity among personnel enhances creativity and constitutes the driver of generating ideas that may become successful innovations. Through a high-committed staff the management can ensure a stable environment inside the organization, with better communication and no misunderstandings. Through their different approaches and opinions, each member of the staff can bring valuable inputs to the development of great ideas and help turning them into successful innovations after tests, development processes and researches. If the management stimulates continuously idea development through all personnel participation, the innovation process can become a permanent activity, and if sustained, in time it would lead to benefits and bring the organization a strong competitive advantage in front of the competitors. Even if each member has a different character, working inside the same organization leads to sharing the same goals, having the same objectives, and fighting for the same mission, so they can turn into a high-committed staff. From another perspective, some authors believe that even inside a diversified work environment, high personnel retention leads to a uniform workforce in time, and this implies the risk of diminishing the rate of personnel renewal. Consequently, the diversity would transform into routine and will not deliver the same outcomes as inside an organization where the people are always changing (for example, inside the creative agencies, where people usually change after short periods of time). For avoiding this kind of risk and maintaining the diversity climate in order to stimulate creativity, the management may rotate staff inside the teams, so they would never get too accustomed with each other. Of course, there are other ways to encourage creativity to its maximum potential, such as rewards, recognition and people development programs.
THE INNOVATION AS THE MAIN COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

There are many ways in which an organization may take advantage of the innovation capacity: some organizations approach radical innovations as a strategy to enter new markets and to overcome the entry barriers, others innovate to gain the first position in the market and become the trend setters or others simply follow the trends and copy others’ innovations, adding extra improvements. Sometimes innovation can be a breakthrough technology, a new product, or a radical product innovation, but some other times it can be just an improvement or a change that can extend the product lifecycle. No matter the result, in order to become a successful innovation, the products or service has to go through three main stages (Cummings, 1998): the conception, the development and application (figure 2).

![Diagram of the Three Stages of Innovation](image)

**Figure 2. The Three Stages of the Successful Innovation**

Source: Based on Cummings, 1998

During the conception stage, the creativity plays the crucial part; it’s the moment when all the participants are stimulated to bring their contribution. The diversity of their opinions is the source of generating various ideas that may later develop into successful innovations. Among the variety of initiatives, the management has to decide which route to follow, according to the organization’s resources and capabilities. The development is the stage when all the parties have to closely cooperate and share opinions in order to maintain the desired direction set by the management. The development is also a challenge when it comes to technical issues and human resources management. As problems can occur any moment, until the completion of the process, the leaders have to carefully supervise the evolution of the innovation development and not leave unsolved any misunderstandings that may grow into conflicts. Accordingly, an efficient communication is very important for enabling a full cooperation between departments and teams. The successful application is the final stage, when the results of the collaborated work of all the people involved become visible. Good results link the teams even more, as a proof of their common success after their common inputs, lots of divergences and hard work to combine different styles and providing their common goal. Poor outcomes mean failure of the innovation process, and moreover the failure of the management team to deal with diversity. It takes a lot of tact to be able to group together totally different people and make them collaborate, rely on each
other and complement one’s weakness with another’s strength. The literature has outlined the thin line that makes the difference between groups and teams (Katzebach and Smith, 1993), but this difference counts a lot. While the groups are formed of people simply working together without any deeper connections, the teams have a much deeper significance: the members of the team learn one from each other, are able to complete their skills and knowledge by sharing experience, cooperate and collaborate on a basis of trust and reliance, so that the final outcome would be the result of their joined forces and the merits are for the whole team and not for individuals.

The ability to innovate has to be developed in time and requires lots of resources, so not any organization can achieve this with success. The innovations take lot of time and researches before being ready to enter the market, but the possibility to quickly innovate and to outcome the competitors can place the organization among the pioneers in a certain sector. This is the case of many industries, such as clothing industry, characterized by great diversity (for example, ZARA group can develop and bring into the market a new line of products in just one week), the automobile industry (where every month counts for gaining the supremacy on the market, and any delay can mean great losses), or the computer industry (where the developments are done so fast that new generations appear one after the other, and it’s really challenging to keep the pace). Accordingly, the final stage, the application of the innovation has to be done after many previous tests, including technical tests and marketing tests that would show whether the innovation can enter the market, how will it be adopted by consumers and what will be the reaction of the competition.

Generally, the first that brings a new type of product or service well accepted by the consumers into the market will be the trend setters, and the others will try to follow their example. The first organization creating an innovation would take the credit for being the pioneer, but this does not guarantee their success, as the followers may be more cost and time efficient when copying the innovation and bringing improvements that would make their product even more successful than the initial variant. There are cases when the result of the diversity and creativity can be such a radical innovation that the market is not ready to accept it yet and the consumer does not acknowledge its need and added value, so it can become a total failure. From the opposite perspective, the inability to innovate fast and to adapt to the constantly changing market leads to loosing the competitive challenge and to being unable to fit in the modern trends. According to the above stated the timing of launching an innovation is very important, the reason for which the creation team has to keep a constant contact with the market and find the best suitable moment to introduce their work outcome into the marketplace.

Often times, the organization may lack the necessary resources for developing the innovation throughout all the stages, so it has to search help outside the company. Sometimes it may be even more cost efficient to use the know-how of a specialized third party, comparing to the required investment for developing an internal department. Moreover, adopting new ideas and know-how or trying to cope with others' style also implies a certain degree of diversity, so there are lots of other ways for attracting diversity inside the organization, such as exploiting strategic alliances, following others' example or implicating third parties into the organization improvement. The strategic alliance is a way to learn from others, to share experience and to cooperate for obtaining better results compared to what each part could have obtained on its own. The fast-followers can overtake the initial innovation and in a short period of time reproduce it by bringing their personal touch and adding value to it, while doing all this at a much lower cost. Third parties usually are specialized companies that help complete the weakness of the
organization and bring improvements into specific areas.

CONCLUSIONS

Summing up, managing diversity can be also very difficult and very risky. Having to deal with totally different people, and convincing them to work together for a common purpose can be a real challenge. But the management is often willing to take the risk of having a diverse environment in order to obtain the competitive advantage brought in by creativity and innovation. The management has to be really efficient in order to obtain the best outcomes and to benefit from a high rate of successful innovations. Otherwise, due to the possible problems caused by workforce diversity, such as conflicts and misunderstandings, damaged cohesiveness inside the teams, higher turnover rates, some managers prefer a more stable environment that would be easier to manage, and would not cause so many problems inside the organization.

But on the other side, the experienced management team will try to encourage creativity by gathering people as different as possible, but with complementary skills, in order to form efficient teams. As noticed in practice, the most difficult part is to encourage collaboration among personnel, their cooperation inside teams, and through efficient communication to ensure problem-solving and a higher degree of social integration.

As the existence of diversity inside the organization does not automatically lead to good results, neither leads to creativity. In order to be productive, the creativity has to be stimulated and to have ensured the proper environment for its development. Accordingly, the management has to determine every member of the personnel to participate and to bring its own contribution in order to generate valuable ideas that can be transformed into successful innovations. An organization that permanently seeks new methods of improving itself and its products through the benefits of innovation will gain a strong competitive advantage and establishing a good position on the marketplace.

REFERENCES

MANNERS OF COOPERATION BETWEEN AGENCIES FROM THE INTERNATIONAL TOURISM FOR IMPROVING THE TOURISM ACTIVITIES

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Abstract: The tourist product is composed of many categories of services (transport, lodging, providing food, entertainment, guide) proposed by different providers who have to agree with the product before it will be offered to the customers. Cooperation in the tourism field tries to create a rating chain between the providers of tourist services, so that the holiday package gets quickly at consumers and in optimal conditions.

Treatises in the tourism field studied the issues concerned about the collaboration between the tourism operators and tried to offer approaching ways to improve their reports with the final purpose of pleasing the consumer. With this intention the articles can be emphasised: Efficiency evaluation of A-group travel agencies with data envelopment analysis (DEA): A case study in Antalya region, Turkey, Can Deniz Koksal, Tourism Management, ISI Thomson Journal, Elsevier, nr. 28(2007); Perceived value of the purchase of tourism product, Javier Sanchez, Tourism Management, Elsevier, nr. 27(2006); Relationship quality with a travel agency: The influence of the postpurchase perceived value of a tourism package, Miguel A Moliner, Tourism and Hospitality Research, London: Jun-Sep 2007. Vol. 7, Iss. 3-4.

Starting from the knowledge stage in this field, this paper work suggests a quality research of marketing by the observation method, at the tourism agencies level which purpose is to investigate the way the tourism agencies cooperate with the international tourism services providers. In the last part the paper work will present the conclusions of the research which will propose new manners of improving the cooperation in the tourism field.

The tourism industry has many different sectors, including transport (many airports, cruises, railways, rent a car), accommodation (independent hotels and chain hotels), food units (traditional and catering), amusements (historical buildings, museums, parks), the ones that creates the product, companies that organize events, info centers, advertising offices, infrastructure. In every sector there are many touristic services, and from the combination of the four important elements – transport, accommodation, food, amusement – is created the touristic product.

The importance of the collaboration in realising the touristic product

The touristic product are created by the tour operators. They contract the ones that suppliers of touristic services and they are sold directly to the clients ar to a tourism agency. The importance of the touristic product reveals that he is made up to satisfy the needs of all people regarding travelling. The diversity of the services implies attention for the tourism
agencies because they have to collaborate in good conditions with all suppliers and all consumers.

The cooperation is a very good way to develop and diversify the commercial changes and influences the tourism for the economic growth for all countries, especially for those in development.

The cooperation relationships generates stability in all reports between the international tourism operators and all of them want and create long term relations. The building of any sightseeing spot (for example to attract a new segment of tourists, a new flow of tourists) can happen in a few years, and the relationship between partners will be prolonged even more after the finish of the sightseeing spot.

Taking into account the economic and social context – globalization – the multinational companies of tourism are expanding from a country to another one giving birth to multiple new relations. I can give examples of such hotels: Marriott, Hilton, Accor, Howard- Johnson, Inter-Continental, Best-Western that have made their appearance in our country a long time ago with all the potential that our country holds; some aeron companies - Air France, Lufthansa, fast-foodurilor – McDonald’s, KFC, Pizza Hut, amusement parks – DisneyLand and tourism agencies – TUI, Thomson. The development of the new markets can’t be realised with out the attention focused on the needs of the clients. So, having in the first part the tourism agency, this one cand not offer by herself superior satisfaction of the clients. An essential role is the connection between the one that creates the product and the final client.

Figure 1. – The touristic product

The touristic cooperation recommends that the agents involved in the organisation and the distribution of the touristic product should work in a very tight relation with the other economic agents building lasting satisfaction for the client. This means that every agent will produce, sell and deliver good products to support the agency. The success of the agency depends on how well everybody does his job and how all the elements can correlate.

Some integrate their services, for exemple the tour opertours build up hotels and have aeron companies.

**COOPERATION USING THE INTEGRATION STRATEGY**

The integration of the tour-operators can be realized horizontally, between companies which take part at the same stage of the production process, the advantages
of this being the utilization of an informational system, quick and modern reservation, computerized administration, promotional force, standardization of the touristic product.

It can be talked about horizontal integration (in the production and distribution of journeys) in the case of the tour-operator TUI. The group has been formed by the fusion of 6 german touristic agencies of middle size, which continue to market under their brand, while the TUI ensures the common functions of booking the flight and hotel tickets, coordination of the financial politics, of the publicity and marketing.

**Figure 2. Cooperation using the horizontal integration between touristic agencies**

Horizontal integration assumes that some complementary companies gather within the same group and the companies interfere in different degrees of the manufacture process of a touristic product. Therefore, the tour-operator turistical agency will try to achieve the transport and accommodation services.

Many touristical agents have wondered if an operator should interfere on the whole product channel, or just to confine at the essential activity. There are many reasons for companies to disagree with the integration of their activity on the whole channel:

- **The necessity of substantial capitals;** in order to diversify their activity in multiple heterogeneous activities, tour-operators should invest substantial amounts of money;

- **The necessity to acquire new competences;** by providing also accommodation services or, moreover, by becoming an airline company, the tour-operator should have substantial knowledge about those specific activities, in order to be able to negotiate;

- **The competence; when it comes to integration, we have to answer to some questions as:** „Does a tour-operator have the ability to lead an airline company, or moreover, to exploit a hotel or to exploit a pleasure ground?” and „Would it be appropriate for a tour-operator to claim that they could become the best in every field?”

- **The danger of the captive market;** an airline company will never expect a tour-operator to fill in all the aircrafts, a hotel will never hope that the tour-operator will book in the entire capacity, thus for collaborations are imposed in this domain. It is obvious that you cannot realize by yourself everything in the tourism domain.

And also there are many reasons for companies to agree with the integration of their activity on the whole channel:
- The touring services suppliers monopoly; if a touring operator is obliged to come to a supplier that holds a monopoly position (airy company, hotel, restaurant, etc.) the latter may abuse of his position;
- The missing of the suitable performance; The Mediterranee club had became a hotel for necessity. The peculiarity of his product based on the existing proposals made it became independent;
- The other merchants performances low level; this is the reason why Nouvelles Frontieres had developed its own touring agents chain.

Although there are numerous touring products producers who had succeeded to cooperate using vertical integration with various international companies. Like in the following examples:

- **Thomson (England)** with Thomson Holidays touring operator, the charter airy company Britania Airways, 15 Thomson Overseas hotels, 45 distribution points Lunn Poly;
- **Nouvelles Frontieres** (France) who sales its own touring products; has also its own hotels chain (Paladiens) and controls Corsair;
- **Mediterranee Club** (France), which was touring operator, supplier and airy transporter with Air Liberte;
- **Viajes Melia** (Spain), the world 3rd agency with 80 agencies in Spain, 53 agencies holds the coach transport monopoly in Spain. It is devided in 7 companies, 4 of them in touring: Melia Hotels, Melia International Hotels, Melia Club (which offers to the clients credit cards and preferential tariffs), Melia Ylia;
- **KLM** (Holland), national airy company with branches all over the world also in Romania; It is devided in Holland International Travel, Martin Air (charter)and controls 65% of the touristic package production;
- **Air France** (France) above the activity of airy international transporter, present also in Romania, includes touring operators (Jet Tours), Meridien hotels chain and distribution agencies.

**Figure 3. – The cooperation using the vertical integration**
THE COOPERATION USING THE PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY

The touring-operators partnership usually implies launching new touring products, creating a common commercial way, establishing a strategic committee in charge with the orientation and harmonization policy, editing common brochures, etc. The touring agencies conserve the juridical and financial autonomy.

Over the time many partnerships have been developed but without success; here are some examples: Nouvelles Frontières – Mediteranee Club (due to both managers strong personalities, and also because of the lack of common points that their clients had); Sotair – Frantour – Fram (because of the partners different behaviour: Sotair- Air France branch, Frantour- SNCF branch, Fram - better mark image. That is why the partnership success bases on common elements between the 2 partners (clients, interests for certain locations and places, etc.).

By building an association the largest touring operators develop their activities, become stronger and launch new touring products. The main products are: hotel-clubs, combined touring offers, holiday village, each one of them with its own characteristics.

The hotel-clubs and the holiday village occupy large field area, which offers the possibility to divide the tourists in different segments depending on their social and cultural features, own wishes, suggesting them various activities for spending their leisure time.

The hotel-clubs and the holiday village limit the local agents interfere in this activity; the orchestras, guides, artisans, and merchants are recruited by the touring operators or by the hotel-clubs and the holiday village employees.

The combined circuits imply a holiday in one touring resort and trips near it. While building association in order to organize combined holiday, the partners must provide the clients full satisfaction. The client must feel he tests a complex product, not pieces of it and he is being well treated by the touring products supplier no matter to which touring agency he belongs.

THE COOPERATION USING THE ACQUISITION STRATEGY

Few tour-operators use this strategy because the acquisitioned part impose a resistance to the occurred changes. The most difficult thing for the new tourist agency is to adapt itself to the new organizational culture which is characterized by other values, beliefs, attitudes, motivations, etc. Nonetheless, the sporadic acquisitions registered were due to the difficulties of the merged enterprises, and not to their financial activities, like it was observed in many economic sectors.

An example of utilization of the acquisition strategy in the travel agencies’ sector may be offered by “Club Mediterranee”, which purchased Aquarius Club and Voyage Forum.

THE COOPERATION USING THE PROTECTION STRATEGY

Some tour-operators, in order to be less vulnerable and to increase their credibility, associate themselves with powerful partners who have an international fame (repute); for instance the tourist agency Arica Tour which is connected with ACCOR

The company which offers protection demand a tax for this service, but it brings the know-how of the touristic activity, potential customers, brand’s notoriety, advertising possibilities abroad, computerized reservation systems, global distribution systems,
centralised procedures of conceiving the touristic product, financial aid and technical assistance.

Furthermore, the protection strategy is accompanied by the noncompetitive guarantee (the territorial exclusivity of the agency which wish to be protected) from behalf of the great tour-operator, as well as a series of common services described above.

QUALITATIVE MARKETING RESEARCH THROUGH THE METHOD OF THE OBSERVATION OF THE TOURIST AGENCIES

Qualitative marketing research ensure a bigger proximity to the customers, to the way that they think and behave. In this case are applied the techniques of motivational studies. The motivational studies of touristic marketing state the knowledge of the consumer’s reaction concerning the touristic offering, focusing on his satisfaction.

Among the techniques of motivational studies can be remarked the observation method which is about the direct tracing and observation of the potential touristic consumer’s reactions in the moment of his contact with the touristic offering. This observation can be realised in the tourism fairs, at the tourist agencies’ offices, during the trip or in the place where the touristic service in provided.

The research through the observation method proposed by us did not regard the consumer of touristic products, but the way in which tourist agencies cooperate with the touristic services providers.

The research took place into a touristic agency with an important position on the market, and having relationships with touristic service providers from Turkey, Greece, Spain, Italy, France and Egypt. We have debated for 2 hours with the agency’s adjunct manager and we assisted at 3 touristic contract negotiations for 2008 spring season.

During the discussions that we had with them, we observed that the travel agency makes a differentiation between the touristic service providers. The tourist agency classified the touristic service providers into three categories: A (the ones who have a great power of negotiation on the agency, they offer incentive holidays to the agency’s employees, their products are the best sold on the Romanian market, generating the biggest incomes), B (the ones who have an average negotiation power on the agency, but they do not offer incentive holidays to the agency’s employees, and their products are selling well on the market generating average incomes) and C (the providers with a low negotiation power, not offering incentive holidays to the agency’s employees, their generated incomes being low).

After the classification it was observed that approximately 75% among the agency’s touristic service providers were belonging to the C category. “The problem is not that one doesn’t want them, but one needs to differentiate them from the others” says the travel agency’s adjunct manager. We continue to collaborate with this providers (hotel owners, ariyan companies from several countries), but the contracts are negotiated harder, the agency does not spend much time and energy in dealing with C category providers. We have focused on A and B groups, trying to obtain bigger commissions and to create with them more holiday products. The result was the increase with 15% of businesses with the touristic service providers from A and B groups. “If you look at what we have succeeded, you will see a very tangible result”, says the travel agency’s adjunct manager.

This observation serves as a model for the way that dealings between travel agencies and touristic services providers take place, bringing out a vision of the managerial team of the researched agency.
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPROVEMENT PROPOSALS FOR COOPERATION IN THE TOURING DOMAIN

For offering to the tourists “an unforgettable experience”, travel agencies are being an important link in the valuable chain of the touring product. The agency must apply quantitative and qualitative research for finding clients’ needs, but those of touring services providers too.

All departments of the tourist agency must accomplish their duty because (That) touring experience in a specific resort to become reality. For instance, the personnel must be qualified and prepared, with communicational skills, good merchant, the management must use motivational techniques and teambuilding, agency’s contractors must be good negotiators comparative with touring services providers. Their success depends on how good every department is doing his job, and how good are the activities of various tourism providers are correlated between them. It is said that “does not matter if the hotel is excellent, if the charter plane was late 6 hours”, or “a recreation park which offers a lot of holidays games can’t make up for could and bad food served at the hotel’s restaurant”. Worse is the situation in which you arrive to the destination through a touring bundled product, and the hotel’s receptionist says that no rooms available, or more severe that they do not work with that specific agency.

Solution for a much better cooperation in this area:

• Knowing business partners, through agencies’ visits at the holiday destinations
• Experimenting the product by the agency before offering to the customers
• Maintaining and forming tight relationships between agency and its customers, realizing reports for each important/constant customer
• Organizing cocktail parties and round tables between the travel agency and tourism providers (hotel’s owners, airlines, restaurants, entertainment points), so that they to retrieve into another environment than their offices.
• Pursuing carefully effectual lows, inter-governmental agreements which influence touring activity
• Creating a computerized system which can offer the permanent possibility of a contact between tour-operator and touring services providers
• Training travel agency’s personnel and motivating him in the cultural values spirit of the tourist agency
• Implementing not very high commissions to the touring products, which will regard sustained income and a wide time horizon, than a temporary income, in an narrow time horizon

Consequently, the cooperation in the touring field will be a superior and efficient one. Moreover, also the agencies from our country are aligning more and more requests of the international markets, offering a wide line of touring products, proving, in this way, that are capable to cooperate on an international level.

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* in this case, the incentive voyage represent holidays trips created for the tourism operators, who are invited by the hotels managers to visit their touristic destination. Also, represent a combination between hard work and entertainment.
SOME IMPACTS OF THE LOW-COST AIR CARRIERS OVER THE TOURIST ACTIVITY

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Abstract: Every year Low Cost Air Carriers have an increasing number of passengers due to their innovative strategy of work that let them to reduce the price of their flights. Consequently, this has created a new situation where appears “new tourists” who did not fly before, with different behaviour with respect to the tourists that use traditional airlines. In this paper we will analyse some of these important consequences over the tourist activity that have lead this new situation.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism and transport are two sectors that always they have been much related. When in one sector there is an innovative strategy, it implicate change on the other. The World Tourism Organization defines tourism as follows: it comprises “the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited” (Asa, 2004) so, transport is absolutely necessary for the tourist to get to outside their usual environment.

Both activities tourism and transport represent 12\% of the expenses of world-wide consumption, 11\% of the world-wide employment and 7\% of the world-wide Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In the same way, there are synergies between both sectors and one of this is that some tourist destinations have been developed thanks to air transport (Sánchez, 1996), because “for some countries, air transport is the principal means by which tourist access the country. Airports play a major role in facilitating the development of inbound tourism. For example, 70\% of foreign tourists to the United Kingdom arrive by air.” (Cristureanu and Bobirca, 2007)

We will concentrate on Low-Cost Air Carriers (hence forth LCCs). The objective of this paper is to analyse the effect of this air companies since their creation, on the behaviour of the average tourist, and for extend, their impact on the tourist activity, for that purpose, we will analyse some hypothesis both in macro as in microeconomic level.

The importance of this topic is that these companies have revolutionized the way of work in the air sector and they have an increasing participation in the number of passengers transported or market share, so it is very important to analyse some of these repercussions over the tourist activity, because it is an issue that not only nowadays but will be more relevant in the future.

The sources use in this paper are Spanish Airports and Air Traffic (AENA), Spanish Institute of Tourist Studies, Housing Ministry, Promotion Ministry, Institute of National Statistic and World Tourism Organization.

In the first part, section 2, we will pay attention to the strategies carrying out by LCCs and some consequences of a transport cost reduction. Then at the section 3., we will concentrate on the theoretical framework of an air transport price-cutting. After that, we will enunciate three hypothesis about foresee impacts that could have had the presence of the LCCs over the tourist activity. The first one is relative to the surroundings of the airports that work with LCCs, in particular, over their residential tourism. In the second one, we will examine the impact that has had over the tourist activities and particularly over travel agencies and other intermediaries’ workers in this sector, the fact that the users of LCCs make, almost of them, use of the Internet as the way to book and to buy the flight. Finally, the third one, we will study if the behaviour of low-cost tourists with respect to
their average tourist expenditure will modify the standard and values of spending of the foreign tourism. In the end, we will pronounce some conclusions and lines of work to future research.

**LOW COST AIR CARRIERS**

Some years ago, travel by plane was only possible to people with higher income due to the elevated prices of the air transport. But now it is easier because, among other motives, to the spectacular reduction of the air transport since the liberalisation of this sector in the Europe Union through three consecutive packets in 1987, 1990 and 1992. In Spain, specifically, this process started in 1993 (Costas y Germà, 1997).

Their business strategy is to maximize cost reduction, so they can offer the lowest prices. The success factors of LCCs, in contrast with traditional, regional and charter flights, as we can see on the below square, are: they do not offer extra services, work with secondary airports, direct travels, short routes, through Internet, simple process, cost efficiency, high level of traffic, etc. (Bieger, Döring and Laesser, 2002).

**DIFFERENCES BETWEEN LOW COST & TRADITIONAL CARRIERS**

**Low cost carriers**
1. Fast turnarounds (up to 25 min.) - **UTILISATION**
2. No Frills, extras paid for (e.g. catering, extra luggage) - **FRILLS**
3. Primary and secondary airports - **AIRPORTS**
4. Standardised fleet (only one aircraft type), higher seating density (737-300; 148) - **Fleet**
5. Direct channels, use of travel agencies only if extra costs minimal - **Retail**
6. Direct flights, no transfers, short routes - **Network**
7. High variable-proportion of salary (up to 26 %), better capacity utilisation - **Personnel**

**Classic scheduled airlines**
1. High basic salaries (variable proportion up to 11 %), trade union affiliation - **Personnel**
2. Turnaround slowed down by use of major airports with large amount of traffic (approx. 45 min.) - **UTILISATION**
3. Entertainment programme, quick check in, lounges, paper tickets, business class, catering - **FRILLS**
4. International airports - **AIRPORTS**
5. Various aircraft types, low seating density (737-300: 128) - **Fleet**
6. Most tickets sold via travel agencies and by the airline itself - **Retail**
7. Long haul and short haul routes with transfers - **Network**

**Low cost advantages**
1. • Lower fixed personnel costs - **Personnel**
2. • Lower complexity, higher capacity utilisation - **Network**
3. Higher utilisation - **UTILISATION**
4. • Lower ancillary costs, less complexity, additional income - **FRILLS**
5. • Cheaper airport charges - **AIRPORTS**
6. • Lower maintenance, spare parts and training costs, simpler swapping around of flight staff, higher capacity utilisation - **Fleet**
7. • Lower distribution costs, lower complexity - **Retail**


Therefore, LCCs are an example of strategy innovation, because they have known offer a new product in a mature market, where everything would look “all invented” with the result that their
market share is increasing year in year out, under direct competence of all type of air companies, low cost and traditional.

**Figure 1. Entrance of passengers according to Air Company used**

![Graph showing passenger entrance by Air Company from 2003 to 2006](image)

Source: Institute Tourist Studies and own source

Graphic 1 shows the evolution of the number of passengers according to the air company used from 2003-2006. As we can see, both graphic I and graphic II, LCCs are in a growth phase as corroborates the data obtains from the Spanish Institute of Tourist Studies where we can see that every year LCCs transport a higher number of passengers, from 23% of the total of flights by LCCs and traditional, with 10.5 millions of passengers, to 32% in only three years with more than 17 millions of travellers.

However, we can not say the same regarding to traditional companies, that even in 2004 there was a light decrease and a reduction in the participation of the number of passengers, from 77% in 2003 with 37.6 millions of travellers. Likewise, it could hope that this tendency will continue until the LCCs market reaches to his mature state.

**Figure 2: Percentage of low-cost passengers over the total of passengers (Low-cost and traditional)**

![Graph showing percentage of LCC passengers](image)

Source: Spanish Institute of Tourist Studies and own source

Hence, we deduce the great impact that these companies have had on the Spanish economy, not only in the transport sector but also in the rest of the sectors like tourism. So as consequence of this price reduction, it appears a new tourist profile, the user of LCCs. From this we can considerate some
consequences that we would explain by three hypothesis that we will try to develop in spite of the shortage of information and statistics available in this topic.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

From the point of view of the behaviour of the tourist user of LCCs and the consumer theory (Varian, 2001; Mochón, 2005; Frank, 2005; Pindyck, 2006), a rational agent buys some goods \( X_i \) so that their preferences over them are the most possible satisfied. However, this election is not totally free, but it is conditioned by some factors: the prices of that goods \( P_i \), the price of the other goods \( P_j \) and a budget restriction on available income \( Y \). This lets us identify which is the feasible set of commodities combinations available for the consumer, that is, the feasible set which the consumer can realize their selection. The condition that determines that feasible set is that the consumer can not spend more that their income. In our case, the tourist can not spend more that their journey budget.

\[
\sum_{i=1}^{n} P_i \cdot x_i \leq Y
\]

If we suppose that a person wants to travel, using air transport and having a fix budget or budget restriction \( Y \), she/he will try to satisfy their preference bearing in mind the prices of the rest of the tourist journey \( P_i \) like other transport, accommodation, food, etc. and that expense has not exceed the budget \( Y \).

Continuing with the consumer theory, as indicate Lundberg, Krishnamoohrty and Stavenga (1995) “The tourism demand is influenced by the economic concept of utility: the benefit or the satisfaction that person obtains from a product or service consumption”

The preferences of the consumer can be represented by the indifference curves, which reflect the marginal relation of substitution (RMS) in the consumption. This indicates the number of units of a good that have to sacrifice by an additional unit of other good, so the consumer is in the same indifference joint (in the same level of utility). More over, graphically, the farther is an indifference curve situated from the origin, the more will be the utility of the goods basket that obtains the economic agent.

\[
RMS_{x_i}^x = \frac{dx_i}{dx_j} = -\frac{U_1}{U_2}
\]

The very best election will be the one that harmonize with their budget restriction with the indifference joint (level of utility) farthest from the origin possible. That is, we can suppose the consumer as an agent that tries to maximize their utility under restrictions:

\[
\text{Max } U = U(x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_n)
\]

\[
\sum_{i=1}^{n} P_i \cdot x_i \leq Y
\]

If we utilized the Lagrange Multiplier to resolve the problem of maximization, it leads to:

\[
RMS_{x_i}^x = -\frac{P_i}{P_j}
\]

Only the equilibrium combination fulfilled this equation, where, both the budget restriction slope and the farthest utility level possible, join. So this is a tangent situation that means that the relation in which the consumer is inclined to substitute the goods among them (according to their preferences) coincide with the relation that they really can do in the market.

Therefore, in our case, the tourist prefers combinations situated in farther indifference joints from the origin, that is, that gives the best level of utility to satisfy their preferences in the best possible way, but at the same time, they can only choose among the available combination joint, bearing in mind their real incomes and the prices of the other goods. So, they will situate on the tangent point of the indifference curve and the budget restriction where both slopes are the same.
The budget restriction in the travel budget, cuts in the axis in the maxim quantities that could obtain of the goods if we dedicate all income or travel budget to buy only one of them, but this concrete case will never happen because when a person makes a travel by plane, they can not do without the air transport and the rest of goods of the tourist journey as the accommodation, purchase of souvenirs, the food consumption, etc. are complementary goods, that is, “when the price of one of them increase, the other decrease their demand” (Mochón, 2005), hence, if the air transport price increases, it will decrease the demand of the rest of the goods, because, it is very possible that they do not make the journey or on the other side, as a higher part of the budget is dedicates to the transport, they have lower economic resources to spend in the destination.

The slope of the budget restriction is the relative price with negative signal and it reflects the exchange rate that exists among goods in the market. His magnitude indicates the relation to which two goods could substitute one for the other without variation of the total quantity of the spent money. In the same way, if a person is on the budget restriction shows that is spending all their available income.

\[ P_x \cdot X + P_y \cdot Y = m \]

As the LCCs have decreased their price, respect to the traditional air companies, the “variation in the relative price will give more changes in the inclination of the frontier” or budget straight, so if we suppose that the price of the rest of the goods stay invariables, the budget straight rotates to outside with respect to the coordinates of the number of flights. As the price has decreased, the quantity of flights that a consumer can obtain has increased. Now the tourist has a higher spending power or real income.

As we can see in graphic III, the tourist has now the possibility of maximize their utility placing on the indifference curve farther from the origin (U’) and it is tangent to the budget of the journey or budget restriction.
1) **Variation on the real income in terms of purchase capacity**: if price changes, with monetary income constant, the budget restriction changes, consumer has different possibilities of consumption that gives their monetary income.

2) **Variation of the real income in terms of utility**: it varies the available utility levels with monetary income that has not changed.

When a consumer passes from one to another equilibrium we break down in two parts: **substitution effect**, that reflects the substitution of a good for another when its relative price changes, and **income effect**, that is the influence over the change decision, the variation described before, on the real income.

In our case, as the reduction price of the air transport, the tourist now, has a higher real income, theoretically now they can reach to a higher level of utility or to have a higher purchase capacity. The substitution effect will be if the tourist purchases more goods for their journey and an income effect, because now they have more economic resources to spend on the destination or on the transport.

Similarly, from the theoretical point of view, it can be some extreme situations where tourist sets aside the increase of their real income only to purchase higher quantities of goods of the journey (graphic IV) or on the contrary, it dedicates to increase the frequency of flights (graphic V), that is, they realize higher spending on the destination maintaining the same number of flights.

Hence, from this short review of the consumer theory we have observed how the decrease of the air transport price could have diverse consequences:

- Increasing the number of flights or frequency (extreme case, graphic V)
- Appearing a new tourist who did not travel before and now they can do it because of the "increase" of their real income thanks to the decrease of the air transport price, or
- Increasing the spending on the rest of the goods of the journey (extreme case, graphic IV)

Additionally, it opens new opportunities as the expansion of the second residential market, new tourist destinations, where some years ago people do not considerate it as a destination because of the expensive of the journey, but now with the flights offer by LCCs, they can even be residential tourists.
In the next pages, we will analyse three hypotheses about the behaviour of the low cost tourists and some impacts on the tourist activity.

**Hypothesis 1: Increase of the foreign residential tourism\(^{16}\) in the surroundings of the airports that work with low cost companies**

Thanks to the flights offered by LCCs, and to easier accessibility of population to technologies of the information and communication (TIC’s), every time is less costly travel to places where some years ago was unthinkable to have a second residential, for example, live in England and have a second residential in Alicante (Spain) for the average British income.

However, this situation is taking place in Spain with more frequency in the last decade. The foreign inversion in property with residential character have experimented a great expansion, thanks to, among others motives, to the reduction of air transport cost, and that has allowed not only an increase of mobility, but also an increase of incomes, reduction of hours in a working day, and therefore, an increase of the leisure time, etc. (Gili i Fernández, 2003)

People search in a secondary residential a pleasant place where they can rest to escape from the daily urban life. They enjoy a similar quality life they are uses to (security, health assistant, commercial offer, etc), a place that satisfies their necessity and expectations, where they can carry out their leisure activities (sport offer, restaurants, clubs, etc)

Nonetheless, to enjoy that conditions, it is very important for the demand of second residential an easy accessibility from first to second residential, in a non excessive cost or period of time, because if this is not possible, it would not be profitable to maintain a second residential. For this reason, LCCs are very important in the taking decision process of buying a house in Spain while the other building is in another country.

During 2005, Planning and Development Society of Málaga (SOPDE) made a study in the airport of Málaga (Spain), and their results are, that the tourist that uses LCCs has in a higher extent, a second residential near the airports. In fact, in this study, through inquiries to a tourist users of LCCs, 23,91% have a second residential in this city, while passengers of traditional airlines, only 6,69% of them have a second residential there. In the same way, three out of every four tourist that come to “Costa del Sol” (Spanish south cost) and have a second residential, they come through LCCs (74,33%), but only one out of every four come through traditional air companies (25,66%).

Similarly, in the airport of Granada (Spain), it was made another polls which shows that 0,24% of low-cost tourists came to buy a house, and 9,88% of the travellers already own their second residential there (ESECA, 2006)

On the one hand, Rubio de Juan (2006) analyses the inversion flow of no residents in properties in Spain with data of the Bank of Spain, and her conclusion is that inversion had been multiplied by seven from 1993-2003, it represents 0,9% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Spain. In the same way, she confirms that LCCs are a key factor that facilitates the access to Spain and the purchase of a second residential. Approximate 25.000 houses were the inversion by no resident in housing with residential character in Spain during 1997. During 2003, with more market share of the LCCs\(^{17}\), the number was multiplied by two, because it was estimated 50.400 residential houses purchased by no residents.

On the other hand, Prado (2004) explains that in 1997 it was foreseen 35.000 the number of residential houses purchased by no residents, that equivalent more than 1.803 millions of euros\(^{18}\). In 1998, it was generated 2.175 millions of euros, so that was an 20% increase with respect to the year

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\(^{16}\) We can define residential tourism in base to the definition of tourism of the World Tourism Organisation because it concentrate all the conditions given to the term of tourist, since is a person that moves from a place outside his/her usual environment, for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes that is different to exercise a remunerate activity in the tourist destination.

\(^{17}\) In 2000, the market share of the LCCs represented 2%, in 2006 was 14%. In 2010 foresee is around 25%, that is the same as 150 millions of people. (Rey and Inglanda, 2006).

\(^{18}\) Bearing in mind that the origin of these incomes is the origin place, so that profits, in principle, the settlement of the Balance of Payments of the Spanish economy.
before. In 1999, it was 2.908 millions of euros in residential product. So, he continues, “taking that data as true, which represents that more than the 15% of the houses in Spain in 1999, were purchased by no resident with tourist purposes”. In 2000, it was 3.906 millions of euros, and in 2001 of 4.765 millions of euros. In 2002, 90,000 houses were purchased by no resident, and this was 945.000 millions of euros, so that signified an increase of 16% with respect to 2001. In 2003, 135.000 houses were purchased by no residents in Spain, and this was 7.167 millions of euros, so that signified an increase of 15,7% in comparison with 2002.

So, we can conclude that by the information showed, we can advanced that effectively, development of the LCCs strategy has as a derived consequence of an increased of the residential tourism. On the other hand, to study in depth this hypothesis and to confirm it, it would be necessary an additional research with surveys or to have more statistic information.

In the same way, it would be positive to analyse the main social and demographic characteristics of this type of tourist that purchase a second residential in Spain, as well as the comparison of the evolution of the price of the housing and land of the near areas, in opposite to farther areas of the airports that work with LCCs.

**Hypothesis 2: The Low Cost Air Carriers incentive the disintermediation of the tourist activity**

LCCs mainly work through Internet in order to reduce costs, in consequence this has modified the behaviour of the tourist when they want to organized their journeys. This hypothesis pretends to analyse the impact that have had this change both in the business and in the user of LCC, raising the disintermediation of the tourist activity. For this reason we will considerate the most relevant bibliography about this topic as well as the statistic provided by public and private organisms.

Internet offers some advantages to both business and clients, as exposed Cronin and McKim (1996). Among the advantages to manufacturers are: lower entrance, distribution, existing and publicity costs, as well as direct access to the customers, etc. On the other hand, some advantages to client are, among others: more comfortable, price control, higher number of options, etc. All are some of the advantages o reasons because people access to Internet to buy their air tickets and LCCs as Vueling, Ryanair or Air Berlin offer their services through Internet.

LCCs have as a strategy to reduce costs to work less with traditional travel agencies than traditional air companies. So thanks to that, every customer can reserved and pay a flight direct through Internet or by telephone, unlike air traditional companies, that a great percentage of them work through traditional travel agencies. In fact, “the behaviour of the traveller shows more intensive use of Internet by low cost tourist with 64,1%, while only 41,3% of the traditional tourist use the network”

In Spain, air transport is the activity sector with highest transactions through Internet with 27% of the sales, while traditional travel agencies and tour operator represent the 7,2% of the purchases. One of the reasons that provides this situation is thanks to the importance that have the cheap flights, which have grown higher than 40% in Europe during 2005.

“Internet is stealing participation share in traditional travel agencies, specifically 5% of the global sales” so the presence of the LCCs on the Internet have actuated as a detonator of sales by Internet (SAVIA, 2006)

**Figure 6: International tourist that use Internet with relation to their journey**
As we can see from the above graphic VI, since 2002 there is a favour evolution on the use of the Internet to consult, reserve or pay any tourist service by foreign tourists.

*Consult of the information*: 87% affirmed that acceded to Internet to consult information about means, 65% accommodation and 47% activities that could realize in the place of destination (IET, 2006c).

*Reserve and payment of any service*: 91% reserved and 95% paid the means. But only 9% and 6% reserved and paid, respectively, activities in the place of destination.

Originally, the principal consequence of disintermediation is the reduction of distribution costs that leads to benefits manufacturer and/or decrease of the final price that pays the consumer.

Bearing in mind all we have exposed so far, we can establish that the development of the technologies of the information and in particular, the more accessibility in the use of Internet, have let growth the LCCs, which strategy of commercialization is greatly with the use of this way, that is, disintermediating the tourist activity associated with the air transport. This is making a change on the behaviour of the travellers by plane, when they purchase the flight through Internet instead of in a travel agency. So in this way, it realizes more efficient distribution and less costly and not only companies obtain benefits but also consumers.

At the same time, the access to Internet to consult, reserve and pay the flights of LCCs generates that people purchase through Internet other complements as hotels, or rent a car, etc. because in the same web page where it purchases the flights it can also obtain these services.

The fact that the tourist every time has less physical presence in a traditional travel agency makes that those firms loss opportunities not only in selling flights, but also in tourist packages, weekend packs, tickets for events, renting cars, etc. because the new “low cost tourist” prefers to do all those actions of buying from their home and with less monetary and time cost.

So, this new scenario has an incentive or multiplicative effect that makes more disintermediation in all tourist activity. Hence, every tourist business as hotels, rent a car, museums, etc. should dispose of a web page where can offer their products, and can reach to every tourist, including the “low cost tourists”.

Therefore, in the light of the literature revised so far, we can not reject the hypothesis and the LCCs seem to have a decisive role in the process of the disintermediation of the tourist activity.

Nevertheless, it would be very interesting analyse with more detail the phenomenon of the disintermediation with the objective of quantify and to know until which stage the sectors that play a intermediation paper in the tourist activity are being affected, both in the way they work and the results they obtain after the low cost impact.

**Hypothesis 3**: The low-cost tourist spend on average lower during his/her stay that traditional tourist
The reduction of the price of the flights thanks to LCCs has some consequences on the expenditure of the low cost tourist as we have showed above at the theoretical framework. Nevertheless, we will concentrate on three of them:

1) Increasing of the demand of flights, that is, tourists should travel with more frequency. This fact could leads to, ceteris paribus, a lower average expend of the tourist due to lower average stay in every journey, because they are more frequent.

2) In the same way, people who did not travel before due to have a insufficient income, now they can do it. This seems to show that this new tourist, with a lower income, will spend less during their stay than the previous average spending of the tourist.

3) However, on the contrary, if we suppose that the tourist has a fixed budget in every tourist journey, now they should have more money to spend in the destination during their stay, so, that implies higher average expense by tourist on the extra services.

Both the first and the second consequence, enunciated above would fulfil the third hypothesis proposed because the average expense of the tourist would decrease when increase the relative importance of the low cost tourist among the total of tourist. On the contrary, the third consequence or implication of the LCCs leads to this expense would be higher.

The tourists that utilize low cost airlines are having every year higher share in the air transport market; nowadays, they represent more than 30% of the total\textsuperscript{19}. Hence, is very important analyse their behaviour, because they represents an important and growing part of the market which consequences will have important outcome in the tourist sector. Consequently, if their average expense would shorter than the traditional tourist, as they represent an important and a growing part of the market, the average expense by tourist (in which it is included both low cost and traditional ones) will decrease.

In this third hypothesis we will try to analyse which is the average expense both low cost and traditional passengers by making, as previously, a literature revision. Then we will see if the low cost tourist assigns less expense during their stay than a traditional tourist.

To contrast this hypothesis we will expose which have been the results of the enquiries realized by the Spanish Institute of Tourist Studies, reports of the World Tourism Organization, etc.

We will start with the first possible consequence of the air transport price reduction, which says that now the low cost tourist will be able to realize more flights per year that their average expense during their stay will decrease according to the shorter number of days at the destination.

According to World Tourism Organization, “Every time tourists have shorter holiday periods”, now people enjoy some holiday period instead of the traditional complete month.

Muro, et. al. (2006) indicates that “the shorter is the stay, the more possibility is that the tourist has travelled by low cost airline”. In this way, all indicate so far seems that the first consequence is fulfilled.

Now we will analyse the second possible consequence mentioned above about the air transport price reduction, that is, lower average expense due to the lower level of income that have the passengers that before did not travel or do it by other means.

Valls (2007) corroborate this situation when indicates that “the phenomenon of the low cost has produced a fundamental effect: have attracted new travellers, which until this moment could not access to this means”. The part of this new demand is 59% of the total demand of the LCCs, from which 71% did not travel before; 15% did it by car; 6% did it by train and 8% by other means (ELFAA, 2004)

\textsuperscript{19} Source: Spanish Institute of Tourist Studies, statistics of 2006
Therefore, we can see the importance and the impact that have stimulated the LCCs, because 42% of the LCCs passengers that now fly with those companies, they did not fly before. As consequence, it looks logic think that this part of the new demand that before did not travel, they did not do it due to their lower level of income, so now in their travel, spend lower average diary expense that an old user of an airline and this would be another reason why the average expense has decreased.

To clarify that let it point out that average expense is total expense (average diary expense\textsuperscript{20} x average stay) divided by the number of visitants, that is, the total average expense have decreased as consequence, not only due to the decrease of the average stay but also because of the reduction of the diary average expense.

With respect to the level of income that declare to have this “new tourist”, is clearly lower, because, “nine out ten tourist of LCCs declared to have average income (69%) or average-higher (21,3%), while traditional tourists reach higher values that LCCs tourists in superiors income stages” (IET, 2006a)

Then we can observe that the second possible consequence is fulfilled because it has appeared a “new tourist” that did not travel before and has a lower level of income than the previous users of air traffic for tourist purposes. As consequence, they assign lower diary average expense.

Now we will analyse the last possible consequence, that is, the average expense increased due to a fix budget of the tourist, so now they have more money to spend in destination.

To do this, we will see which has been the structure of the expense of both tourists, low cost and traditional.

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\textsuperscript{20} Total expense realized by the tourist divided by total number of overnight stays (IET, 2006)
Source: EGATUR\(^{21}\) (Spanish Institute of Tourist Studies)

This graphic shows the breakdown of the diary average expense of both tourists and we can observe the difference between them. Following EGATUR, the diary average expense of a low cost tourist was 18.8€ lower than a traditional tourist.

So, the third possible consequence looks not fulfil in the part of the expense correspondent to the transport and accommodation, but it is fulfilled in the items less important, like purchase food expenses, etc.

On the other side, to realize a deeper study about the average expense of the low cost tourist, it would be necessary to know the part of expense realized by a low cost tourist that before did not travel or do it by other means, and the expense by a tourist that before used traditional airlines and now is a low cost user. In this way, we could see which part of this group of low cost tourist we can responsibility as the reason of the lower average expense by tourist.

Finally, only mention that the bibliography revised and statistics, seems to indicate that the hypothesis 3 is fulfilled so, a low cost tourist assigns lower average expense with respect to a person that travel with a traditional airline due to, in great measure, to the decrease of their reduced average stay and, in lower measure, a lower level of average income.

**CONCLUSIONS**

As we have seen, tourism and transport are two important sectors, which are very close related. We have showed that the innovation of one sector affects to the other, in particular, we have analysed the impact that have had the irruption and growth of the LCCs over the tourist activity. In this sense, it has been proposed three hypotheses about the consequences that could have had on tourism, the growth participation of the LCCs on the air traffic passengers.

In spite of the lack of statistics we have, with the hypothesis 1, though a literature revision, we have tried to analyse how in the surroundings of the airports where the LCCs represent high and growing percentages of their traffic, looks to have had a growth of residential tourism and it has generated business opportunities to enterprises that dedicate to housing construction. Both activities, LCCs and residential tourism, go together because, as we have seen, a determinant when someone wants to choose a place for their second residential is to have an easy and available communication in transport.

Later, with the hypothesis 2, it has been showed the consequences, over the tourist sector, of the growing utilization of Internet incentives by the more utilization of it to buy flights with LCCs. As the users of the LCCs make more use of Internet, it expands the disintermediation toward other traditional tourist activities. It is observed that the rules of purchase and sale in some activities, not only in air companies but also in hotel sector, rent a car, purchase tickets for cultural events, etc. So LCCs look to have an incentive and multiplicative effect on the traditional tourist disintermediation, with more direct relationship between consumer and tourist business.

On the hypothesis 3, we have seen that the low cost tourist has lower average expense that the tourist of the traditional airlines during their stay due to, among other reasons, the shorter duration of the stay in the place of their destination and to the incorporation of new demanders which did not fly before or they travelled in other means, due to their lower income. This situation opens new opportunities to investigate about this topic as for example, estimate a demand function of the low cost tourist, and this will let us to have deeper knowledge about their behaviour and, in particular, which are the variables that depend that they have lower expenditure, so we will adapt our tourist offer to their necessities.

\(^{21}\) EGATUR (Tourist Expense Enquiry) is an enquiry elaborate by Spanish Institute of Tourist Studies, that is realize monthly to no resident visitants in Spain that access to this country by road or airport. The enquiries recall information about the journey, including all the expenses related with it and some characteristics of the people who do them.
So we have observed how the innovative strategies of the LCCs have not gone unnoticed in the tourist sector, being obvious both in the increase number of tourist flying with these airlines and on the repercussion that have over the business tourist model as the disintermediation.

On the one hand, one of the most difficulties that have this research area is that there is not exist an official list of LCCs, because according to some conversations held on with Spanish Airports and Air Traffic (AENA) and Spanish Institute of Tourist Studies, are the companies which declare themselves if they are LCCs and not by a rule or standard. For this reason it is not easy to analyse and establish with a criterion which companies are low cost and which are “low prices”.

On the other hand, from March 2008 it will start the liberalization agreement between Europe and United States (SAVIA, 2007) in which according to the European Commission will be a 50% more of passengers in five years time and 12.000 millions of euros of savings to the consumers, because it foresees a price reduction of the intercontinental flights. “This will let from 2008, flights to the United States from whichever European airport, which was limited until now” (Valls, 2007). In the same way, it is preparing a second phase of negotiation in 2010. Therefore, it opens a new situation that will give rise to future researches in this line.

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IDENTIFICATION AND MODELING OF BUSINESS PROCESSES AT THE ENTERPRISE

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Abstract: The activities of every organization may be expressed as a group of interrelated processes. The task of these processes is the accomplishment of the aims or the organization alongside with the minimization of process functioning costs. The key to success lies in the ability to dynamically create business processes, according to the requirements of the customers.

1. THE CONCEPTIONS OF THE IDENTIFICATION OF BUSINESS PROCESSES IN THE ORGANIZATIONS

The initial stage of the process management is the identification of processes. The enterprises analyze their own spheres of activity, and then they describe these spheres, trying to see them as a certain entity composed of the types of implemented functions; trying to trace the role of the executors of these functions, their authorities, the types of documents and applied communication channels. In this way it becomes possible to specify and describe individual spheres of activity – for example, sales, customers’ service, reclamations, marketing, and accomplishment of the orders, and thus depict all the most important processes within the enterprise. This approach enables the further introduction of quality systems, the elaboration of the mechanisms of evaluation and control, and provides a good basis for the further development of the organization.

The identification of the processes is supposed to bring the answer to the question, which processes are necessary in this organization, so that the organization could fully meet the expectations of its customers.

Figure 1 - The aims of the identification of the processes

- Improvement of the efficiency of activities, according to the criterion of the added value
- Structuring of activities (definition of the functions, decisions, documentation)
- Description of the behavior of the process in the organization according to the dynamic conception (time, quality, costs)
- Description of the behavior of the process in the organization according to the spatial conception (organizational units)
- Introduction of the principle of the internal market - orientation.
The identification of processes enables a better understanding of the creation of the value, and the facilitation and constant development increase the efficiency of the organization and the degree of satisfaction of the external and internal customers.

To reach the success in the adoption of the process approach at the enterprise it is necessary to clearly understand the main (fundamental) processes, management and supportive processes directed at the creation of the added value, for which the customers are ready to pay the appropriate price.

**Figure 2- Main types of processes in the organization**

**Supportive processes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mega-processes</td>
<td>On the strategic level of management; the fundamental aim is the increase of the satisfaction of the customers, enterprise owners, fellow-employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processes (main)</td>
<td>On the tactical level of management; mega-processes are subdivided into processes and in this case the fundamental aim is the optimization of these processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-processes</td>
<td>On the operational level; the sub-processes and operations are projected, the fundamental aim is the optimal application of resources (machines, tools, information)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundamental processes</td>
<td>These are the processes, which directly bring the addend value to the organization and customers. These processes commence from the moment of the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Towards Business Excellence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Processes creating the added value</th>
<th>These processes aimed at the satisfaction of the customers' needs and expectations, for the satisfaction of which the customer is ready to pay.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Processes creating no added value</td>
<td>These processes are necessary for the creation of the conditions necessary for the existence of the processes creating the added value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal functional processes</td>
<td>These processes exist within a single function (for example, in the supply) or within a single organizational unit (for example supply warehouse).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-functional processes</td>
<td>Processes, which penetrate through various units and various functions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The following processes may be called mega-processes: introduction of new products to the market, implementation of the production tasks, search for the new customers, capital operations, etc. The majority of the enterprises have usually about 20 interrelated mega-processes in their main activities.

In the process management conception the emphasis is put on the satisfaction of the needs of external and internal customers. The choice of the fundamental process depends on the implemented strategy. However, all the enterprises should concentrate only on several fundamental processes (for example, the development of new product, integrated logistics). Supportive processes (also called subsidiary) should be solely oriented at the fundamental processes.

The next step to be taken is the differentiation of the complex processes, which make up the main processes. The method, which is the most appropriate for this activity and for
The creation of the overall vision of the organization, is the method of the hierarchy of processes.

The preparation for the creation of the hierarchy of processes is directed at the logical decomposition of processes, which makes it possible to identify the component parts of the main processes, elementary processes and the bundles of the processes. The fundamental aim purpose of the creation of the process hierarchy is the comprehension of the identified processes.

Each process has its purpose. General purposes of the whole process should make up a basis for the specification of the partial purposes and certain tasks or activities, which affect the implementation of process purposes based on the expectations of the customers. Process purposes, which are related to the external customers, should follow from the aims of the whole organization and expectations and requirements of the customers. Thus, it is important to be aware of the following: each process has a precise and clearly defined purpose and the purposes of the individual processes are related to the requirements of the customers.22

The map of processes is the most generally used tool of the visualization of the complex of actions, evaluation of the structure of each process and sub-process. This is a well-arranged image of the structure of the processes, their interrelations and interconnections; it takes into account the order of the implementation of certain activities within the process. Properly arranged map of process enables to identify the main relations of the process, it make sit possible to specify the time needed for the implementation of certain activities within the process and to identify the illogical, inconsequent or inefficient activities. The map of the process is a dynamic image of the enterprise, as compared to the organizational structure, which is a static image.

After the identification of the main processes and depicting them on the map of processes, it is necessary to analyze the purposes, specified in the strategy of the organization, as it often happens that the purposes specified in the strategy find no confirmation in the implemented processes.

2. METHODS AND PRECONDITIONS OF THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROCESSES

There are two approaches to the identification of the processes: top-down (from the top to the bottom) or bottom-up (from the bottom to the top).23

Using the top-down approach, we proceed from the strategy of the enterprise. The activity areas and the groups of customers, defined in this strategy, combined with the requirements of the customers and product offer, create the out-flowing data, necessary for the definition of the new processes, which were never before apparent at the organization. In this approach main (key) processes are identified61 and functions related to them, then, as a next stage, the supportive processes are identified 62.

Using the bottom-up approach, we act in the reverse order. We proceed from the elementary functions, from the processes actually existing within the enterprise at its lowest level. Then, after the aggregation of these functions, we proceed to the single processes and macro-processes. In this approach we proceed from the already existing processes; though

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their selection from the point of view of the satisfaction of customers' requirements, contribution to the creation of the added value for the enterprise in practice is either limited or absent. It is also possible to apply a method, which combines the above-named solutions.

Table 2 - Classification of the fundamental processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification of the fundamental processes by International Benchmarking Clearinghouse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Understanding of markets and customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Creation of the vision and strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Elaboration of products and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Marketing and sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Production and sale at industrial enterprises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Production and sale at non-manufacturing enterprises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Billing and customer service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Development of human resources and management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Management of information resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Management of financial and material resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Adoption of environmental programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Management of external relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Management of development and changes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Brilman J., Nowoczesne koncepcje i metody zarzadzania, PWE, Warsaw 2002

In practice the identification of the key processes rouses difficulties. It is important to differentiate which activities (processes) of the enterprise should be equipped with the evaluation tools. Another problem of the enterprises is related to the sphere of the identification of evaluation areas and the selection of the tools for the description of all the implemented processes or only some of them. Active management of all the processes is not necessary and does not guarantee the improvement of the efficiency level of the enterprise's activity. Therefore the effort should be concentrated on the identification of the key processes within the enterprise, the efficient behavior of which directly affects the competitiveness of the enterprise.

The degree of accuracy in the description of the processes within the enterprises rouses numerous difficulties. The fundamental rule is the maintenance of the transparency and consistency in each process and the relations between the processes.

The aim of the identification of key processes is the specification of the chains of actions, to be mapped, the attribution of the evaluation tools to the processes and monitoring of their values. The specification of the main measurement areas takes place at two stages. The first one is the analysis of the current situation, which shows the actual process of the task implementation at certain work places, and on the second stage the

selection of the processes, which are the most important from the point of view of the accomplishment of the strategic purposes.

The important task in the identification of key processes is to identify the critical ways, created from the task implementation procedures, and the implementation of these tasks is necessary for the maintenance of the integrity of the process and accomplishment of the desired purposes. The key element is the identification of the weak points, impeding the implementation of each chain of actions and joint conjunctions between the processes, the measurement and the evaluation of these conjunctions. Most often they are discovered during the transferring of the results of the implemented tasks between departments and positions.26

Next the processes are analyzed from the perspective of their importance and completeness of their description and the hierarchy of processes of the strategic importance is created. The tool, which is applied in the identification of processes, is the map of processes, which shows their behavior and actual relationships.

It is very important to analyze the map of processes; as such analysis demonstrates entries and exits, used resources and dependencies between them. The differentiation of the process owner is an important factor determining the efficient process behavior. At numerous enterprises the role of the process owner is just a formal one. The purposes of the processes, which are related to the external customers, should follow from the aims of the organization, from the expectations and requirements of the customers. The purposes of the processes within the organization should be formulated on the basis of the needs of external customers.

Owing to the maintenance of transparency and logic, the created process behavior facilitates the decision-making about which processes should be regarded as strategic. Based on the collected data and the analysis of the created value the group of processes of key importance for the survival and development of the enterprise is created27.

3. THE PRINCIPLES OF THE BUSINESS PROCESS MODELING AT THE ORGANIZATION

Process modeling aims at the reflecting of the processes at the enterprise with the help of the accepted symbols. This is done for the purpose of the documentation and analysis from a certain perspective. Process modeling may be carried out for the diagnostic needs, for example, in order to find the cause of the actual errors or to adapt the processes to the constantly changing requirements of the organization. Process modeling may also be used in the projecting of new processes, which were never described before. The exit point in process modeling is the results of the analysis of the informational needs. The modeling report should contain the check list of the identified fundamental processes and the information inflow within the enterprise.

Usually the processes, which are of primary importance for the enterprise, are selected for the modeling and detailed analysis; these processes may be the main processes, regulating the fundamental business functions of the enterprise, supportive processes, management processes.

The task of the process modeling is to deliver the answers to the following questions: How does our organization act? Which processes are implemented by our organization?

Are these processes implemented efficiently and effectively? Is it possible to improve certain processes? Are the implemented processes in line with the principles of the enterprise’s strategy?

The main purpose of the modeling is to understand in what way the enterprise functions and to analyze its functioning and the need for the possible improvement. The transition to the process management enables the enterprise to gradually raise the activity of its employees (by attributing them with the roles of the process owners) and the maximal application of their potential.

Process modeling at the enterprise starts from the elaboration of the plan of activity, which expands over certain stages of work. The first stage includes the identification of the processes, which are the key ones in the division to the sub-processes, activities and the participation of the employees in the implementation of the process, their role and the specification of other elements of processes (specification of the process owners, definition of entries and exits). The second stage is the elaboration of the target map of key processes, which have to be monitored and controlled by controlling procedures.

The works over the process modeling at the enterprise may be supported by consulting companies by way of the participation method (for the modeling of some processes the combined participation-expert method can be applied). The accepted methods provide for the carrying out certain work-sessions with the active participation of the employees and consultants. Work-sessions usually begin with the representation of the basics of process modeling by a selected employee to secure the active participation of the employees in the common search for the solution.

Firstly, during the work-session the actual enterprise’s activity within the certain period is modeled and analyzed, and the directions of changes and so-called success measurements are specified. Then, as the next step, the target process model is constructed and possible changes considered. Next this process model is analyzed and investigated by the imitation methods, corrected and finally accepted as the actual process model at the enterprise.

The elaborated process model may be announced in the internal network of the enterprise and published in the Internet as a web page. It has a form of an assemblage of processes, which may be directly applied for the purpose of the quality system construction, according to the norms of ISO 9001:2000 as an element of Electronic Quality Book. The process model may also be helpful for the further improvement of the process.

Modeling is a way to improve the architecture of the defined process, which are necessary for the accomplishment of the enterprise’s aims (optimization of processes).

Process modeling is a continuous process. To reduce its costs, the enterprises search for the modeling methods, which enable the application of available knowledge about the creation of processes.

While creating a new model of the process, we may proceed from the fragments of proved and ready processes. Considering the number and the complexity of processes, the attempts are made to assist the individual in his search and adaptation of solutions, which were useful in the past, and such assistance takes place with the help of the information systems.

28 Borucinska I., Babinska K., BI+, czyli controlling procesów, Controlling i Rachunkowość Zarządzca 2007, ? 6, 29 Ładosław Drelichowski MODELOWANIE PROCESÓW BIZNESOWYCH Z WYKORZYSTANIEM METODY CASE-BASED REASONING, ANNA KEMP A STUDIA I MATERIALY POLSKIEGO STOWARZYSZENIA ZARZĄDZANIA WIEDZA,
Depending on the method applied in the modeling procedures (outlet point) it is possible to apply the following approaches: the diagnostic approach (proceeding from question: \textit{what is the situation like now?}) and \ or forecasting (where we proceed from the question: \textit{what would the situation be like if...?}). The first approach, evolutional in its essence, implicates the expression of the present situation, the analysis of accomplished solutions and the putting of the diagnosis. This approach makes it possible to design (project) the improved or brand new version of the process (or target process model), and its further adoption. Forecasting approach often implicates the abstraction from the applied solutions (not only in the revolutionary way); economic processes at the concrete enterprise are designed on the basis of the already adopted (ideal) process models by their adaptation to the concrete conditions of the enterprise’s activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principles of process modeling</th>
<th>Concentration of the creation of the value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The formation of the process behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agreement with the supplier, concerning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the entrance to the process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The results of the process modelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>should be documented.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Errors in process modeling    | Facilitation of the processes not related to the strategy of the enterprise |
|-------------------------------| Engagement of the wrong employees     |
|                               | The lack of the precise goals of the process-facilitating teams |
|                               | Lack of support of the management of the enterprise |
|                               | A greater concentration on the rearrangement of the project rather than on their adoption |
|                               | The lack of the system of the process evaluation and of other process-improving tools |
|                               | Too early cessation of the introduction of changes in the processes |
|                               | Organizational culture impeding the introduction of changes at the enterprise |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for the lack of process modeling activities</th>
<th>Reluctance in the creation of diagrams (maps) of processes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of time needed for the process modeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of knowledge to be created</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of skills in the synchronization of processes and information tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Too quick changes in the enterprise’s environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: author's own investigation
4. INFORMATION TOOLS SUPPORTING THE PROCESS MODELING

Process modeling is impossible without information tools. The simplest of them enable the creation of only the result of the process, creation of diagrams and their appropriate description. These programs are applied at enterprises with the simple structure, where the possibility of the fast depiction of the process will be enough. More advanced tools, alongside with the creation of models, enable the accumulation of these models in databases, they also provide an opportunity to create a model for numerous employees within a single enterprise. These tools also enable the accomplishment of a more advanced analysis of processes and the imitation of their behavior. More and more often the programs of this level are equipped with the solutions, which enable the calculation of costs using the ABC-method, the measurement of the results using the method of Balanced Scorecard; they facilitate the creation and functioning of the quality management system. The tools applied for the process modeling can be divided into the following:

- programs for the creation of diagrams, aimed at the visualization and mapping of processes with the help of diagrams and their documenting, for example, MS Office Visio 2003, Flowcharter (Micrografx), which are cheap and easy to use,
- CASE tools (Computer Aided System Engineering) are used for the process modeling particularly in the situations when they can be integrated with the informational solutions, for example Designer/2000 (Oracle), Select Enterprise (Select Software),
- advanced tools for projecting and development of processes, which enable the advanced analysis and imitation, such as: ARIS Toolset (IDS Scheer), Adonis (BOC GmbH), Workflow Analyzer (Meta Software), or process modeling tools within ERP systems (integrated into these systems), for example, IFS Business Modeler.

The information system makes it possible to manage the whole life cycle of the process from its projecting, adoption, exploitation, evaluation, changes and its second adoption.

CONCLUSION

A proper approach to the identification and modeling of processes, the selection of the appropriate informational tool is vitally important for the process-oriented organization. Process modeling identifies the key directions in the activities of the organization. Either selected or all activities within the organization are modeled • The order and the place for the implementation of certain activities within the organization is specified, and this enables the understanding of the functioning of the organization; process modeling enables and facilitates the communication within the enterprise.

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Abstract: It is proposed to present an ecological tourism case study in African insular context that has been pursued by a research team that the author is the coordinator. First of all, in the team, we have a PhD in African Development, specialized in ecological tourism and pursuing the Post Doctoral research, two master degrees in African tourism, an MBA and a PhD student in environmental issues. The main theoretical background is the development alternative approach complemented by the ecological tourism concept and the evaluation indicators and methods about the impacts of the practice increase in the community life and environment balance. Sao Tome e Principe is a small insular and African country in development (SIDS). It is an archipelago that is endowed with a diversified environmental patrimony where it is possible to identify and to classify different protected areas in agreement with the international indicators. Some examples are the Natural Park Obo in the two main islands (Sao Tome and Principe islands) and the Ecological Areas (Malanza and Praia das Conchas), characterized by the biodiversity and endemic flora and fauna in the forest, coastal and sea areas. The archipelago has many natural potentials that are adapted to the ecological tourism and the observation practice. On the other hand, it is a country with abundance of natural resources that are the maintenance of the local community who are dependent on the nature to guarantee the family survival, developing traditional cultural practices, exercising and added load in the environment. In spite of the Government considered and recognized officially the importance of the ecological segment in 2000, at present in Sao Tome and Principe tourism is still a marginal sector. The participation and the local community empowerment in the ecological tourism projects with environmental preservation had been valued in the last years. Some examples are the important societies or partnerships with community groups, local associations and Non Governmental Organizations in coastal areas as well as in rural context. Because of the importance of the education in the development, concerning to make certain the local poverty relief as well as the improvement of the community abilities, the care about the environment education is real, especially when we analyze the ecological tourism experiences. In Sao Tome and Principe it is already visible the concern with the environmental education and the formation for the nature preservation and the conservation of the threatened animals in extinction. Those fragile species have a decisive importance for the ecological tourism practice but are a preferred target for the local consumption. The target groups of the education actions are both, the youth and scholar population as well as the working people like the small fisher, the fish sellers and the artisans. The research indicates that in Sao Tome and Principe something is changing slowly but it is already possible to identify some transformation signs in the local people mentality and practices.

Keywords: Ecological Tourism, Development, Sustainability, Environmental Education, Participation, Empowerment
BACKGROUND

The paper “Ecological Tourism and Environmental Education, presentation of a study case in African insular context” is the result of a research and an academic passage of the author. Since 1999 till the present, it has been studied a little African country named Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe. The research began with the PhD thesis in African Studies studying the importance of the ecological tourism to the sustainable development having as a case study this Small Island Developing State. After the conclusion of the academic research and the attainment of the degree, it had continuity with the Post Doctoral on going Project related to the environmental education practices in African insular contexts. At present this research is associated to a research team project concerning the impacts of the increment of the tourism in the local community life forms. All of those researches are complemented by the obtaining of academic degrees as PhD and Masters in African Studies developed at Centro de Estudos Africanos (CEA/ISCTE).

METHODS

In the both researches, concerning to the tourism theme and to the environmental education problematic, the methodological option privileged the interdisciplinary analysis, having in the base the case study.

Independently of the focus, the studies have a common element that is the axis between the environment and the local communities due to the narrow dependence, in what it respects to the survival of the local populations.

The researches were developed after collecting and analyzing bibliographical and documental sources that justify the thematic pertinence as well as the importance of the data collecting techniques.

After the definition of a mission plan and methodological tuning, for the field work, some instruments were prepared for the data collect, such as the interview model, the inquiry for questionnaire and the grill for the data register.

In a first moment, it are valued the qualitative techniques that means the establishment of informal contacts, the accomplishment of interviews and the direct observation during the recognition visits. In all of those moments it was possible to register in writing with the support of the grates but also through photographs.

In a second moment, and mainly in the study on the questions of the environmental education, histories of life with types previously defined had been carried through.

In a third moment, but just as complement of the principal methodology, it has been applied some inquiries for questionnaire that are a quantitative technique.

The methodology of the field work conjugated different techniques of retraction of data understood as complementary. The criterion for the retraction is identical to the adoptee for the data handling.

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The subject of the tourism is being analyzed as a development strategy for African insular countries that means to reach the qualitative change in the conditions of the local population life. Related to this, the alternative approaches have come to acquire importance
particularly in what it respects to the concepts of participation, involvement, empowerment and sustainability (Friedman, 1992; Korten, 1992; Syrett, 1995).

The most relevant dimensions for the strategic analysis are the communitarian, the local and the environmental. By this approach, it is required the mobilization of the communitarian capacities and the dynamism of the local initiative what it means the concept presented by David Korten (1992) as “people centered development”.

Coincidently with the analytical principles of the development concept, also in what it respects to the problematic of the tourism and the trip, an alternative approach emerged justified by the new practices (Lanfant, 1991).

Throughout the time, the tourism activity passed by some transformations related to the choices of the demand as well as the offer conditions: elitist; standardized; personalized. Nowadays it exist a diversification of the tourism forms and practices but the new forms of tourism based on the culture, the people and the environment have increasing importance.

The new forms of tourism are off course alternative and responsible since it results of the balanced joint between three levels of the analysis: the tourist, or the tourism practice; the local communities; the environment. For the tourist, this idea leads to the expectation and the identification of a possibility to find an authenticity looked in the traditional cultures that characterize the local communities named “insiders”. As McCannel (1973) defended, this authenticity is just staged and not real but the thought more preserved is the culture bigger on the possibility to find it. The tourism segment that is the most next to these ideas it is fit in the ecotourism.

The ecotourism is a segment that values preserved environments as much in forest, coastal or marine context. In conceptual terms the question is placed in the possibility of contact with nature scenes, preferential associating traditional cultures, during the stay. The conception of the trip is based on the idea that to learn through the direct contact is the best form to know with depth.

In accordance with this concept, to travel means, beyond to enjoy and knowing, having the chance to support and collaborate in actions and local projects of environment preservation and conservation of species.

The ecotourism practice values the regions endowed with biodiversity since it is based on activities of observation and contemplation like the birdwatching, the whalewatching, the dolphin watching, the turtle watching and so on.

On the other hand, these activities have underlying a dimension of responsibility of the different involved actors - representatives of the State, tourism operators, promoters of the initiatives, local communities and tourists. The responsible attitude is obtained on the basis of the mutual respect of the social, cultural, historical, political and economic differences, but also having in common the concern with the nature preservation and the conservation of species at risk.

For the ecological tourism there are some types of tourists who are characterized by the adoption of responsible, ethic and respected attitudes concerning to the environment (Bull, 1994) like the explorer, the nature lover and the experimental. These types look for unknown destinations that make possible the exploration and the discovery sensation since they have the pleasure of the newness, the difference and the direct contact with the nature and the exotic cultures.

The problematic of the Environment Education becomes direct related with the ecological thought that is favorable to the promotion of the sustainable development (Morin, 1999; Gutierrez, 1999). The principles that base the strategic measures are values that defend the education for the development, privileging two great thematic, the

References:
environment preservation associated to the conservation of threatened species and the cultural diversity that characterizes the local communities.

In great measure, the accomplishment of these principles depends on the civil society, as well as on the groups that in it emerge, just because are part of the collective conscience. It means local associations, non governmental organizations and other groups with ambient concerns.

In this perspective, habitually, the existence of a communitarian belonging feeling is considered (Morin 1999; Gutierrez, 1999) with widened characteristics, where all the human action has for objective the balance of all with a concern of sustainability.

The sustainability acquires an educative and pedagogical dimension that requires change of mentalities in the meaning of the adaptation of the form as the communities understand the environmental resources.

The objective consists on the re-education of the individual and group look at the environment, allowing the development of a critical but constructive attitude, protecting flora and fauna resources, preventing the deterioration, the pollution and the extreme exploration. This change assures the welfare of the communities without putting in cause the tourist visits and the activities in leisure time.

The challenge of sustainable societies consists on the creation of new forms of being eliminating false values and promoting principles as the conscientious and responsible respect. This idea normally reported to the educative and environmental themes can be applied to the problematic of the tourism especially as for the ecological segment.

SOME TRACES OF CHARACTERIZATION

The Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe is a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) with no more than 1,001 Km², distributed by two main islands and a set of adjacent islets, the majority of which are inhabited. The country is situated in the sub-region of Central Africa, in the Gulf of Guinea, next to the line of the Equator.

The climate is tropical wet, distinguishing two stations, the one of rain and the “Gravana” that is drier. The thermal amplitude does not present significant variations but the rainfall can get high levels of 6,000 mm.

The islands are of volcanic origin with accented relief accidents evidenced by multiple courses of water and great mountainous rises (most important has 2,024 meters of altitude), as well as significant coast with beaches and bays.

The center of both main islands is characterized by a very important forest protected area that is named “Parque Natural Obô” where it is possible to find lots of endemic flora and fauna species. The Park is usually defined as a biological laboratory alive because we can find unique species living in its natural habitat.

The coast and the marine areas have also protected status defined as ecological zone, in the north “Shells Beach Ecological Zone” and in the south “Malanza Ecological Zone”.

The archipelago is distinguished from the majority of the African States for its characteristics of insular territory, isolation in relation of the main international centers, for the events lived throughout History of portuguese colonial domination during 500 years with delayed independence without armed conflict, for the social, demographic, cultural and politic evolution, for the specific traces of the economic and productive sector and over all for the environment particularities.

The country is a young democracy with more or less 30 years being the option for the democratic system associated to the economic liberalization in the decade of 90.
analysis of the pointers indicates a country with a young demographic structure, having half of the population age under 15 years (www.ine.st). In this little country it is also possible to register the great importance of the urbanization that results in the emergency of concentration processes in urban and suburb zones.

The productive base is combined in the primary sector, with predominance of agricultural activities and artisan fishing, associated to tertiary marked by the informality, and the transforming sector is inexistent.

The negotiations for oil exploration have generated lots of expectations concerning to a fast development, even though until the present the results are not visible neither favorable. Although the fragility of the forest, coastal and marine ecosystems the environment has benefited of isolation and distance. The exploration of natural resources, renewable as well as exhaustible, has been to the long time mainly local continued having in the base concerns related to the survival and familiar well-being.

In Sao Tome and Principe the development of the tourism is collated with a set of constraints like the weak capacity of the national investment, the fragile and dependent characteristics of the entrepreneur actions, the reduced foreign investment, the small direct tourism services offers as well as complementary services, the weak qualification in the specific formation for the functional performance, the inexistence of a coherent and well gliding strategy for the development of the sector, betting in potential and adjusted segments, the insufficient tourist marketing in the other continents especially in the Europe. As an international tourist destination the country has been secondarized because of the preference of other regions that have bigger spreading with diversified offer having competitiveness, endowed with the necessary infrastructures, associating natural and cultural potentialities.

PRESENTATION OF THE CASE STUDY

In 2000, the sector has been officially considered by the Government as important for the national development and, having in count the natural potentialities, the ecologic segment as strategic. However, seven years passed, in Sao Tome and Principe, the tourism sector continues to evidence a weak economic performance.

Face to the natural elements that characterize the country, the methodological option for the case study was based on the identification of tourist projects that fit in different preserved environments and that contribute for the maintenance and conservation of the local areas.

The tourism initiatives analyzed have been mainly of three types: the rural tourism projects; the coastal examples; the informal activities.

The rural tourism projects are being implemented in the old and big units of agricultural exploration where, during the colonial period, it was produced the coffee and the cocoa for exportation. However, after the political independence those lands registered an accented decrease in the agricultural productivity, losing the importance and the status of high quality in the international market.

After de decade of 90, benefiting of the signals of the liberalization and the economic reorganization, some of those old properties have been adapted to receive small groups of tourists. Those are the “Roças” (“Roça de São João”, “Roça de Bombaim” and “Roça de Monteforte”) that have a local management and an important function on the communitarian development.
It is usual that the promoters classify the units as agro-tourism integrated projects because the objective is to promote near de local community different economic activities that are able to increase improvements in the population conditions of life. It means to create new local jobs, to form and to qualify the workers, to acquire new familiar incomes, to satisfy familiar basic needs, but also and over all to allow a valuation of the traditional productive activities as agriculture, fishing, animation and handcraft.

Beyond the stay in an agricultural site, the tourism in “Roça” has privileged the development of the informal actions tending to environmental preservation and to conservation of identified species of flora and fauna.

These actions can be understood with a double perspective. First, the informal involvement of the local communities in the activities of cleanliness and maintenance of forest tracks, catalogation of the local flora, comment and monitoring through the adoption of participatory methodologies. All these actions allow the emergency of a new attitude face to the environment stimulating that it is recognized the intrinsic value of the natural resources.

Second, the continuity of the sensitization programs to the tourist, clarifying the natural characteristics of the visited environment, mainly in forest, the threatened species or at risk and the possibilities of, in elapsing of the stay, the visitor get involved in the conservation actions.

The tourism coastal examples in Sao Tome e Principe that evidence concern with the nature protection are not as many as we could imagine in the insular context. In fact, there is an eco-tourism project (Ecolodge Jale) situated in a desert beach, in the south of the Sao Tome island, that is characterized for being a privileged zone for the spawning and nest building of sea turtles, as well as zone of circulation of cetaceans as whales in migration and dolphins.

This project has small dimension with a maximum capacity of shelter of 9 people, was created by a program of European Union, ECOFAC, implemented by a Non Governmental Organization of Sao Tome and Principe, having at present local management through the involvement of a local association. All the services are given by local groups and the philosophy of the Project is deeply conservationist.

The participation and the communitarian involvement are considered the key of all the activities promoted. Through the charged and paid tariffs for the staying, the tourists contribute on the actions of the sea turtles conservation and improvement of the local population life conditions.

In this case, the nature sensitization is permanent and all the activities facilitate the landscape contemplation, the observation of animals in natural habitat, the trekking, the recognition and the exploration of the area by foot or by canoe.

Although the informal trait, some tourist and leisure activities have been organized and developed with increasing importance. Thus activities of trekking, contemplation, species watching and river walking by traditional canoe are mentioned. All of those possibilities have local organization by direct contact between the visitors and the community making possible the deepening of knowledge on the local fauna and flora.

During the informal activities the sensitization is pursued with smoothness and slightness, and many times without the communities or the tourists, or until the both, get conscientious form of it.
CONCLUSIONS

Till present, in all of the ecological tourism projects with environmental preservation studied, the participation and the local community empowerment are contemplated principles and had been deeply valued in the last years.

Because of the importance of the education, the formation and the sensitization in the development actions, making certain the local poverty relief as well as the improvement of the community abilities, the environment concern is real, especially related to the ecological tourism experiences.

Although the results are fragile requiring a continued action, in Sao Tome and Principe it is already visible the concern with the environmental education and the sensitization for the nature preservation and the conservation of the threatened animals.

The researches indicate that in Sao Tome and Principe something is changing slowly but it is already possible to identify some transformation signs in the local people mentality and in the developed practices.

REFERENCES

FARM DEVELOPMENT TO BECOME AGRO-TOURISM AREA
BY COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN SARABURI, THAILAND

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Abstract: The study was to investigate: 1) the potential of farms in Saraburi province as an agro-tourism area, and tourists attraction; 2) tourists’ behaviors and requirements of an agro-tourism area; and 3) development of farms in Saraburi province for having qualifications to become an agro-tourism area and tourists attraction by community involvement. The population of this study included farmers, groups of farmers’ housewives in Saraburi province, and Thai tourists. Data were collected through interviews, survey, observation and inquiry. The instruments used in the study were semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. The quantitative data were analyzed by descriptive statistics including frequency, percentage, arithmetic mean, mean score and standard deviation. Moreover, qualitative data were described in details. The study showed that farms in Saraburi province had a high degree of potential and qualification to become an agro-tourism area and tourists attraction. These were because of the unique physical and biological values, technology and agricultural way of life. There were many different types of tourist attractions such as orchid farm, orchard of guava, anthurium farm and dried rolled banana preserving, etc. In addition, it was found that there were transport facilities, safety, and a high degree of the readiness of tourist services and closing to the interesting cultural and famous places of the district. Concerning the tourists’ behaviors and requirements, the study was found that there were several kinds of agro-tourism activities such as visiting farm, cooking and fruits tasting, demonstrating of agricultural products processing and preserving fruit making practice. These activities were in accordance with tourists’ requirements. Result of this study indicated that there were various kinds of activities in developing farms to become an agro-tourism area and tourists attraction by community involvement. There were 1) a training activity and knowledge transfer regarding services and agro-tourism management for farmers or farmers’ housewives; 2) a strong coordination of all concerned group such as the chief of the district and community leaders or key persons in the community; and 3) a budget plan for money spending from the government and concerned organization.

Keywords: agro-tourism, agro-tourism area, tourists attraction, community involvement, agro-tourism activities, agro-tourism service and management, community leaders
INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an activity which is a part of human life desirable since man requires new experiences to reduce tension and increase happiness in life. Nowadays, tourism expands rapidly all over the world. In the past, almost of tourism were mass tourism but at present it is changed into small group tourism which tourists search for experience from nature and care for environment. Therefore, tourism is about living the life of the people being visited, practicing the culture of the places, experiencing the same joy and pain in moments of celebration and despair as the people in the midst of who one is. It is all about forgetting one’s individual identity and deeply implanted cultural roots and getting lost among the crowd of the people one is with, and imitating them in every respect with the same zeal and vigour that is characteristic of the locals.

It has long been recognized that the agricultural sector plays a vital role in the development process. The majority of the world’s population is poor and lives in rural areas. The most low-income countries tried to implement development strategies but these people will continue to live in rural areas with poverty. Consequently, it is now recognized that future agricultural and rural development strategies will have to be concerned with raising rural productivity while ensuring an equitable distribution of benefits (Biggs, 1982).

Thailand has recognized that the development of agriculture is a more difficult process as in many countries, unemployment and the number of landless laborers have grown and real wage rates in agriculture have fallen. The government, try to solve the problem continually. And, because Thailand has a great amount of income from tourism, they have set up the idea of developing farms into agro-tourism areas and tourists attraction. The concept of agro-tourism is a direct expansion of ecotourism, which encourages visitors to experience agricultural life at first hand. This type of tourism is gathering strong support from small communities as rural people have realized the benefits of sustainable development brought about by similar forms of "green tourism". Visitors have the opportunity to work in the fields alongside real farmers and wade knee-deep in the sea with fishermen hauling in their nets.

(www.ecotourdirectory.com)

Moreover, it needs community involvement since it will enable participation from the local community in the development and operations of tourism with their consent and support. Another important feature is that a reasonable share of the revenues is enjoyed by the community. This type of tourism also maintains and respects the local culture, heritage and traditions. Often, community-based tourism actually reinforces and sometimes rescues these. Community-based tourism also implies respect and concern for the natural heritage, particularly where the environment is one of the attractions.

Saraburi province is in the central region of Thailand. It is, about 108 kilometers from Bangkok, the capital of Thailand. Main agricultural products are rice, sugar, cane, corn, sunflower, cattle and poultry.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study had three main objectives:
1. To study the potential of farms in Saraburi province as an agro-tourism area, and tourists attraction
2. To study tourists’ behaviors and requirements of an agro-tourism area; and
3. To development farms in Saraburi province for having qualifications to become an agro-tourism area and tourists attraction by community involvement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Agro-tourism may be defined into the following categories:
1. To take a journey temporary from ones' hometown to other destinations in order to relax oneself from work and tension. In addition one can learn and exchange ideas in producing and preserving food from agricultural products, culture, tradition scenery and good relationship with local people.  
2. To take a journey voluntarily in order to study and exchange ideas on ways of local people and local wisdom.  
3. It is a journey with no intention to work for earnings. The journey may aim for study tour, exchange ideas and experiences with others, study the target scenery or appreciate beautiful nature and environment of planned destinations. (www.southnfe.go.th/LearnSquare/2/agro1.htm)

The concept of agro-tourism is a direct expansion of ecotourism, which encourages visitors to experience agricultural life at first hand. Agro-tourism is gathering strong support from small communities as rural people have realized the benefits of sustainable development brought about by similar forms of nature travel (www.ecotourdirectory.com/agrotourism.htm). The aim of agro-tourism is to improve the life of farmers especially in remote areas or in areas with a developing economy. Agro-tourism brings growth to local communities, it facilitates the production of traditional products that would otherwise possibly vanish, such as fruit preserves. It assists in the preservation of crafts that would otherwise perish with the last artisan, preserves human memory through the revival of custom and traditional festivities, offers a communication channel between regions isolated from the large population centers and provides life-long opportunities to local youth. (www.alternativegreece.gr).

In Thailand, agro-tourism activities can be classified into six groups.
1. Products display or demonstration such as paddy seeds plot, agricultural steps of growing rice, and agricultural cultures in the past.
2. Agricultural activities by tourists’ participations such as field plowing, rice harvest, fruits gathering.
3. Home stays, that is, tourists’ stay at night in farmer’s house to learn agricultural way of life.
4. Agricultural knowledge training. This training aims to provide agricultural knowledge both of modern agricultural knowledge and local wisdom of villagers such as fruit preservation, making fruit and vegetable juice.
5. Agricultural products distribution such as flowers, fresh fruits, handicrafts, preserved eggs.
6. Agricultural business offering. Some tourists are businessmen who search for new agricultural projects to invest in. Therefore, they might join in agricultural business with farmers in such venture as processing agricultural products.

Research studies on Agro-tourism are as follows:
Dacha Tongsoungnoen (2000) studied “Agro-tourism Administration and Management: A Case of Ban Moung Kham, Tambon Pong Yaeng, Amphoe mae Rim, Changwat Chiang Mai.” the result of the study concerning principles for service and management of the tourist site, indicated a need for training and knowledge transfer.
regarding tourism for the concerned personnel. A master-plan for the general management of tourism within the village should be developed by all concerned groups. Area should be divided according to purpose in tourism, e.g. an area for the demonstration of work and an area for recreational purposes and in accordance with local geographical features and social conditions. Buildings should be developed according to purpose in tourism and to promote an increase in the number of tourists. Local agricultural and processed products should be supported and developed to achieve a higher quality to improve their competitive edge on the outside market.

Nartsuda Chemnasiri (2006) studied “Development Guidelines of Farm on Being Agro-Tourism Tourist Attractions and an International Learning Center : A case Study in Chai nat Province, Thailand” The results of this study concerning development guidelines of an agro-tourism area and tourists’ attraction indicated that there should be: 1) a training activity and knowledge transfer regarding services and agro-tourism management for farmers or farmers’ housewives; and 2) a master plan for general tourism management to be developed by tourism entrepreneurs in cooperation with all concerned groups. Concerning the development guidelines of an international learning center, results of the study suggested that there should be: 1) A strong coordination for the cooperation of all concerned groups; 2) a training on how to transfer knowledge on the technology (technology demonstration skills) and speaking the foreign language (preferably English); 3) a designing of technology curriculum to include contents, instruments/tools, studying period, number of students, and tuition fee; and 4) a publishing of the agro-tourism information, in both the offline and online media, specifically in the website.

Pawinee Wachasitrirapai (2000) studied “Potential and Problem of Agro-tourism in Chiang Mai Province”. It was found that the factor of the worth of tourism was most consistent to the specialists, next in the rank were tourism management, and community participation in tourism management. The problems in each kind of tourist spot were the government’s experimental project encountered the problems of the lack of budget to develop the site, marketing and the operation system of the government. The Royal Project encountered the problems of the lack of the officers; accessibility and prior contacts must be made in written forms for allowances from government.

Yuriphan Saenjaiya (2002) studied “Guidelines for Development of Suvirun’s Tea Farm for Agro-Tourism in Mae Lao District, Chiang Rai Province.” The result of this study showed that the Suvirun’s Tea Farm has a high potential and readiness for developing into an agro-tourism resource, due to the location situated on a tourist route, security and good acceptance and cooperation from the local community. Recommendations from the study of the guideline to develop Suvirun’s Tea Farm into an agro-tourism resource were to rearrange the landscape, create short term and long term development plans, improve buildings, arrange tourist area for observing activities, and improve amenities for tourists.

Ramate Promchat (2002) studied “Participation of the Community in Agro-tourism Development: A Case Study of Ban Pong, Pa Phai Sub-district, San Sai District, Chiang Mai Province.” The results of the study showed that the sample had a low degree of involvement in Agro-Tourism Development in the aspects of tourism resources management, services and marketing. For the relationship between personal factors and the involvement in Agro-tourism Development, it was found that samples with different ages and length of residence periods had significant differences in the involvement in Agro-Tourism Development.

Aphirom Phomjanya, et al. (2003) studied “Rural Tourism Development: Changwat Phuket.” It was found that rural tourism had been identified as an important tourism sector
that has great potential for development and promotion of Phuket. The strong growth in tourism expected over the next decade will provide excellent opportunities for the growth in rural tourism. A case study of the villagers at Baan Bangrong even saw their traditional way of life being corded, leaving them struggling to survive. There were a few exceptions where the adaptation and the strength of a particular community helped people to cope with problems and become prosperous when conditions were changed. The villagers at Baan Bangrong in Pa Khlok were one example, as known through their rural tourism activity in an agro-tourism project. One innovation of the agro-tourism project had been designed to promote the community’s environment and employed villagers.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study utilized quantitative and qualitative research methodology. It included:

1. **Participants**
   1.1 Farmers in Saraburi
   1.2 Groups of farmers’ housewives
   1.3 Community leaders
   1.4 Tourism trainer

2. **Instruments**
   The researcher constructed two questionnaires. The first one was a semi-structured interview. It was designed to elicit the participants’ perceptions of the potential and qualification of farms to become agro-tourism areas, tourists attraction. The second questionnaire aimed at obtaining tourists’ opinions about their interests, behaviors and requirements in agro-tourism. It consisted of two parts, the first part was personal information and the second, consisting of 7 items asked for their opinions. A five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agreed, agreed, were uncertain, disagreed and strongly disagreed was used to measure respondent’s opinion. The third is an evaluating form for tourists to evaluate tourism service and management of the plantation.

3. **Data Collection**
   The data collection was done in November 2006-May 2007. The following steps were carried out in collecting the data.
   1. Farms in Saraburi were selected at random from the Agricultural Extension Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Bangkok, Thailand.
   2. The selected farms were explored in searching for their potential and qualification such as the readiness of attractions, community participation, basic facilities, environment and accessibility etc.
   3. During the exploration, the researcher interviewed the participants which consisted of:
      - Owner of orchid farm,
      - Owner of anthurium farm,
      - Owner of guava orchard,
      - Group of farmers’ housewives “Daourueng” who are producing products of dried roll banana.
   4. A total of 229 tourists were asked to indicate their opinions about their interests, behaviors and requirements in agro-tourism through the questionnaires. Of this number, 116 were males and 113 females. There were 10 interview participants. All are female.
   5. Two community leaders were interviewed.
6. Forty three housewives were trained on tourism service and management. Tourism service and management were conducted as an experiment in dried roll banana plantation.

4. Data analysis

As for qualitative data, the analysis was carried out to answer the research objective. So, the qualitative data were grouped under these headings:

1. Physical information of farms such as location, accessibility environment, basic facilities etc.
2. Tourism information such as attraction spots, technology, agricultural way of life, etc.
3. Community participation.
4. Readiness as an agro-tourism area, tourists attraction.
5. Problems and limiting factors for an area to become an agro-tourism spot, tourists attraction.

Regarding the second research objective, the quantitative data were analyzed by computer program to determine the mean and standard deviation. Concerning the third objective, 10 tourists were invited to evaluate tourism service in dried roll banana plantation after conducting role playing in tourism service and management.

FINDINGS

1. Potential and qualification of farms

   Results of the 10 participants’ interview were as follows:

a. Physical information of farms

   The majority of the participants reported that almost of farms in Saraburi are situated in tourists route and their sizes are big enough to be agro-tourism areas and tourists attractions except orchid farm and guava orchard which were difficult to reach because of narrow and rough road. Their environments are nice, clean, with fresh air and without any kind of pollution. Near by the plantation especially dried roll banana plantation, there were a community cultural center and community area which was being developed to be floating market for tourists to visit.

b. Tourism information

   It is reported that there are many attractive spots for tourists, especially sunflower plantation which are located near Lopburi Province, guava farm, orchid farm, etc. But these farms could not be developed to serve tourism this year because of the critical flooding. Any way, the agricultural way of life in this province is very interesting. They also use appropriate technologies in their farms from plant and animal production to preservation. Their local wisdom is useful for processing agricultural products such as dried roll banana, dried rice cake and other products. They are very pleased in sharing their knowledge to everyone.

c. Community participation

   Community members joined together as groups, such as farmer group, farmer housewives’ group, small and medium enterprise group so that production planning can be done for the community for common benefits. Community members are also provided the chance to learn and acquire experience in production, processing of agricultural products, marketing and even exporting. Community leaders in the district play a vital role to develop community in many aspects. They tried to contact the government to allocate budget in developing tourism area for tourists. In this way, farmer families can earn more income and live happily and the community is strengthened.
d. Problems and limiting factors of an agro-tourism area and tourists attraction.
As a result of political problem and the policy changed by the new government, community members which included farmers, farmers’ housewives, and people in community could earn less money than before. They tried to help themselves by strengthened in group with the cooperation from community leaders. With existing land, labor and products, and community leaders, the area is ready to be an agro-tourism area and tourists attraction. But their lack of knowledge in tourism services and management are their big problems.

2. Concerning the study of tourists’ behaviors and requirements for agro-tourism, some Thai tourists in Saraburi were interviewed. There were 229 respondents who completed the questionnaire. The characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1. Table 1 shows that the participants were males and females equally (50.66%, 49.34%) within the age groups of 21-30 years (48.03%). Most of them were single (77.73%), whose highest educational attainment were bachelor’s degree (65.07%) and the majority were businessman and employees (40.18%-41.92%).

Table 1 : Characteristics of the participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>50.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>49.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 20 years</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>25.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30 years</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>48.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40 years</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>14.41</td>
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<tr>
<td>41-50 years</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 60 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>77.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>19.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
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<td>2.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
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<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Educational Attainment</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>32.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>65.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;Bachelor’s Degree</td>
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<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience in occupation</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government official/ state enterprise officer</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Businessman</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>40.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>41.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired official</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 : The participants opinions on agro-tourism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>OPINIONS</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Interest in agro-tourism</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>There are many interesting agro-tourism spots and tourists attractions in Saraburi</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Interest in visiting the following agricultural areas:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rice growing</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flower garden</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orchards</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chicken and duck raising</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mushroom cultivation</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Basketrey</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agricultural products processing</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>During visits, the following activities/services should be provided to tourists:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Farmers’ explanation</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participating in agricultural activities</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cooking or eating farm products</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Farm products for sale</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Home stay</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Expectations when visiting agricultural places:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Convenience in traveling</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Its scenic beauty</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Its environment</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friendly people and good services</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High quality but low price of farm products</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Type of traveling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Travel by yourself</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Travel by tour agency</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Travel by car / bus</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The best media of tourism public relations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Papers / Brochure</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>.99</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Television</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bulletin board</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in table 2, the results of the tourists’ opinion on agro-tourism showed their positive interest in agro-tourism (mean=3.90). They also agreed that there were many interesting agro-tourism spots and tourists attractions in Saraburi (mean=3.67). The agricultural places of agricultural products processing were their most interesting to visit (mean=3.97). During their visit, they wanted to cook or eat farm products and sell, too (mean=3.92, 3.84). Their expectation in visiting was the environment of the agricultural
place and friendly people with good service \( (\text{mean}= 4.29,4.25) \). As for the type of traveling, they preferred to travel by themselves and by car or bus \( (\text{mean}= 3.78,3.75) \). Moreover, they indicated that the best media strategy for tourism public relations is the use of television \( (\text{mean}= 4.15) \).

3. Concerning the development of farm to become an agro-tourism area, the implementation were as follows:

3.1 Survey and analyze farm potential factors which are divided into two. The first one is its general potential as tourist attraction such as location, accessibility, environment, and basic facilities. This factor will show the qualification and readiness of farms. The second one is its specific potential as agro-tourism area, that is, the capability to conduct any of the six agro-tourism activities. Moreover, the activities should provide the tourists the opportunity to participate in various farm activities. For Saraburi, the tourists prefer to visit orchards, such as guava orchards, tamarind orchards, with good environment.

3.2 Train farmers, farmers’ housewives or owners agricultural processing plantation in the community on tourism services and management.

3.3 Conduct an experiment of an agro-tourism area, tourists’ attraction by selecting the most ready place to be a sample. Implement a role playing for 10 tourists, to do the initial evaluation.

3.4 Expose for public relations on the television or website.

According to the implementation as mentioned above, the researcher conducted the following activities:

1. Selected a farm from potential factors indicated in the above results. The Group of farmers’ housewives “Daourueng” who produced products of dried roll banana was selected because this group composed of small farmers’ housewives groups with in. There were group of ornamental plants, group of traditional Thai dessert, group of handicrafts. The chief of this group is a lady. She has a connection with other farmers’ housewives and housewives group in other districts. In addition, she can deal with leaders in the district those were district official and the owner of cultural center in the district. They planned together to develop an area near dried banana plantation to be tourism area that is floating market. This project aimed to improve income and remove the shackles of poverty from the people in the community.

2. Training on tourism services and management. Since the result of the study showed that the community lacked knowledge on tourism services and management, the researcher conducted a one-day training to the members of dried roll banana and the connections. The researcher invited a tourism expert from Chandrakasem Rajabhat University as a trainer. The training focused on how to welcome the tourists; how to prepare for tourists; and how to make a community plan for tourism.

3. Conducted a role playing activity by inviting 7 tourists from Bangkok and 3 tourists from Saraburi. The leaders of the community also joined this activities. Before visiting “Daourueng” dried roll banana plantation, the chairman of the district who was a government official invited the tourists to visit an area that the community planned to develop to be tourism area. It was a big pond which connected to a river. It will be a floating market in the community where the tourists come to visit and community members can sell their products. This project started after the researcher conducted this research since the he thought that if some agricutral area in the district can be a tourism area so other
places in the community should be developed, too. The chairman of the district tried to ask for budget allocation to the district and it was succeeded.

After that the tourist visited dried roll banana plantation. The owner paid respect to the tourists by giving flowers and told briefly the background of this group. The member of this group demonstrated in pressing banana and dried by exposing to the sun or heating in a big oven. Rolled dried banana and packed in a small package. The tourists also had a chance to practice processing and at some. After the activities, the tourists evaluated and made the following recommendations:

3.1 The owner should also briefly tell about the background of the connecting group since there were many other housewives group joined in this roleplaying activity and sold their local products.; 3.2 Other members should have more practice on how to explain while they demonstrate the process step by step.

After visiting dried roll banana plantation, tourists had an opportunity in having lunch in cultural center of the district 1 kilometer from the plantation. The owner of the center offered Thai Classical Dancing by the children in the community. The tourists concluded that this plantation was ready to be an agro-tourism area and tourists’ attraction together with cultural center and the area expected to be floating market.

As a result of the above experiment, the community involved in developing tourism area with strong coordination with two community leaders which were the chairman of the district and the owner of cultural center. They worked together with the people in the community to develop a floating market during weekend by asking some budget from the government and now it is become a small tourist attraction in the community.

CONCLUSIONS

From the implementation in this study, the farmers’ housewives can be trained to be the owners of agro-tourism areas and can earn more income from these activities. They can also sell their agricultural products to the tourists, so they will be self-reliant and can stay with happiness in their place. The results of this study indicated several important issues related to farm development to become agro-tourism area such as the involvement of community leaders and the strong coordination in the community.

For the problems and limiting factors of an agro-tourism area, it was found that the community members had lacked knowledge in tourism services and management. Therefore, training programs on how to develop and manage an agro-tourism area should be offered.

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WHO IS THE SENIOR CONSUMER FOR THE TOURISM INDUSTRY?

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Abstract: The tourism industry in the 21st century is facing a changing and competitive environment. Hurricanes and other climate catastrophes, military conflicts and wars, progress in information technologies and the increase of competition between airline companies and, last but not least, the demographic aging wave. As a matter of fact, this wave, also called the senior market, is an opportunity for growth in the tourism industry worldwide. First, this part of the population is an important market in size that will continue to grow in future years, with a high market potential. Second, seniors have the free time required for the consumption of tourism and also show a desire to travel. They take more holidays and spend a larger proportion on travel and leisure than other age groups. Third, they give travel the highest priority for their retirement years.

Consequently, the travel potential of seniors cannot be overlooked anymore and a need for current and future research on senior travel behaviour exists. Such research is all the more needed as this market is a heterogeneous one. This heterogeneity raises the first issue of the status or proper definition of the senior consumer for the travel industry: who really is the senior consumer and how do we identify him?

This article proposes a new, stable and precise identification of the senior consumer for the tourism industry. The first part of this research, based mainly on an in depth analysis of the review of literature in Marketing and Tourism Marketing, reveals the fragility of the concept of the senior consumer and the limits of the criteria used to characterize this consumer. Hence, the second part of this research proposes the building of a stable definition of this concept that could be used by every researcher and practitioner. The applied method of building is inspired from set mathematical theory. The definition is based on the only three non varying elements for which a consensus between researchers exists. This definition is linked to an indicator that aims to empirically identify the senior consumer.

This first built definition of the senior consumer provides a stable conceptual framework for every study and all research on this consumer. By offering an opportunity of identifying and studying the same subject, it allows comparative studies, which is an important step in tourism research. Finally, by including the concept of subjective age within the definition of the senior consumer (as a non varying characteristic of the senior consumer), it justifies research on the effects of this variable on seniors’ tourism consumption behaviours. This may be a future way to predict the senior tourism segmentation and to help with the conception of new tourism products in response to the needs of this market.

Keywords: Senior consumer, tourism opportunity, characterization, indicator
INTRODUCTION

In North America, Australia, Europe and Japan, there are more elderly people than ever before (Günter, 1998; UN 2000). They have reached a high proportion within their populations (Gabriel, 1990; United Nations Development Program 1999) and their numbers are likely to continue rising (U.S. Bureau of Census 2000). This growing senior segment, long ignored by marketers (Bartos, 1983), is initiating enormous opportunities for industries (Dychtwald, 1997) such as the tourism industry. Indeed, seniors have the free time required for the consumption of tourism (Muller and Strickland, 1995; Tamaro-Hans, 1999; Chevalier, 2003) and show a desire to travel: they give travel the highest priority for their retirement years (Supernaw, 1985), they take more holidays (Lavery, 1999) and spend a larger proportion on travel and leisure than any other age group (McGuire et al., 1988), and finally, they go longer distances and stay away longer than any other segment of the population (Shoemaker, 1989). Consequently, seniors are an opportune market for travel (Organisation Mondiale du Tourisme 2000).

But who really are these senior consumers? Indeed, if every marketer agrees on the market potential of seniors, there is still a lack of consensus on a proper and unique definition of these consumers considered as: (1) people aged 50 and over (Lavery, 1999; Anderson and Langmeyer, 1982), or (2) people aged 55 and over (Javalgi et al., 1992; Shim et al., 2005), or (3) people aged 60 and over (Cleaver and Muller, 1998; Muller and Polle, 2001; Goulding, 2002), or (4) people aged 65 and over (Heslop, 1987; Bernhardt and Kinnear, 1976; Barak, 1982), or (5) people who are retired (Tamaro-Hans, 1999), or finally, (6) people who are experiencing biological, psychological and social ageing (Belk Smith and Moschis, 1989; Guiot, 2005). This lack of consensus raises two main issues. First, for academics, the issue of the stability of the conceptual framework for research on the senior consumer. Second, for practitioners, the issue of the appropriate tool of identification of the senior consumer. This article proposes a new and stable definition of the senior consumer for the tourism industry that could be used by researchers as well as by practitioners. The method applied is inspired from set mathematical theory and the definition is linked to an indicator that aims to empirically identify the senior consumer.

I. THE SENIOR CONSUMER: A FRAGILE CONCEPT

An analysis of the senior consumer literature review reveals that this concept is characterized by two types of elements. On one hand, elements that do not vary whatever the identity of the marketer (who mentions them) is and/or whatever the type of industry the marketer (who mentions them) is working for. Every researcher and every practitioner agree on these elements as intrinsic characteristics of the senior consumer. Consequently, these elements will be named “non varying elements” of the concept. On the other hand, one element does vary depending on the identity of the marketer (who mentions it) and/or depending on the type of industry the marketer (who mentions it) is working for. This element is the definition of the senior concept and will be named the “varying element”. This element is responsible for the fragility of the concept.

I.1. THE NON VARYING ELEMENTS OF THE SENIOR CONSUMER CONCEPT
The analysis\(^{30}\) of the senior consumer literature review in Tourism and Marketing Journals (appended 1) has revealed three non varying elements for the concept. These elements, listed in Table 1 below, are cited by each practitioner as stable characteristics of the senior consumer.

Table 1. Non varying characteristics of the senior consumer concept

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non Varying Characteristics of the Senior Consumer Concept</th>
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<tr>
<td>(1) senior is part of a high potential target for one industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>(2) senior has reached or has passed a chronological age threshold above which some old age signs appear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) senior feels younger than his/her own chronological age</td>
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The first stable characteristic (1) refers to the market potential of the senior segment for one industry. This is a market potential generated by the important size of the elderly population, and by the increase in the elderly population’s buying power (Gottlieb, 1997; Rizal, 2002, 2003; Davis et al., 2003). This market potential is the reason why this segment has captured the attention of researchers and practitioners. By becoming an interesting target for marketers, this “grey market” (Treguer, 1995) should then be entitled by a term that reflects its peculiarity and its advanced age, without being pejorative (Guiot, 2005). That is the reason why the word senior has been chosen (The Newbury House Dictionary of American English 1996). The second stable characteristic (2) is intrinsically linked to the word senior as it refers to its etymological origin. Indeed, originally, senior was the superlative masculine and singular of the Latin word “senex”, which means “the old individual”. Consequently, senior originally meant “the oldest one”. In addition, the current definitions (within The Newbury House Dictionary of American English 1996\(^{31}\)) of this word also refer to this second characteristic.

Finally, the third stable characteristic (3), “senior feels younger than his/her own chronological age”, was first noticed by the gerontological researchers Tuckman and Lorge (1954) and Blau (1956). Research indicates that the majority of elderly have a strong tendency to see themselves as considerably younger than their chronological age. Consequently, a new non-chronological age variable, entitled subjective age, has been developed. It measures an individual’s self perception in terms of reference age groups (Blau, 1956, 1973; Peters, 1971; Rosow, 1967, 1974; Ward, 1977; Mutran and George, 1982), and subjectively establishes how a person feels about such reference age groups.

\(^{30}\) This research takes place in France. That is why, as a first step in the analysis of the literature review, the French literature review has been analysed. The non-varying elements identified in this context were then used to identify precisely the equivalent of this senior consumer concept in the English literature review. Consequently, the French literature review and the English one are dealing with the same concept.

Progressively, researchers have focussed on this subjective age variable and have developed an overall concept to describe a variety of alternative non-chronological age variables. Among them, the cognitive age (Barak and Schiffman, 1981) is of interest for research on seniors. This age is defined as an individual’s actual age-role self-concept, reflecting his/her age-identity in terms of four age dimensions (feel-age, look-age, do-age, and interest-age) and is expressed in years (Barak and Gould, 1985). More precisely, a relevant variable for the study of senior consumer behaviour is the discrepancy between a respondent’s chronological age and their cognitive age (Barak and Schiffman, 1981; Stephens, 1991; Wilkes, 1992; Dune and Turley, 1997). Entitled youth age, this variable reflects the number of years a person perceives him/herself to be younger (or older) than his/her chronological age (Barak and Gould, 1985). This variable has already been used as a segmentation variable for the tourism senior market (Cleaver and Muller, 1998). The first results confirm the relevance of youth age and may explain more about senior consumption behaviours than chronological age.

If there is a consensus from researchers and practitioners on the three characteristics of the concept listed in Table 1 above, there is a lack of consensus on one element: the senior consumer definition. Various definitions are used in the research and studies of senior consumers. This variability of a definition generates the fragility of the concept.

I.2. THE VARYING ELEMENTS OF THE SENIOR CONSUMER CONCEPT: A DEFINITION

I.2.1. The Various Definitions of the Concept

An analysis of the international literature review (appended 2) has revealed two major elements. First, each definition of the concept is intrinsically linked to a criterion that allows distinguishing senior consumers from non senior consumers. This criterion is particularly useful for the identification of senior consumers in empirical work. Second, there is a lack of consensus on the senior consumer definition and, consequently, on the criterion. As a matter of fact, in Marketing, two types of criteria are used: a chronological age threshold (Chevalier, 1999, 2003; Guiot, 1999, 2001; Claxton and Gorn 1985; Chiu Fui et al., 1994; Mathur and Moschis, 1995; Geuens and Weijters, 2002) and retirement, defined as the time when one leaves the workforce and stops working (Tamaro-Hans, 1999). In Tourism Marketing this observation is obvious: either chronological age thresholds (Anderson and Langmeyer, 1982; Javalgi et al., 1992; Lavery, 1999; Cleaver Sellik, 2004; Shim et al., 2005) or retirement, considered as the limit that defines an increase in the tourism consumption potential (Tongren, 1980; Supernaw, 1985; Tamaro-Hans, 1999), are used.

Moreover, considering the criterion entitled chronological age threshold, it appears that marketers do not agree on the appropriate threshold to distinguish senior consumers from non senior consumers. This threshold could be either 50 years (Chevalier, 1999, 2003; Guiot, 1999, 2001; McMellon et al., 1997), 55 years (Kucukarslan et al., 1993; Mathur and Moschis, 1995), 60 years (Boulbry, 2004, Muller and Polle, 2001; Goulding, 2002), or even 65 years (Heslop, 1987; Bernhardt and Kinnear, 1976; Barak, 1982). In the tourism sector, this lack of agreement on the appropriate chronological age threshold is particularly noticeable: the threshold varies from 50 years old (Lavery, 1999; Anderson and
Langmeyer, 1982) up to 60 years old (Cleaver and Muller, 1998), with some choices at 55 years old in-between (Javalgi et al., 1992; Shim et al., 2005; Cleaver Sellik, 2004).

Finally, it is important to underline the fact that if some authors do justify their choice for a criterion (Tamaro-Hans, 1999; Chevalier, 2003; Barak, 1982; Kucukarslan et al., 1993), some others do not (Heslop, 1987; Claxton and Gorn, 1985; Muller and Polle, 2001; Cleaver and Muller, 2001). However, the justifications could be different.

This lack of consensus on the senior consumer definition (and criterion) raises two important issues. First, it raises the issue of the stability of the conceptual framework for research on the senior consumer. Second, it raises the issue of the opportunity to compare results from different studies on the senior consumer. Indeed, for empirical work, the researcher will choose a precise chronological threshold, linked to the criterion (definition) he/she has chosen, to identify and then target the people to study or interview. Different chronological thresholds will lead to different age groups of people studied or interviewed. Hence, the issue is: how to compare the results of studies on individuals, named by the same word “seniors”, but who do not belong to the same age groups?

These two issues underline the fact that the use of different definition criteria generates important limits in research. Hence, a unique criterion is needed and the relevance of each criterion currently used should be studied. The purpose of the following section is to introduce the main limits of the two criteria cited previously.

I.2.2. The Limits of the Current Criteria Used to Identify Senior Consumers

- The limits of the chronological age threshold
  
The chronological age threshold is obviously an interesting demographic and financial border between two parts of the population. It is also a criterion easy to use empirically. However, some limits do exist in using this criterion to identify senior consumers.

  **Limit 1: The chronological age thresholds used vary depending on the author, the industry and the cultural context**

  We have already mentioned the fact that different chronological age thresholds are used to define the group of senior consumers. This lack of consensus is the first limit in the use of this criterion.

  **Limit 2: A criterion that defines a heterogeneous target**

  In addition, choosing one chronological age as a unique criterion to distinguish senior consumers from non senior consumers leads to defining a large and heterogeneous target. Large in size because it means that we need to consider the group of people aged from 50 up to 100 years. Heterogeneous in terms of revenues, needs, health, consumption habits and values (Serriere, 2003).

  **Limit 3: A dynamic criterion**

  Finally, this criterion is linked to historical events such as the Great Period, medical progress and the access of women to paid jobs. Consequently, it reflects a social and economic reality of the current society at the beginning of the 21st century. But, it could change depending on fertility rates and future social and political changes. It means that this criterion is a dynamic one, depending on the period of history, basically depending on time.

  Consequently, the chronological age criterion has to be complemented. Indeed, it could be considered as a necessary criterion for the empirical part, but in regards to the limits listed above, this criterion is not a sufficient one.

- The limits of retirement criterion
Retirement is a useful criterion to delineate changes within senior tourism consumption. However, the use of this criterion could generate difficulties, particularly in terms of comparative studies.

Limit 1: The retirement age varies from one country to another
Within the majority of the countries within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development32, the legal age to retire and receive a public pension is 65 years old. However, three countries do not follow this rule: Norway, with a legal age of 67 years, and Korea and France, where the legal age is 60. Consequently, the use of retirement as a criterion could generate the difficulty of comparing the results of studies led in different countries (where the legal age for retirement is different). However, this observation also emphasizes the cultural dimension of the senior consumer concept.

Limit 2: The various expressions of the criterion in France
The legal age to retire in France is 60 years. However, “an invisible border fixed at 55 years old” does exist in people’s minds (Rochefort, 2004). As a matter of fact, various situations exist: retirement, progressive retirement, pre-retirement, retirement in anticipation (Tamaro-Hans, 1999) that entail a difficulty to use this criterion empirically. This empirical use will become all the more difficult with the growing tendency of holding concurrently a job and retirement (Méli and Martineau, 2006).

Limit 3: A dynamic criterion
Within a country, the retirement criterion is a dynamic one. It means it will change depending on social and political reformations. These reformations could impact the legal age for retirement, which could become higher in future years, while also affecting the nature of the retirement period. For instance, the access of women to paid jobs has been one of the most important sociological changes in developed countries. These women are now retired, and they are the first generation of women receiving their own pensions. Consequently, there is an increase in the number of couples who receive a double pension, and as a result, there is an increase in the amount of revenue per retired person (Rochefort, 2000, 2004). Hence, this reformation has had a great impact on the nature of the retirement period (Rochefort, 2004).

In future years, new changes could impact these two aspects of retirement. In addition, these changes could be different from one country to another. As a result, this criterion is too restrictive and should be complemented for use by the entire scientific community.

II. PROPOSITION OF A STABLE SENIOR CONSUMER DEFINITION BASED ON THE NON VARYING ELEMENTS OF THE CONCEPT

The first purpose of this article is to propose a stable senior consumer definition. It means a definition in which there is a consensus from marketers. Hence, such a definition should reflect the three senior consumer properties in which there is a consensus from marketers (Table 1). The second purpose of this article is to propose a definition that could be used empirically by each marketer. Hence, at a later time, a criterion, linked to this stable definition, can be built.

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32 Thirty countries, such as the United State of America, France, Australia, Canada, United Kingdom and Belgium are members of the OECD
II.1. A STABLE DEFINITION OF THE SENIOR CONSUMER

Set mathematical theory has been applied to build this new definition. This theory offers the opportunity to build a clear overall definition based on stable properties. Individuals are considered as mathematical elements named $y_j$, $j \in N$, and living in a field named $E$. Among the individuals, senior consumers are considered as specific mathematical elements named $x_i$, $i \in N$. They are living in a smaller set named $D_f x_i$. $D_f x_i$ is included inside $E$ and is called the senior consumer definition set. Like every definition set, $D_f x_i$ owns stable properties $P_i$ that characterize itself. These properties distinguish the senior consumers (who are living inside $D_f x_i$), from the non senior consumers (who are not living inside $D_f x_i$).

Indeed, each element $x_i$ of $D_f x_i$ is defined by (or owns or fulfils) the set of stable properties $P_i$, whereas the elements $y_j$ that cannot enter $D_f x_i$ are not defined by (or do not own or do not fulfil) the set of the stable properties $P_i$. However, if an element $y_j$ owns the set of properties $P_i$, this element could hence be considered as a senior consumer and allowed to enter $D_f x_i$.

There is a consensus among researchers and practitioners on the three non varying elements listed in Table 1 as characteristics of the senior consumer. Consequently, in order to create a definition that will be used by the greatest number of marketers, these non varying elements of the concept will be considered as the stable properties, $P_i$, of the senior consumer definition set. The combination of these three elements will generate a stable senior consumer definition. Before achieving this combination, each characteristic should have been clearly defined or detailed.

- Consumption behaviour change and chronological age threshold
  The non varying element, quoted (2) in Table 1, is “senior has reached or has passed a threshold chronological age above which some old age signs appear”. As we are considering consumption potential by studying the senior consumer, this age threshold should be considered as a consumption change threshold. It means that a senior consumer is an individual who has reached or who is over a chronological age limit that is the starting point of biological and/or social aging expression. This expression of aging entails a change in the individual’s consumption behaviours.

- Dependency of the chronological age threshold on industry
  The non varying element, quoted (1) in Table 1, is “senior is part of a high potential target for one industry”. The central element within this characteristic is: an individual will be considered as a senior consumer regarding one given industry. This means that an individual could be considered as a senior consumer by industry A and as a non senior consumer by industry B (with $B \neq A$). This element is crucial since it is mainly the origin of the lack of consensus on this concept. This characteristic allows detailing the chronological age threshold discussed previously: this chronological age threshold depends on the type of industry. Above this chronological age limit, the individual’s consumption of products from the given industry has changed. As the senior market is a high potential market for the given industry, we can precise that this change is an increase in the consumption of products.

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$N$: set of the natural numbers (integers)

At the biological level, the ageing of the cells entail different degradations, such as the degradation of the nervous cells that entails sensorial, motive and cognitive loss (Guiot 2006).

At the social level, the author refers to the Roman military use of the term senior (Boulbry 2003). Applied in current societies, social ageing refers to retirement.
Finally, the element, quoted (3) in Table 1, is: “senior feels younger than his/her own chronological age”. This element could be simply expressed in these words: a senior consumer is an individual who feels younger than his/her chronological age.

Considering the set of the three elements detailed, we propose the following definition:

An individual, who is naturally experiencing signs of (social and/or biological) aging, that has initiated changes in his/her consumption of products i, and who feels younger than his/her chronological age, is considered as a senior consumer for the industry i, i ∈ N, N: set of the natural numbers (integers).

A criterion, linked to this definition, is now needed to allow the empirical identification of the senior consumer.

II.2. THE SENIOR CONSUMER INDICATOR

The mathematical translation of the three non varying properties (Table 1) will provide the senior consumer criterion. Indeed, as the definition is based on the set of these three properties, the criterion will be its proper empirical translation. To clarify the terminology used, we will say that the result of the translation of each property is an empirical property or a criterion. Consequently, the translation of the set of properties will be a set of criteria, named indicator.

II.2.1. The Property of Dependency on One Industry i, i ∈ N

An individual will be considered as a senior consumer regarding one given industry. It means that an individual could be considered as a senior consumer by industry A and as a non senior consumer by industry B (with B ≠ A). We propose to express empirically this dependency of the concept to one type of industry, though this formulation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior = Senior (industry i), i ∈ N, N: Set of the natural numbers (integers)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
II.2.2. The Chronological Age Threshold’s Properties and the Consequences of Aging over This Threshold: First Criterion

We have to translate the following definition: “a senior consumer is an individual who has reached or who is over a chronological age limit that is the starting point of biological and/or social aging expression. This expression of aging entails a change in the individual’s consumption behaviours”. First, the empirical translation focuses on the chronological age threshold. This threshold owns two noticeable properties. First, as we have noticed it previously, this chronological age threshold depends on the industry of interest. Hence, empirically:

\[ \text{Chronological age threshold} = \text{Chronological age threshold (industry i)}, \text{ where i} \in \mathbb{N} \]

Second, this chronological age threshold is dynamic. Indeed, it is dependent on the historical period of time, and could change from one decade or century to another. Hence, empirically:

\[ \text{Chronological age threshold} = \text{Chronological age threshold (industry i, t)}, \text{ where i} \in \mathbb{N} \]

Finally, above this chronological age limit, the individual’s consumption of products from the given industry has changed. As we have seen it previously, this change is an increase in the consumption of products. That is why, for a given industry i, we draw on the graph [1] the impact of the chronological age threshold on the senior’s consumption of the products.

**Figure 1 Impact of the chronological age threshold on consumption**

Consequently, the criterion linked to this property is:

**Criterion**

At a given date t, and for a given industry i, an individual is considered as a senior consumer if:

\[ \text{Chronological age}_{\text{individual}} = \text{chronological age threshold (industry i, t)}, \text{ where i} \in \mathbb{N} \]

II.2.3. The Tendency of feeling Younger: Second criterion

The concept of youth age (Barak and Gould, 1985), also called the tendency of feeling younger (Guiot, 2005), is useful for empirically translating the third definition. Indeed, the variable of youth age has already been introduced as the discrepancy between a
respondent’s chronological age and their cognitive age (Barak and Schiffman, 1981; Stephens, 1991; Wilkes, 1992; Dune and Turley, 1997). The discrepancy is symbolised by \( \Delta \), and is calculated this way:

\[ \Delta = \text{chronological age} - \text{cognitive age} \]

This variable reflects the number of years a person perceives him/herself to be younger (if the result is \( \Delta > 0 \)), or older (if the result is \( \Delta < 0 \)) than his/her chronological age (Barak and Gould, 1985). Consequently, the empirical translation of the third property is:

**Criterion**

An individual is considered as a senior consumer if \( \Delta = 0 \)

Consequently, the indicator, based on the set of these three criteria, is:

Considering an individual at one given date \( t \),

\[
\begin{cases} 
1. (\text{chronological age})_{\text{individual}} = (\text{chronological age threshold (industry i, t)}) \\
\text{AND} \\
2. \Delta = (\text{chronological age})_{\text{individual}} - (\text{cognitive age})_{\text{individual}} = 0 
\end{cases}
\]

**Hence** this individual is a senior consumer for the industry \( i \)

Graphically, the senior consumer indicator could be defined as below:

**Figure 2. Senior Consumer Indicator**

II.3. The Identification of the Senior Consumer for the Tourism Industry

The application of the indicator to the tourism industry requires the identification of the chronological age threshold for this industry. This means identifying the threshold
that activates an increase in an individual’s tourism consumption. Considering the impact of free time (when retired) on tourism consumption (Shoemaker, 1989; Supernaw, 1985; Tamaro-Hans, 1999), the retirement age is the chronological age threshold. Consequently:

```
Considering an individual at one given date t,
If
1. (chronological age)_{individual} = (retirement age (t))
AND
2. \( ? = (chronological age)_{individual} - (cognitive age)_{individual} = 0 \)

Hence this individual is a senior consumer for the tourism industry
```

This definition provides a stable conceptual framework for research on the senior traveller. It also emphasizes the importance of the variable \(?\), youth age, on the study of the seniors’ tourism consumption behaviours.

CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, the senior consumer definition that was built could be considered as a first attempt to establish a stable conceptual framework for research on the senior consumer.

Even if this definition does not solve the issue of comparing results between studies dealing with different industries, the conceptual framework built provides several advantages. First, it provides an opportunity for marketers to agree on a unique senior consumer definition. Second, it provides a relevant tool, the indicator, which empirically identifies the senior consumer for each industry. Third, the dependency on the variable of time, \( t \), allows this conceptual framework to be used today but also in future years as well. Finally, it justifies the use of \(?\) in senior consumer research, particularly in the tourism industry. Several issues could then be addressed: the use of \(?\) as a segmentation tool has already led to interesting findings (Cleaver and Muller 1998) and needs further investigations; the study of the influence of \(?\) on the information channels’ choice could help reach the target more efficiently. This research is all the more needed in countries such as France, where the senior consumer has received very little attention.

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Abstract: The sustainable development meets the current needs, without harming the development capacity of the next generations. Sustainable development is closely linked with the issue of environment, with the keeping of the environment within the normal parameters, so that the attractions and the splendors offered would have continuity in time.

The attraction elements of Romania in the field of rural tourism are special. From ancient times, one could notice and still can notice a strong tradition and a multi-millenary rural culture. The popular customs, as well as the entire wealth of the folklore constitutes sine qua non elements for the entire rural ambience.

The folklore of the rural areas provides for the identity of each geographical area of the country. In the course of time, the purity of the ancient culture has been preserved. Due to its vitality, in the course of time, the folkloric culture has been perpetuated, with different accents, dictated by the specific mark of each rural community. It is necessary and important that the heading of the Romanian culture not to be an unknown one, especially now, when the message of modernism has been quickly spread in the rural area too and messages and elements against the traditional values have been sent.

Nowadays, there is the risk that the values would be diminished, eliminated from the life of the rural communities. The organizing of activities that would assure the keeping of the traditions alive is now necessary.

Keywords: agriculture, touristic activity, mountain opportunities, agricultural tourism, economic development

INTRODUCTION

The Romanian mountain area represent about a third of the national territory and it is at the same time the largest European mountain massif within the same borders. The surface is of 79,919 km², out of which 53.3% is covered by forests, with a 74.4% degree of aforrestation and 42% agricultural lands, constituting 46% of the territory of 28 counties, within 729 communes, with 3960 villages and 92 mountain cities. Population: 3614000 inhabitants (45 inhabitants/km²), out of which 2100000 are farmers who own about 1000000 private farms, most of them being of subsistence, in which they perform a traditional agriculture, animal husbandry being the main occupation. In the rural and pre-city environment the populations' incomes come from agriculture (30-40%) and pluriactivities (forestry, mining, processing industries, services, handicrafts and so on). The farms are the main job provider for the industrial sectors.
The agricultural products are not polluted and of high biological quality. In spite of the farms’ subsistence character, the mountain area has an important potential for producing goods, especially as far as the animal products are concerned: milk, meat, leather, wool. An important aspect is the fact that these goods are obtained with minimum consumption of cereals and energy (oil and electricity). The energetic consumptions per product unit are higher but are based on recyclable energies. Another characteristic of the mountain areas is the fact that they are naturally (altitude, climate, slopes, low soil fertility, isolation) and structurally (ageing of the active population and the exodus tendencies, restrictive occupation, great distances to the decisional centers, insufficient infrastructure and so on) disadvantaged.

The main riches of the mountain areas are and must remain the following:
- forests – source of raw materials and energy
- agricultural lands – for animal breeding and production of quality food
- waters – for energy and drinkable water used by the cities
- population – especially the agricultural one, healthy and energetic, which provides decentralized colonization of the national territory and the preservation of the cultural landscape

MOUNTAIN AGRICULTURE

It is a marginalized agriculture, with low technologies and low vegetal and animal outputs. The isolation, the lack of production factors and professional and economical bodies, the lack of vocational training of farmers on the specificity of the mountain economy make the mountain area not only a disadvantaged area but also an extremely vulnerable area from the economical and social points of view – and this could lead to demographical exodus and environment degradation.

The European integration of the Romanian mountain area implies the development in specific balanced ecosystems, based on the family farms and the private property, continuing the traditions and the pluriactivity.

Decrease of the mining and other industrial activities have generated a high number of unemployed people whose properties are too small to ensure their existence. In the Romanian mountain area where the basic structure – the family farm – exists, the shift from the centralized to the market economy cannot be done by restructuring the production units but by reorganizing the environment upstream and downstream the agricultural farms: supplying, storing and selling the products, organizing the credits and so on.

The dominant is given by the quality factor, in all fields of activity, by a balanced agri-forest concept, pluriactivity and by turning the resources into account.

A main strong point is represented by the fact that the family farms already exist, the farmers exist, the only necessary thing being the modernization and development of family households.

An alternative would be to modernize the family households whose structure will remain constant or will only be modified when the number of non-agricultural jobs will constantly increase.

In parallel, new activities can be created – related to wood, rural tourism and agri-tourism, small non-polluting industries.
THE PREMISES OF ARRANGING THE MOUNTAIN AREA FOR TOURISM

The implications of tourism development of an area show the necessity to approach this development through a global conception in which the development of tourism on that territory has to be in correlation with the other activities and sectors, together making a contribution to the environmental-friendly behavior. Development of rural tourism has to be part of the general strategy for economical-social development of this area.

For this, one needs to know the following elements first:

- the evaluation of all categories of economical, financial and social categories existing in that area for which the project of arranging the territory for tourism is conceived, in order to assess the area’s social and economical potential for development;
- the definition of the directions and orientations of economical growth in the area;
- the evaluation of possibilities and limits of tourism development

The mountains, as tourism and week-end destination have always been on top of tourists’ preferences, its place within the tourism traffic being determined by its plurivalence and its accessibility the entire year.

In the last years, the mountains have attracted a great part of the tourism circulation, as a result of both the intensification of tourism phenomena and the relatively recent increase of the interest in winter games. The development of mountain “industrial tourism” at large scale, as well as the development of winter sports requires a tourism arrangement of the mountains.

In conclusion, the tourism arrangement of the mountain area comprises diversified issues which need to be solved, by using specific methods and techniques.

The issues regarding the tourism arrangement of the mountain area comprise the following main aspects:

- tourism arrangement for providing the material base for development of winter sports and mountain “classic tourism”
- tourism arrangement of mountain countryside for establishing the necessary conditions for development of rural, ecological and cultural tourism and development of agri-mountain tourism
- tourism arrangement of national parks (regional) and natural reservations
- tourism arrangement of spa areas

These aspects, which can be different from one area to another, must not be treated separately, because they complement each other. For instance, rural tourism and agri-tourism can be combined with any of the other aspects, thus providing cheaper solutions, especially for solving the problems concerning accommodation and meals.

The predominance of great sports areas, parks, reservations or nature and cultural-historical monuments can determine a certain particularization of rural tourism and mountain agri-tourism.
ARRANGING THE MOUNTAIN HOUSEHOLDS FOR TOURISM

In 28 counties with mountain area from Romania we have identified more than 4000 households and agri-tourism hostels.

The concept and structure of households

The household is created by a group of persons who normally live together, are related to one another and have a life in common. These persons have a full or partial contribution to the household’s budget of incomes and expenses, work together the land or breed animals. The households can have one person or a group of two or more persons, with or without children. Within the household the head is the person who is recognized as such by the other members, in most of the cases the husband. The important decisions are reached in agreement with the other family members.

The traditional household, under the natural and diversified conditions typical for the mountain areas and facing the general evolution of modern life’s requirements cannot reach a level of proficiency that would determine the next generations to remain in the area and to continue breeding animals and developing production. In this context, it is necessary to enhance the economical and social functions, to improve tourism’s organizing and to amplify its destinations.

In general, the way the traditional mountain household is built solves the condition of isolation but do not support the development of the zootechnics production, there are problems regarding the fact that areas too large are occupied with constructions (the house, the annexes and the stable are separate) and they require large quantities of construction materials, the access is not so easy and the functionality is low.

When somebody decides to improve or re-arrange the house must keep the local archaic and rural specificity. The interest in preserving the past civilization must be turned into account. That’s why the specificity displayed by the construction materials, work techniques, architecture, decorations, furniture, clothes, food and drinks, language, crafts and so on must be rediscovered, identified and protected against the bad influences of the cities’ civilization. It is well-known that in general what is authentic is also simple and functional. Also well-known is the fact that the inhabitants of cities appreciate and admire the values of the Romanian village. For them, the apparent easy living is paid with stress, overcrowding and pollution.

The house and the household must be harmoniously integrated into the natural environment, without being strident. The façade and the entry must be decorated in concordance with the local architecture, providing harmony between the construction and the surrounding vegetation. Although it is good to have traditional equipments within the households and dwellings, it is also necessary to introduce some elements of modern comfort (stove, refrigerator and so on).

The main condition for an agri-tourism farm is to have enough rooms for the family and extra comfortable rooms for tourists. This means that the rooms for tourists should be separated from the ones used by the family.

CONCLUSIONS

Agri-tourism represents a chance for the inhabitants of villages, the inhabitants being willing to try a new seasonal (about 100 days per year) activity which would bring
them extra incomes. Agriculture remains the basic occupation for the people who practice agri-tourism.

The importance of agri-tourism does not consist only in obtaining extra incomes but also in the contribution to at least 4 great achievements with social value:
- continuity for agricultural activities in a poor productive environment
- prevention of the increase of cities’ unemployment rate
- urban society’s return to origins – the young generations raised in the cities once again have contact with the rural area
- major contribution to increasing the civilization degree for a great category of population, the farmers, who live isolated, by improving the life conditions.

If to these we add the good effects of an improved infrastructure we have a major increase of life quality.
- agri-tourism represents the safest, quickest and most efficient way to increase the quality or rural products, with direct results generated by the interest manifested by the urban population.
- The direct effect of practicing agri-tourism and rural tourism on the urban population is that the labor force is increased, the health status of adults and children is increased as well and the children are educated to respect the real values and the farmers. We must not forget that the children raised in cities do not have a rural culture, they know nothing about the realities in the villages. Thus, agri-tourism becomes a way for them to complete their education.

Performing agri-tourism means not only that the household’s incomes increase but also that the civilization degree of the rural population is increased too, by:
- human and animal hygiene
- kind social behavior
- good sense
- better information
- new knowledge on management
- preservation of valuable cultural traditions
- new skills for the farmers (foreign languages, computer literacy and so on)
- better social life

Sustainable development of rural area is the main reason why somebody should start practicing agri-tourism. Efficient use of the natural environment and of the farms’ products – by development of agriculture and tourism.

Tourists expect the tourism product to reflect the main characteristics of the household. They want to see small animals, to eat homemade products and regional specialties, they want to have a direct contact with the host, they want fresh air and solitude. They want to learn more about the rural traditions, culture and nature and about the religious traditions.

They also want to practice sports and to go hiking. In the rural area they can find cultural identity and traditions, harmoniously combined. Development of mountain agri-tourism certainly leads to integrated development of the Romanian mountain village.

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COMPANY SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THE MULTICULTURAL CONTEXT
CASE STUDY: ACCOR GROUP

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Abstract: The knowledge gained in the last few years showed that, at least in the developed part of the world, organizations, aware of the importance of social responsibility in management strategy and business, became more ethical. Also, it has been told that if the nineties were named the decade of hunger corporations, the present decade represents the years of assuming responsibilities.

On the other hand, once the globalization process have been speeded up, it became obvious that CSR is not neutral, culturally speaking, even though there were a lot of ethical values with universal vocation. At the same time, the impact of culture on ethical behaviour plays a very important role and it also depends on the way in which some ethical problems are perceived, how significance they are for people and for organizations.

ACCOR Group is one of multinational companies who operate in a multicultural context and this fact is reflected by the CSR practice. Discussing about this example, this paper try to examine and demonstrate the necessity and efficiency of the CSR’s adaptation process at every local culture (using the modern tools of communication), but also at the cultural differences that could exist in or around the company.

Keywords: company social responsibility, organizational culture, cultural diversity, equal opportunities.

"If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer" Henry David Thoreau

The changing business environment, the changes in communication technology, the political changes, encourage and facilitate the emergence of global business, transnational companies and the emergence of common markets around the world. Free-trade agreements, such as NAFTA or more dynamic organizations such as the European Union, have given rise to enormous possible markets for a large amount of companies. The premise of ‘globalization’ is in fact the most important single concept emerging in today’s market economies.

With the emergence of a global economy, the export of business culture and business interests is evident. Today bigger companies are run no longer in a “national” way, but are strongly influenced by one management style or another.

In those conditions, while the media is essentially a one way communication process, where the feedback is only very marginally provided (by means of viewer ratings), the
Internet offers the possibility of a far more interactive experience, with a feedback directly provided.

1. COMMUNICATION AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Diversity is often perceived as disparity, variation, plurality, that is, the opposite of uniformity and homogeneity. In its first and literal sense, cultural diversity then refers quite simply to the multiplicity of cultures or cultural identities. This vision has now been superseded, though, as for many experts “diversity” is not so much defined in opposition to “homogeneity” as in opposition to “disparity”. It is synonymous with dialogue and shared values. In fact, the concept of cultural diversity, like that of biodiversity, goes further, in that it envisages the multiplicity of cultures in a systemic perspective where each culture develops and evolves through contact with other cultures [Kiyindou 2006].

Searching the international literature, we can find multiple definitions of cultural diversity:

- Variety or multiformity of human social structures, belief systems, and strategies for adapting to situations in different parts of the world (www.traditionalknowledge.info);
- The mosaic of individuals and groups with varying backgrounds, experiences, styles, perceptions, values and beliefs (www.culturalpartnerships.org);
- Ways in which the cultures of social groups and societies find expression. From the diverse forms taken by culture over time and space stem the uniqueness and plurality of the identities and cultural expressions of the peoples and societies that make up humankind (UNESCO);
- The variety of human societies or cultures in a specific region, or in the world as a whole (The term is also sometimes used to refer to multiculturalism within an organization) (www.wikipedia.org);
- Coexistence of numerous distinct ethnic, racial, religious, or cultural groups within one social unit, organization, or population;
- Differences in race, ethnicity, language, nationality, or religion among various groups within a community, organization, or nation.

Conclusioning, the cultural diversity is a multiplicity of sub-cultures and different value systems in a plural or multicultural society. It is one of the information & knowledge management subject.

Each nation seems to have its own character. The attempt to define what makes each of the characters distinct will provide massive difficulties. The idea of a “national character” is based on the assumption that people from one nation share basic common behavioural patterns and personality traits, differentiable from other nations; but the concept has however been often criticized, and findings in that field have been often contradictory, particularly from highly diversified cultures. The methodological difficulties may be one of the reasons why the term “national character” has widely been replaced with “basic personality” or “social character” in modern literature [Dahl 2006].

On the ethical level, the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, adopted on November 2nd, 2004 recognizes cultural diversity to be the “common heritage of humanity. In our increasingly diverse societies, it is essential to ensure harmonious interaction among people and groups with plural, varied and dynamic cultural identities as well as their willingness to live together. Cultural diversity widens the range of options
open to everyone; it is one of the roots of development, understood not simply in terms of economic growth, but also as a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence.”

The scientific community has woken up to the risk of the uniformisation of culture, as a consequence of the globalization, even if it theoretically enables the manifestation of cultural diversity. This is because the new information and communication technologies, far from being tools, model our ways of thinking and creating. As a result, culture becomes inhabited by technology, in a dialogue with it, sometimes containing it and allowing itself to be elaborated by it. The evolution of information and communication societies must rest on respect for and promotion of the rights of indigenous communities and their distinctive nature.

Organizations around the world has been realizing the cultural diversity within organization is not a negative aspect, rather can facilitate organizational performance. On a broader perspective, cultural diversity can be manage through communicating (creating awareness among all employees about diverse values of peers through communication), cultivating (facilitating acknowledgement, support and encouragement of any employee’ success by all other workers), and capitalizing (linking diversity to every business process and strategy).

Many organizational examples can be taken in this regard. In Australia, for instance, Hotel Nikko in Sydney has unique edge that staff members in direct guest contact areas speak a total of 34 different languages. Similarly Qantas Flight Catering has sixty-six nationalities on staff, with various overseas-born chefs. So dedicated diverse “ethnic” kitchens gave Qantas a huge competitive edge that offers food based on customer's ethnic taste and requirements [Vaneeva 2006].

On the other hand, recent years have seen considerable attention paid to diversity programs in the workplace. In the workplace, diversity has evolved to be seen as highly desirable in many organizations, giving companies an edge in the market and enriching the creativity of the workforce. In other companies, diversity programs are implemented only as a way to prevent lawsuits or unfavourable publicity, but the corporate culture as a whole does not necessarily embrace diversity.

2. CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

The organisation has a double responsibility: economical and social. From the economic point of view the main purpose would be obtaining the profit, a market quotation or other similar objectives; the social responsibility implies the production of quality goods and services, the search of economical efficiency on legal and fair ways, the implication of the employees and the development of human resources, respecting the environment, paying the fiscal obligations to the State and local communities etc. [Tigu 2004]. The two sides of the company responsibility don’t exclude themselves but the company objectives must have in sight both aspects.

In order to perform the good corporate citizen role, organisations should fulfil a number of responsibilities, which include: economic responsibilities, that is, to earn a fair return on capital to satisfy shareholders, deliver value for money to satisfy customers, create new jobs and new wealth for the business; legal responsibilities, to comply with national and international laws; ethical responsibilities, to be ethical and fair, respect people's rights, avoid harm or social injury and prevent harm caused by others; and
philanthropic responsibilities, that is, to perform beneficial activities for society. For competitive organisations, good corporate citizenship must not remain confined to better economic outcomes. There is an increasing tendency to also pay close attention to ethical and philanthropic dimensions of social responsibility [Syed 2006].

CSR is a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis. Corporate social responsibility is the commitment of businesses to contribute to sustainable economic development by working with employees, their families, the local community and society at large to improve their lives in ways that are good for business and for development.

Corporate Social Responsibility is increasingly found on the international agenda as globalization continues. It is a factor that determines client and consumer decisions and is a competitive advantage in the market.

In order to create a more rounded and balanced organisation, it is essential that diversity is weaved into strategy, corporate ethics, customer and market relationships, recruitment career planning, training and personal policies and activities. Essentially, the inclusion of diversity has to be woven into the fabric of the corporation itself.

Valuing diversity means making decisions based on merit, encouraging different perspectives, and challenging behaviours that undermine other cultural or gender groups. Valuing diversity means developing attitudes, practices and procedures that provide genuine equality of treatment and opportunity for all employees, regardless of issues such as gender, religious belief, age, disability, sex or ethnic origin.

Employees constitute an important group of stakeholders. Their values and concerns about an organisation’s employment policies, and social impacts of organisation’s operations must be taken into account in formulating organizational responses towards diversity and sustainability. From social responsibility perspective, it is important to translate values like “inclusion” and team/group work” into specific practices such as the criteria for recruitment, appraisal and rewards. In this respect, managing diversity may offer a useful starting point for developing socially responsible policies.

3. ACCOR GROUP - A GOOD EXPERIENCE FOR COMBINING CSR AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

ACCOR is the European leader in hotels and tourism, global leader in corporate services, and operates in nearly 100 countries, counting around 170,000 employees.

With more than 4,000 hotels worldwide, covering all segments from economy to upper scale, ACCOR offers hotel services tailored to each customer’s needs. It has long positioned itself in many countries around the world as a provider of innovative services to meet growing demand for solutions that enable companies and public institutions to improve productivity, while responding to the legitimate aspirations of their employees and for a better quality of life.
Figure 1. ACCOR’s expansion in the World

Source: www.accorgroup.com

ACCOR has opened more than 50,000 new rooms since early 2006, of which 28,000 in 2007. There are another 93,000 rooms in the pipeline and in the most recent development plan ACCOR is planning to open 200,000 new rooms between 2006 and 2010.

Overall, 92% of the openings in 2007 were in the economy and midscale segments, 38% were in emerging markets and 93% through low capital-intensive ownership structures (variable leases, management contracts or franchise agreements). In 2006-2007, ACCOR invested €745 million for its share in a €2.5 billion expansion program planned between 2006 and 2010.

Figure 2. Employees by region

ACCOR Group manifests the social responsibility toward:

- **Customers:** For more than 40 years, ACCOR has constantly reinvented its core competencies to keep pace with the world around it, with the goal of providing innovative, high quality products to Hotels and Services customers. ACCOR hotels have more than 120 million customers worldwide and 30 million people in 40 countries benefit from ACCOR Services products.

- **Suppliers:** Purchases from 2,274 certified suppliers in 15 countries totaled more than €1 billion. In 2006, the Sustainable Development Purchasing charter was tested with 547 suppliers in France. 1,500 additional hotels now support fair trade initiatives.

- **Employees:** ACCOR had 170,000 employees in 2006. In January 2007, a Group-wide agreement on diversity signed. Initiatives to diversify hiring, upgrade skills and promote job mobility were pursued. Listening to employees and recognizing their accomplishments are important ways of maintaining a constructive social dialogue.

- **Environment:** Every year, ACCOR consumes as much water as a city of 850,000 inhabitants and as much energy as a city of 350,000. Expanded in 2005, the Environment Charter now includes 65 actions intended to help protect natural resources and address the issue of climate change. In 2006, 3228 hotels applied the charter.

- **Local community:** More than 4,000 hotels around the world and a corresponding number of local communities with who ties are being developed. As a responsible player in the tourism industry, ACCOR is committed to eliminating sexual tourism involving children. More than 6,000 employees have been trained to fight against the sexual exploitation of children. The Group relies on the expertise of a recognized international NGO, ECPAT. In addition, the sustainable development actions carried out in our hotels are extended by solidarity actions in favor of local communities.

- **Shareholders:** ACCOR’s growth is financed by institutional investors. Executive and management functions are carried out in line with the principles of good corporate governance. In 2006, ACCOR was included in the following independent ethical ratings and sustainability indices: ASPI (Advanced Sustainable Performance Indices), FTSE4Good, Dow Jones Sustainability Index, Ethibel Pioneer Global Index.

ACCOR develops and reinforces its Corporate Sponsorship actions in every country where it operates. At the heart of this solidarity, the Group employees commit
themselves with recognized partners to support people in need. Furthermore, ACCOR supports internationally renowned cultural events and institutions noted for their excellence, open-mindedness and innovative spirit that reflect the Group’s fundamental values. Across all brands and countries, ACCOR employees are involved every day in providing assistance to the disadvantaged working with local and international partners in favor of Child Aid (Czech Republic, Brazil, Morocco, Vietnam, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, Fiji, New-Zealand), Local Aid (France, United States, Germany etc.) and Healthcare.

In France, ACCOR support the cultural activity, in fact the Théâtre du Châtelet (in the heart of Paris) or the Aix-en-Provence Festival.

Every hotel chain of ACCOR has developed sponsorship actions in the world of sport, as part of the international marketing strategies of its brands (Sofitel – international golf events, Novotel – France soccer, Mercure – French rugby team, Etap – cycle Tour de France etc.).

CONCLUSIONS

There are many different innovative ways that organizations have adopted to manage diversity. If cultural diversity can be managed effectively, there is a potential to use diverse workforce for organizational benefits.

Diversity is a source of opportunity in two main areas: employing people and selling. Appreciation of the differences within the workforce improves group dynamics and helps create an environment where teams can perform to their full potential.

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GLOBALIZATION AND INTEGRATION PROCESSES IN TOURISM
IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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Abstract: Tourism plays an important role in the consumption of people. It contributes substantially to the development of national economy and to the improvement of employment in individual regions of the Czech Republic. Tourism development has proved a positive growth since 1989, but in the same time it has shown that its further development will depend on the ability of Czech economy to respond to the process connected with globalization in world’s economy. The main objective of the research at the Tourism Department in 2006-2007 was to stipulate individual globalization features in tourism, to indicate its benefits and impacts and prepare recommendations for the future. Special attention was paid to education of tourism managers and to necessary changes in the educational process. The research was carried out within projects of internal grant agency of the University of Economics Prague, Fund for University Development of the MŠMT (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport) of the Czech Republic and now it goes on within a research project of the Faculty of International Relations called Governance in a globalized economy and society.

Examing features of globalization in tourism, the following hypotheses were set:
• Globalization has both positive and negative effects on activities of tourism businesses and can be clearly seen in the Czech Republic already now.
• Globalization brings changes into management of tourism businesses and work teams. These changes must be reflected in education of managers for this field.

1. GLOBALIZATION AND INTEGRATION PROCESSES IN TOURISM

Globalization is a characteristic feature of development of current society. Effects of globalization in national economy were studied e.g. by Keller, P.-1996, Levitt, T.-1985³. One of the most precise definitions of globalization is that of the OECD, which states² that globalization is a process increasing the dependence of markets and national economies, process initiated by high dynamics of trade in goods, capital, services and transfers of technologies and know-how. It is an irreversible process affecting all spheres of society’s life. Gúcik -2004- applied this definition to the conditions of tourism and states³: “Globalization in tourism – development and deepening of international relations at worldwide level; megatrend accompanied by liberalization and growth in competitiveness in the market caused by progress in technology. In tourism it is a result of development of transport and telecommunication technologies, rise of new markets in post-communist countries and more experienced tourists. Growing globalization in tourism brings offer of new products and areas, rise of new multinational companies, access to new remote destinations, offer of industrially prepared, standardized and unified brands and global products cutting costs and edging small and middle-sized enterprises out of the market, orientation of businesses at values preferred by customers. - but it also brings care for local
At the beginning globalization means mainly concentration of tourism businesses into larger units. This process can be witnessed at a larger scale after the World War II, first in the USA, later also in other countries. Progress in science and technology and gradual rise of international organizations supporting cooperation of individual countries in many fields make integration processes easier. Historically the oldest international grouping is e.g. McDonald’s in food service (1948) and companies Intercontinental (1946) or Holiday Inn (1952) in accommodation industry. The biggest concentration in transport services (particularly among airline companies) can be witnessed in the 70’s of the 20th century. Integration and gradual interconnection of national economies bring a number of advantages but also threats which may influence future development in particular countries to a relatively high extend.

1.1 POSITIVE EFFECTS OF GLOBALIZATION IN TOURISM

• **Increased pressure on quality of services offered**
  This pressure can be seen in all tourism businesses. At the beginning the quality is guaranteed by standards, which must be adhered to during construction and running of food and accommodation facilities. Hotel chains, which pay a big attention to the quality of services, can be a good example. Quality manuals are strictly controlled and adequate consequences for the management are driven in case failings are found. At present, however, there is a complement to the modern concept of quality – suitability and qualification for the given target. Quality is not only a technical issue any more, it is connected with the issues such as habits of guests and their financial situation. Quality is seen as a central issue in the management of businesses and gradually it is becoming their competitive advantage. We gradually move from mere quality control to quality management.
  At present a number of tourism businesses in the Czech Republic are already certified. Certification in accommodation services follows the recommended categorization and classification. Certification of accommodation facilities is carried out by the following professional associations:
  - Hotel and Restaurant Association of the Czech Republic
  - Campsites and Bungalow Communities of the Czech Republic – Trade Association
  - Association of Rural Tourism
  - Club of Czech Tourists
  After joining the EU tourism businesses started to be increasingly interested in certification, particularly hotels, travel agencies and spa facilities oriented at foreign clients.
  Regarding transport services, quality plays an important role in the choice of the means of transport and choice of a transport company.

• **Rapid spread of modern technologies**
  Modern technologies are applied almost in all tourism businesses in the Czech Republic now. Their application improves the quality of offered services, property protection and guest safety and security, it changes the ways of communication and product promotion. Franchising helps to spread modern technologies very fast. This system started...
to be applied in food and accommodation service in the 60’s of the last century. However, a vast increase in international franchising started in the 80’s. Pioneers of franchising in food and accommodation services were McDonald’s and Holiday Inn. The system of franchising enables the owner of a brand, design or logo to sell the right to use this brand, special technologies, know-how and good-will created by the owner of the brand to a business partner. The business relation between a mother company and a franchisee, an independent trader, is based on a franchising agreement which solves in detail the rights and duties between a franchisor and franchisee.

At present a number of tourism businesses in the Czech Republic use this model. It is still a question if all signed franchising agreements, particularly the agreements from the 90’s of the last century, were always advantageous for traders, as the legal system of the Czech Republic did not know this concept then. The speed with which this form of trading is growing can be seen at e.g. McDonald’s chain, which entered the Czech market in 1992 by opening 3 restaurants. In 2005 this chain ran 72 restaurants. During the years this system has spread also among Czech companies and has very good results. A good example is a hotel company called Orea Hotels.

The development of modern technologies in transport services substantially shortened the time needed to reach far destinations and completely changed the system of reservation and communication between a seller and a participant of tourism. Global reservation and information systems gradually spread from airline companies even to road and water transport, they are newly used also by travel agencies, accommodation facilities and lately we can meet them even in providing cultural or sport and recreational services.

- **Transition to a new marketing oriented system of management of tourism businesses**

  Application of marketing by tourism businesses was slightly delayed compared to e.g. industrial businesses. Experts estimate that the delay represents approximately 10-20 years. Almost up to 1990 sales and production orientation with all its negative impacts on the development and competitiveness is typical for Czech tourism businesses. Only after 1990 one can gradually witness transition to marketing orientation, based on systematic watching the situation in the market and learning customer’s needs and wishes. Market research starts to be consistently utilized and its results enable a gradual improvement of long-term strategic planning and utilize guest segmentation for targeted creation of marketing mix for different segments of guests. Marketing is becoming an important part of tourism business management. It is applied in destination management and helps in strategic decision-making about future development of individual regions.

- **Gradual recognition of modern methods in management (Total Quality Management, Yield Management)**

  Total Quality Management (TQM) – a modern way of management based mainly on top quality of provided services dates back approximately to the 80’s of the last century, when globalization of world’s economy speeded up and national economies started to link. Introduction of new technologies resulting in internationalization of production and linking of companies in different fields of economy supported this trend. Competitiveness is improved to a substantial extend and companies seek new ways to strengthen their position in the market. Quality is becoming a part of marketing in leading companies in different branches and it penetrates even into their slogans. We can say that it is the most important driving force leading to success and prosperity in national and international markets.
In professional literature one can find a number of different definitions underpinning different aspects of this modern concept of management. Some authors emphasize that this is a concept of management supposing a continual development and innovation. The others stress that it is a method of developing abilities of employees so that they were able to meet the needs of their clients. Summarizing basic ideas of individual authors, we can state that: Total Quality Management is a strategy oriented managerial system for ensuring quality, a system with clearly documented tasks, competences and responsibilities, focused on continuous improvement of ways leading to meeting client’s needs and wishes with the lowest costs possible.

- orientation at a client
- work in teams
- management through information
- continuous improvement
- managing work teams

After 1989 introduction of TQM into tourism businesses together with their certification under standards ISO 9000 was something new which was discussed much and considered for the future. At present there are a number of tourism businesses certified under TQM and a certificate of quality is becoming their competitive advantage.

Yield Management is a modern method for yield optimizing. It can be used in many branches of service industry where prices are set with the help of client segmentation and statistic analyses of the development of demand in a certain period (month, week, individual days). The aim is to enhance the market of the given service and increase the revenue per capacity unit. We can say that Yield Management tries to increase the achieved turnover by adjusting prices and changing the structure of the offered prices with regard to changing market conditions. Yield Management can improve economic results of tourism businesses:

- by increasing occupancy of seats in planes, trains or buses, rooms in hotels
- by reducing the number of guests deciding for other accommodation facility
- and at the same time by maximizing achieved turnover from each seat or room sold in relation to elasticity of demand and supply.

If in the 90’s of the last century Czech tourism businesses started to be familiar with this modern method of yield optimizing. We can say that at present many big accommodation facilities commonly use some features, this method is based on. E.g. they systematically monitor demand during a week, month, and year and regularly evaluate its curve. Data about development of demand during a week are used for decision-making about occupancy level in successive years, regarding different segments of clients and to setting the rate of overbooking. Price strategy for individual parts of a year and different segments of clients also depends on the development of demand. A barrier to wider spread and utilization of Yield Management are high costs of software which must be created specifically for particular tourism businesses. This is why in 2007 the Tourism Department of the University of Economics Prague started to cooperate with a Czech software company on the development of a reservation system based on the principles of yield management for small and middle-sized enterprises. Another participant in this project funded from a grant of the Ministry of Industry of the Czech Republic was CVUT – Faculty of Electrotechnique. Now this specialized software is almost ready and is tested within a
special seminar by tourism students of master study programmes at the Faculty of International Relations of the University of Economics Prague.

- **Pressure on cooperation of tourism businesses while catering for the needs of tourism participants**
  
  Tourism businesses in the Czech Republic still have substantial reserves in this area. A number of entrepreneurs don’t realize that systematic cooperation between tourism businesses (transport companies, travel agencies, accommodation facilities, food service and catering facilities, information centres, sport and cultural facilities, etc.) and coordination of their activities within regional administrative units are needed to meet the needs of tourism participants. Development of destination management is slow and there is often a lack of qualified workers to introduce it systematically. Even despite considerable effort of professional associations cooperation of tourism businesses in the Czech Republic seems to belong to its weaknesses.

- **Pressure on environmentally-friendly behaviour of tourism businesses**

  Environmentally-friendly behaviour of tourism businesses belongs to prerequisite of sustainable tourism development and forms its important part. Sustainable development as a global issue has been discussed since the 70’s of the last century. This issue has gradually become a topic of many international conferences and seminars. In the Czech Republic attention to sustainable development has been paid since the 90’s of the last century, particularly in connection with our access to the EU. New legislation regulating the development in many industries, branches and regions was created. Tourism businesses slowly realize that sustainable tourism development means meeting the needs of tourism participants in the way that would support the development of the region and lead to long-term prosperity of the given region without threatening that the needs of future generations might not be satisfied. Tasks in ecology are becoming marketing objectives of dominant tourism businesses and meeting them represent their competitive advantage.

  Tourism Department of the University of Economics Prague pays considerable attention to the issues of sustainable tourism development in its educational programmes. This situation is caused by the fact that its graduates – tourism managers - can, to considerable extend, influence development in regions and participate in conservation of nature and cultural heritage of the given country. In 2006 the Department received a grant “Sustainable tourism development in the Czech republic” from the Czech Grant Agency. The main objective of the project was to analyse a current situation in application of sustainable tourism development principles by tourism businesses as well as their application within regional units. In the future it would be interesting to include also selected EU countries in the research.

  Globalization is connected also with a number of threats which might, provided that we don’t anticipate them in time, become a barrier to further development.

**1.2 THREATS CONNECTED WITH GLOBALIZATION**

- **Increased competition**

  At the beginning increased competition creates pressure on the quality of services provided. However, in case of wrong implementation of state policy supporting tourism in the given country, increased competition may gradually cause bankruptcy of domestic companies and domestic management. This concerns particularly state policy on creating...
conditions for entrepreneurial activities in tourism, which means fiscal policy, credit policy or employment policy. We can see already today that top positions in hotels which joined international hotel chains are occupied mostly by foreign managers. Mutual linking of economies brings also inflow of cheap labour force, which may, in future lead to stagnation of pays of sales and operational workers and result in pressure on excessive increase in labour productivity.

- **Uncontrolled tourism development**
  Faulty policy of administrative bodies on allowing investment activities may lead to devastation of the environment and to irreplaceable damages on nature and cultural heritage of the given country. This can be seen e.g. in the islands such as e.g. Corfu, Madeira, Mallorca, etc.

- **Little support of domestic companies and offer of differentiated products according to different segments of visitors**
  may lead to decline in the development in the given field and to gradual loss of national identity. Tourism should care for preservation of cultural traditions, habits, customs, typical gastronomy, etc, which present the given country to foreign visitors as a specific culture. In this field Folk Association of the Czech Republic or Association of Historical Settlements in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia play an important role.

- **Threat of international terrorism**
  A basic precondition of international tourism development is ample time and peace. Gradual opening of borders of individual countries, dismantling visa duties and other formalities may, however, open the given country also to subversive elements which may cause increased criminality. Liberalization of entrepreneurship and inflow of foreign capital is unfortunately often connected with the possibility to invest money originating in unfair activities.

  On 1st May 2005 the EU grew by new countries and the Czech Republic was among them. Let me outline the changes realized in tourism, even though we know that it is too soon for a deep analysis.

2. EFFECTS OF THE ACCESS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC TO THE EU ON TOURISM

- Free movement of persons within the EU (they don’t have to register anywhere for a stay up to 90 days)
- A EU citizen needs only an identification card, or passport to travel within the EU
- Within the EU tourists don’t have to give reasons for their stay in other country, they don’t have to prove the cash necessary to cover the costs during their stay
- Allowance to take any amount of money – free movement of capital
- There are no customs controls of tourists within the EU
- National driving licences are valid on the whole territory of the EU
- Growth in the quality of accommodation and food services
- Health insurance paid by a citizen of one EU member country in his country is valid on the whole territory of the EU
Increase in the number of overseas students, study stays – it is not allowed to ask tuition fee unless it is paid by domestic students

Increase in business trips

Growing importance of business tourism

Increase in arrivals from EU countries, growing interest from neighbour EU member countries in one-day excursions to the Czech Republic – shopping, visiting restaurants, trips of young generation for entertainment, etc.

Growing interest in less known regions

Growing number of holidays including stays both in home country and neighbour EU member country – Poland, Austria, Germany

Increase in outbound tourism into EU countries – our citizens demand also more remote territories which used to be less affordable for them

Increase in the demand of Czech students for study stays in EU countries

Increase in the number of business trips

Growing demand for one-day excursions to neighbour countries

Growing demand for touring holiday in more neighbour countries

In connection with the access of the Czech Republic into the EU it is necessary to see also certain risks. It is mainly a bigger competition within providing tourism services. However, it will be possible to evaluate particular impacts only after a longer time period.

3. CURRENT SITUATION OF INTEGRATION PROCESSES IN TOURISM IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Despite the fact that after 1989 we can witness an adverse process in the Czech Republic than in other advanced countries (split-up of the enterprise Interhotel and Restaurants and Other Food Service Facilities, gradual hive off individual hotels and catering facilities, little cooperation between tourism businesses), nowadays the process of concentration and joining international hotel companies and catering chains is very important. Many foreign companies penetrated in the Czech Republic creating competitive environment and encouraging growth in the quality of services provided. This reality is reflected also in the behaviour of tourism businesses.

3.1. Effect of integration processes on the behaviour of tourism businesses in the Czech Republic

Changes in supply and demand can be seen. Before 1989 there was not a problem to have accommodation or catering facilities fully occupied. Currently supply exceeds demand and it is necessary to go to the guest, to feel into his needs and offer him something more than it is common somewhere else. Application of marketing has become a must and that requires highly qualified professionals.

Team work is supported with the aim to meet the needs of our guests at the highest level (introduction of TQM system)

At present many hotel guests prefer informal, but top quality equipped interiors, perfect functioning and interesting cuisine. Guests often require alternative forms of nutrition or seek experience gastronomy.

Hotel design lead by marketing needs has been winning recognition. This brings efficiency (space is multifunctional, equipment must contribute to savings and support...
ecology, etc.). In the same time equipment adapts to the requirements of segments which accommodation facilities try to attract.

- Necessity to be competitive encourages optimization of the economic result and yield management is applied.

The Czech Republic has a big potential in tourism. Middle European region will be – maybe even on contrary to other destinations – a demanded and attractive destination. If we want to succeed in a highly competitive environment, we must use modern methods of team management and gradually optimize results while meeting the needs of tourism participants at the best even in the field of accommodation, catering and transport services. This makes us consider which changes should be reflected in education of future tourism managers.

4. NEW APPROACHES TO THE EDUCATION OF WORKERS IN TOURISM FROM THE VIEW OF GRADUAL GLOBALIZATION

Mutual linking of national economies increases requirements on knowledge and skills of workers in tourism. In a competitive environment only a worker who can push through new ideas, who can communicate in several languages, who will master modern technologies and who will become a useful member of a team, will find a job. Moreover, a top manager is expected to be stress resistant and will be able to encourage the team to top performance. Educational institutions must adapt to this reality so that their graduates could find jobs in tourism not only in their home country, but also abroad, and so that they would not gradually be edged out from their positions by foreign management. International certification of schools will gradually become competitive advantage of individual schools and will contribute to quality improvement of services in tourism. Therefore many universities and colleges in the Czech Republic have already introduced ECTS credits, which contribute to internationalization and permeability of the study. Nevertheless, there is still a lot of work ahead of us and we expect an important deal of support also from the industry. Quality graduates will not appear without cooperation of educational institutions and the industry, as there is a lack of feedback to particular requirements of the industry. On the contrary results of research carried out by universities and colleges should immediately be applied to practice.

CONCLUSIONS:

The submitted essay investigates current issues of tourism development in the Czech Republic from the view of growing globalization, which supports integration processes and mutual linking of national economies. The aim of the research carried out by the Tourism Department of the University of Economics Prague in 2000-2007 was to study the effects of globalization on tourism and to outline positive effects and negative impacts in this field. Researches carried out within specialized seminars, PhD and graduation theses and own research activity of the author in tourism businesses, companies and organizations have shown that globalization influences the activity of tourism businesses both positively and negatively and that it can be clearly seen in the Czech Republic already now. Globalization brings changes into management of tourism businesses and work teams. These changes must be reflected in education of managers for this field.
Based on the output of research activity, changes in the structure and content of tourism study programmes, both bachelor’s and master’s levels, at the Faculty of International Relations of the University of Economics Prague were proposed. Newly designed study programmes in ECTS credits have been applied since academic year 2005/06.

NOTES:
4/ GDS – Global Distribution System – originally CRS – Computer Distribution System, is connected with the rise of reservation systems of airline companies (Amadeus, Sabre, Galileo, etc.)
LDS – Local Distribution System – eg. a system owned by tour operators for distribution of their products in their countries or regions.
6/ e.g. Principles of McDonald’s: high quality, perfect service, cleanliness, reasonable prices
7/ The following big professional associations active in tourism in the Czech Republic can be listed: Association of Hotels and Restaurants of the Czech Republic, Association of Travel Agencies of the Czech Republic, Campsites and Bungalow Communities of the Czech Republic – Trade Association, Association of Rural Tourism, Association of Historical Settlements in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, Club of Czech Tourists, Folk Association of the Czech Republic and others.
8/ According to Czech Tourism, www.czechtourism.cz
9/ We can list e.g. InterContinental Hotels Corp., Holiday Inn, Marriott International Inc., Best Western International, Hilton Hotels Corp., Four Seasons, Choice Hotels, Days Hotels, Mövenpick, Vienna International, Ibis Hotels, Minotel, Corinthia Hotels, SAS Radison, Danubius Hotels, Golden Tulip, Crown Plaza and others.

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ASSESSMENT OF SPA SERVICES QUALITY IN LITHUANIA: CUSTOMER’S VIEWPOINT

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Abstract: Growing attention to quality of life of people caused changes not only in the thinking of customers, but also in providing and consumption of the specific services. Customers of services are interested in wellness and sport services that provide wellbeing and bring input to understanding of qualitative life. Interest of society to the healthy lifestyle, conception of health person induces to look to these services, their qualitative measurements more precisely. As interest to the sport and wellness services that are related to relaxation in water, swimming pools, various eddy baths appeared not so long ago, there are to fewer surveys that enable to develop the qualitative parameters in these services that are appreciated by customers. Summarizing scientific researches it is possible to predicate that SPA service is one of the classes of services that are investigated in scientific researches poorly. A goal of this paper is to develop concept of SPA services and framework of these services quality assessment; to perform a survey in Lithuania on the background of this framework.

There is a concept of SPA services described in this article. Developing the criteria of estimation of SPA services quality, a framework of assessment of SPA services quality on the customer’s viewpoint is prepared. Methodology of the research is based on survey of SPA customers in Lithuania. On the base of the research data an assessment of quality of sport and wellness services to that water procedures are used on customer’s viewpoint is presented.

INTRODUCTION

Quality of services becomes to be one of the basic factors warranting the position in the market supplying one or other service. Overstocked market requires from the services suppliers to provide qualitative services, meeting large expectations of the customers. Although service quality has been explored by numerous researches in the past with varying perspectives, the majority of these studies have focused on service models, but scientific researches on peculiarities of particular services analysis are not a lot. Empirical studies on SPA services are rather fragmented one. So, a quality of SPA services becomes urgent question considering the higher attention to these services. The best estimator of perceived quality is a customer. Knowing the need of the customer empowers the supplier to meet them, also to create a bilateral profit. Customer’s viewpoint, appreciation of particular service reflects through frequency of consuming particular service, customer’s reaction to prices of services, promoting.

A goal of this paper is to develop concept of SPA services and framework of these services quality assessment; to perform a survey in Lithuania on the background of this framework.
Methods of the research: systematic and the comparative analysis of scientific literature, quantitative research.

CONCEPT OF SPA SERVICES

The term SPA is derived from the name of town in Belgium SPA. Other meaning were related to Belgian spring of iron bearing water was called Espa from the Wallon language term for "fountain", and was used in 1326 as a cure by an iron master with such success that he founded a health resort which developed into the town. In 20 century the term SPA was identified as abbreviation of various Latin phrases, as Salus Per Aquam or Sanitas Per Aquam (health through the water). Thus primary meaning of SPA services – water procedures employed in services supply for the reason that a customer will feel himself healthy and well.

Analysing concept of SPA services it is notable that a part of scientists SPA services identifies as leisure services, a part as health tourism services. Gratton and Taylor (2000) develop a model where a market of sport and wellness services is divided to four parts: leisure time, services, means of media and support. This model is characterized as hierarchical and complex on. Links of this model are coherent. Gratton and Taylor in the sport and wellness market system to the link of leisure time sport and wellness centres that use water procedures classify. Cingiene, Laskiene, Kavaliauskas (2003) differently from nei Gratton and Taylor (2000) in the model of sport and wellness services three parts highline: sport entertainment, products and organizations. However this segmentation is not comprehensive by diversity of services.

On the opinion of Müller and Lanz (1998), wellness can be regarded as a subcategory of health tourism. Wellness can be defined as the balanced state of body, spirit and mind, including such holistic aspects and dimensions as self-responsibility, physical fitness/beauty care, healthy nutrition, relaxation, mental activity and environmental sensitivity as fundamental constitutional elements Weiermair and Steinhauser, 2003). Müller and Lanz-Kaufmann (2001) develop a complex model of wellness, displaying such elements: mind – mental activity/education, body – physical fitness/beauty care, relaxation - rest/meditation, health - nutrition/diet. Likely the same wellness services are identified by Weiermair and Steinhauser (2003). They identify sport services as subgroup of wellness services, also attributing a beauty care, relaxation, mental activities and health nutrition.

As we are focusing to wellness services that involves water procedures for them supply, in this paper, we are able to say, that supplier engage in the providing of SPA services both indirectly or indirectly way. Directly they make a massage in the sauna or in massage room, consults about the using water procedures, supervise in the dangerous zones of deep water and so on. Indirectly suppliers engage providing resources for a customer (supervising zone of baths, providing key for changing room, looking through the camera to parking and supervising cars and etc.).

Summarizing definitions of scientists on sport and wellness also referring on Cowel’s (1984) model of services essential elements we provide a concept of SPA services in the Table 1. This table also gives information about mission of SPA services and adjustment of them.
Table 1. Conception of SPA Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements of services (adopted according Cowel, 1984)</th>
<th>In the context of SPA services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conception of customers profit</td>
<td>Balanced state of body, spirit and mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPA services conception</td>
<td>Capability of supplier to provide a service that is demanded by customer. Also possessing of necessary resources for supplement (financial, knowledge, experience and etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPA services supply</td>
<td>Assortment of services provided by supplier: baths, sauna, pools, massage and so on. Pricing, promoting of services, too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System of SPA services supplying</td>
<td>Staff, customer, physical equipment, technologies, know-how and other elements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Generalizing the conception of SPA services, it should be noted that SPA services are of individual consuming, oriented to the final customer, trying to provide possibilities to sport, to threat, to improve health, to spend excellent free time using water procedures and water entertainment equipment.

QUALITY OF SERVICES AND MODELS OF ASSESSMENT

The literature is very rich in terms of definition, dimensions and measurement models in the service quality. There are a lot of empirical researches on the field of retailing, financial services, and some other services. Hereinafter we will develop the essential aspects of services quality from different point of scientists. Kandampully (2007) analyses a question of services quality, its assessment, develops a few of perspectives of evaluating: evaluating from customer’s viewpoint, satisfaction on service (this perspective is called by the author as performance or marketing perspective) and monitoring of operations by services supplier trying to meet the requirements for quality (an operations perspective). Followers of quality assessment from customer’s viewpoint (Poll, 1996; Berry, 1995) predicate that quality is match of a goal. Services should be provided and consumed in such way as was planned before starting to supply. Thus wishes of customer describe raised goals of quality. On the point of Kandampully (2007) services quality is estimated evaluating satisfaction of a customer. Still Bagdoniene and Hopeneiene (2005) think that quality lever could not be only in the hands of a customer. It is necessary to consider a supplier’s estimation, in other words, operations perspective. Consequently an interaction between customers and suppliers quality perception is necessary.

Seeking to estimate particular services quality in the different branches of industry in the different countries various models are used. Commonly SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, Berry, 1988, 1991) services quality model is meet. This model characters the evaluating of gap between a quality that was expected and perceived by a customer. The model includes five dimensions of services evaluating: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and emphasis. Cronin and Taylor (1992) have presented a partly this model, called later SERVPERF – a measurement of service quality based only on
performance (not on expectations and performance). These authors recommended not evaluating that expectation before using the service has had a customer.

Grönroos (1985) services quality model is used rather often, too. Developing a science on services he developed two parameters of services quality: technical quality (outside) and functional quality (process). One more model for estimating a services quality is quality function development model (QFD), described as a system that transforms requirements of services customers to particular technical requirements in the each stage of products life cycle, starting from idea of product, finishing by realizing of this idea. This structural model helps to find a customer, to understand his expectations and to do everything that this expectation could be met. Han, Chen, Ebrahimpour, Sodhi (2001) says that this model is one of the most important instruments for providing a quality of service for new or improved product and service. Kandampully (2007) develops two models for estimating services quality customer – satisfaction measurement (CSM) and service-attribute score.

Models, mentioned above, developing parameters of quality to which preference is made by customer, are structured in Table 2. Almost all of these models use both qualitative and quantitative methods of measurement. Conceivably technical quality is measured by quantitative methods more often (Grönroos). Also QFD is possible to use without engaging the qualitative methods of measurement. However combining qualitative and quantitative measurements guarantee more precisely estimation of quality of services provided. So QFD and Grönroos two dimensions of quality models also cover qualitative methods of measurement.

Table 2. Models and Dimensions of Services Quality and their Relevance in SPA Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Models of services quality</th>
<th>Dimensions of services quality</th>
<th>Relevance in SPA services context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SERVQUAL</td>
<td>Tangibles</td>
<td>Modern and pretty equipped environment of sport and wellness centre determines a choice of a particular sport and wellness club. Modern, secure equipment, appropriate clothing of staff and visual information are also important things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Parasuraman, Zeithaml, Berry, 1988, 1991)</td>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>The most important index for assessment of sport and wellness centre for customer is reliability. In case if SPA centre will disappoint a customer, he will renounce its services. And it becomes an important reason for downfall of enterprise. Promises of such centres reflect in advertisement announcements in media also in various websites of enterprises. Thus port and wellness centres is not allowed to promise more than to perform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>Intensiveness of SPA centres reaction – it is a wish to help for a customer and to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Towards Business Excellence</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td>--------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ssurance</strong></td>
<td>Proving SPA centres services appropriate preparing of staff, it is them qualification is necessary. Certificates, licences of trainers, consultants and them experience influence providing of qualitative services and good image of the centre.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Empathy</strong></td>
<td>Supplying SPA services a contact between customer and supplier is important. Thus staff should pay a lot of attention to each customer, to perceive his expectations and to help to reach his goals – it is to emphasize to individual problems of customers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SERVPERF</strong></td>
<td><strong>Based on performance, post-consumption perception of quality</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronin and Taylor (1992)</td>
<td>Opposite to SERVQUAL a customer estimates a service only on performance level. Notwithstanding that expectation were before performance of SPA service, a customer estimates, what he or she has got, for example, swimming, sport, massage, does he or she has relaxed and etc. Tangible aspects of SPA services are estimated usually.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ch. Grönroos (1985)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Technical quality</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Particular services that have used a customer: swimming, massage and etc.; particular profit from consuming a service: physical, mental or relaxing.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Functional quality</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Circumstances on which services were performed: attention of staff, intangible elements as relationship between staff and customer, does a customer should wait a long time till the entering the centre, and etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality function development (QFD)</strong></td>
<td><strong>One-dimensional</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A customer of SPA centre applies to the centre because of the package of clear identified services: swimming pool or (or) sauna. Usually he or she decides about the quality of centre on the basis how many pools or sauna has it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Must-be</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Customer does not imagine that SPA centre supplies swimming pools services without changing rooms.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Attractive</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Usually attractive attributes are attributes provided not by other suppliers in the</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
market: water slides, child care during procedures and so on.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indifferent</th>
<th>A large waiting lobby before entering the centre is not important for customers if they should not wait, or if supplier sells underwear near swimsuit it is indifferent, too.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service – attribute score</td>
<td>Score attributes of the service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra (or supplementary) attributes</td>
<td>Extra services that are provided by supplier. Usually they differs one centre from other. For example, on of them has a lot of different water slides, other – trainings in the water, qualified staff and any other attributes on which suppliers are competing in these services market.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Umbrella of dimensions covered requirements of customer and ability of supplier to meet these expectations</td>
<td>Covers three main aspects of quality assessment: that are key services for that customers apply to SPA centre (swimming, massage, sport, communication, relax); how important is each of attribute (does large swimming pool is more important than a few sort of sauna); what are the performance rating of each attribute, as perceived by customer (a range of SPA centre’s customer’s preferences: to swim, to train, to use a sauna, to use hydropathical procedures).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practically to use one or two models for estimating a quality of service, for developing guides for improvement of service is not enough. Therefore processing empirical researches it is worthy to use a few of models, them guides for estimating a quality of service on customer’s viewpoint.

PARAMETERS OF SPA SERVICES QUALITY ASSESSMENT

Developing models of SPA services quality more often SERVQUAL services quality estimation could be used. This instrument is a mean of services quality investigation that shows gaps, it is discrepancies between customers perceived and received quality. These gaps let to identify spheres that organization should improve fro reaching the goals. On the basics of SERVQUAL such methodise for SPA services quality assessment were prepared: 1) REQUAL method (Bloemer, Ruyter, Wetzels, 1999); 2) Howat, Criley, Absher and Milne (1996) CERM system formed on the basics of Australian entertainment clubs; 3) Kim and Kim (1995) QUESC scheme that was created according Korean sport clubs.
SERVQUAL model describes an estimation of customer that evaluates a gap between expected quality and perceived quality. Thus services quality is predicated as that expectation has had a customer. Customers are main estimators of services quality. Customers of SPA services are individual persons, families or organizations that make an agreement with a club for providing services to their employees.

Chelladurai, Scott, Haywood-Farmer (1987) classify and estimate SPA services little bit in a differently way. They develop also consuming services: 1) professional services; 2) consuming services; 3) peripheral services; 4) equipment and instruments; 5) extra (supplementary) services. Authors thought that SPA services customer pays more attention to equipment and technologies of SPA centre. Customers do not interest in extra services, as feeding, care on children and etc., very much. On Tawse, Keogh, (1998) opinion, it is most important for SPA centres customers such aspects, as: 1) value for money; 2) health and security; 3) instructions of services, it is education of customers, instructors, consultants, instructions because of consuming water or other procedures; 4) goals of visitors; 5) short term effect comparing to long term effect.

Papadimitriou and Karteroliotis (2000) developed a model that includes four main elements of SPA services quality assessment: 1) “quality of instructor”; 2) attractiveness of equipment and technology and them functions provided; 3) possibility to choose a program; 4) submission and other services. Afthinos, Theodorakis, Nassis (2005) in their works developed the essential criteria for evaluating a SPA services quality – cleanliness. Later professional knowledge of supplier’s personnel, courtesy, responsiveness of staff that frames the core of the service is considered.

On the basics of Lagrosen and Lagrosen (2007) sport and wellness services quality assessment and criteria for services quality we develop peculiarities of SPA service. A model will be adapted to SPA services (look a Figure 1).
Figure 1. SPA service quality management framework (adopted according Lagrosen, Lagrosen, 2007)

### Quality dimensions - Customer viewpoint

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>SPA services context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical change</td>
<td>From the beauty point customer after consuming SPA service becomes slimmer, gets muscles, skin gets smooth. Generally it calls “health look”. Physical change related to customer fortifying, patience, he becomes to be flexible, relieves from pains.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental change</td>
<td>Aromatherapy in sauna, massage helps for customer not only physically but mentally, too. Customer relax thanks these procedures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasure (relax)</td>
<td>Pleasure is got thanks massage and other SPA services. Customers enjoy that they are able to get training here, activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Elements that warrants a quality - the quality elements required from company

#### Direct

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>SPA services context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical competence</td>
<td>All services (package and assortment of services) that are provided by SPA centre, all activities and exercises here, inside and outside the centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative competence</td>
<td>Kind communication of personnel, advises that procedures should be used, unpaid information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Indirect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>SPA services context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>Equipment of pools, sauna, extra equipment for Jacuzzi, slipstream. It should be noted, that a size of premises is evaluated very contradictory: premises should be spacious for do not feeling overcrowded, but in case if they are to large, a customer feels himself impersonal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training / education</td>
<td>Competence of trainers, consultants, supervisors and capability to organize customers to them supervising zone. Proving of security to SPA customers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimation / analysis</td>
<td>For example, it should be decided that bath equipment should be renovated, because it is old not only on modern view, but on physical, too. In this case</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Equipment is changed.

**Empowerment**
Instructors of SPA centre asked if a customer is able to use a slid from dangerous high, decides themselves – do they should allow for a customer to slid or not. They do not need a permit from manager or doctor for consulting a customer, because he posses the necessary information himself.

**Climate**
If customers will get all information inside a SPA centre about hosting services, entertainment in the same town and etc., they will appreciate it, because information will facilitate to collect this information for tourists. Also it is clear that a centre has a lot of outside partners that is directly related to services quality.

**Leadership**
The level of leadership in the SPA centre is impacted by other elements of services quality: climate inside organization, communication with staff and so on.

According to Lagrosen, Lagrosen (2007) quality dimensions – parameters what customers wants, estimates and appreciates, elements that warrants a quality – empowers the enterprise to provide a qualitative service for a customer.

Summarizing criteria for SPA services quality estimation, it should be noticed that corresponding to the essential criteria that are important to customer operating SPA centre’s services managers of these centres should strive that a customer could identify three main criteria of this service’s quality: *physical change, mental relax and possibility to spend leisure time* perfectly. Warranting these parameters, *direct and indirect elements* should be provided. Even if direct quality warrants are usually more important, a security of indirect parameters lets to impact technical and relative competence of SPA services providers, thus a quality of services that are supplied.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS**

Studying the view of customers to the Lithuanian SPA centres a questionnaire was prepared. Dimensions of quality were based on Lagrosen, Lagrosen (2007) research methodology, also on SPA services quality dimensions derived in the theoretical part of this paper. There are a few of SPA centres fulfilling the European standards in Lithuania as Druskininkai Aqua Park (www.akvapark.lt), Vichy Park in Vilnius (www.vandensparkas.lt), a few SPA centres and sport clubs in the largest towns of the country (Impuls (www.impuls.lt), Oaze (www.oaze.net), Linija (www.linijasportas.lt), Fitnesas (www.fitnesas.lt), Forum (www.forumpalace.lt) and other). A pilot survey was organized, inquiring customers of the largest SPA centres. The main goal was to clarify comprehensibility of quality dimensions and parameters of SPA services, also identifying trends of customer’s viewpoint. During a survey 48 respondents were inquired.

Shortly *general characteristics of respondents* will be presented. Dominating part of all respondents were respondents from 31 to 40 (40%), from 21 to 30 (38%) and from 41 to 50 (10%). 56% of all respondents were women, other 44% – man. Almost half of them (44%) were married or were living with partner; 38% were not married and 17% – divorced. Respondents were students or pupils (35%), employee (31%) or businessmen (21%).
third of them (29%) high educated or graduate from universities and academies (31%). As a lot of respondents were young people, 17% of them have not finished a secondary school at the moment of survey. Summarizing the average of respondent we should note, that a customer of SPA centre was midlife, relative equal women or man, equal married or unmarried, engaged in business, studies or other activity and educated person.

Estimating experience of the respondent, attending the SPA centre, we should note, that respondents uses these services longer than one year (38%), year (19%) or half a year (29%). Almost all of them (81%) have consumed SPA services of other centres, too.

Attending to estimate an opinion of customers about SPA centres services, criteria for SPA centres services quality were analysed.

Three the most important quality dimensions – physical change, mental change and relax – were estimated rather differently. A possibility to change physically a body (for example, to slenderize) was estimated on five-point Likert scale as middling, score “3” (58% of all respondents) or good, score “4” (31%). Half of respondents estimated mental rest that they get from consuming SPA services as good change in this centre (50%) or middling (19%). A possibility to get a profit from a service as relax, communication with family, friends or getting new friends was estimated relatively equally middling (25), good (29) or excellent (25) by respondents.

Elements that warrant the quality for services provided depending on they were direct or indirect elements, were estimated also differently.

Technical competence, as possibility to get qualitative massage, individual services depending on state of health of customer, possibility to get a wide scale of services “from one hand” was estimated middling (52%) or good (38%). 8% of all respondents estimated technical competence of the centre as satisfactorily (score “2”). Only 2% think that competence of staff and all services package is excellent (score “5”).

Relative competence of SPA centre staff, it is kind partnership with customers, helpfulness, capability to find solutions in non-standard situations of communication was estimated as good (48%) and middling (21%). 6% and 8% of respondent estimated relative competence of SPA centre as bad and satisfactorily.

On of the indirect elements as layout of centre, clear information about premises layout inside the centre, was estimated middling (50%) or good (23%). However not small part of respondents say that layout is unclear and do not meets them requirements (15% score of “2” and 8% “1”).

Equipment of SPA centre from the point of modernism and safety was estimated good (42%) and middling (23%). Actually 13% of respondents mentioned, that equipment is not safe of modern (score “1”).

Trainers of SPA centre, consultations and competence of training staff was estimated middling (58%) and good (23%). Actually 6% o respondents scored “2” for trainers in SPA centre.

Analysis of customer’s expectation, permanent improvement of services supplied in the SPA centre was estimated very differently. Rather equal part of respondents think that a management of staff does everything for meeting customer’s expectation middling (33%), good (29%) or satisfactorily (29%).

Empowerment of staff, possibility to get individual consultations from each of personnel because of improvement of health or particular services is estimated middling (60%) or good (23%).
General climate inside the centre, cooperation of staff, attention to a customer is estimated good (60%) or middling (29%). Equal part of respondents mentioned, that a climate is excellent or satisfactorily (4 and 4%).

Motivation of staff to provide help for a customer, to give him consultations, motivation to do his best for improving quality of services provided was estimated rather differently. 40% of respondents scored “4”, 29% – “3”, 17 – “2” and 13 – “1”.

Summarizing the questionnaire respondents were asked to estimate quality of services of particular SPA centre not excluding any criteria for estimation, they scored “4” for services that are supplied here (56%). One fourth of them (25%) estimated general quality of services middling (score “3”). Unfortunately 17% of respondents estimated the quality of services satisfactorily (“2”) and only 2% – excellent.

Concluding assessment of SPA services quality it should be noted that respondents do not evaluate services as excellent or bad one. But managers of SPA centre should discuss on how the quality should be proved, because the majority of quality dimensions is evaluated as middling (score “3”), less as good (“4”).

CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

1. A concept of SPA defines that SPA services are final individual consuming services, oriented to final customer that aims to get a possibility to sport, to improve his or her health, to spend leisure time, to communicate with family, friends to get new friends and so on, using water procedures.

2. A quality of SPA services should be evaluated on two basics of quality dimensions: 1) quality parameters as physical (change of look, functional enlargement of the body), mental (intellectual) change of a client and his or her relaxation; 2) elements that warranty a quality for service provided that could be: direct impact (technical competence relative competence) or indirect (equipment and premises of SPA centre, training and education of instructors, staff, empowerment, climate inside and outside the SPA centre, partnership with other partners outside the centre, leadership and motivation of personnel to provide qualitative service).

3. On the basics of criteria of SPA services quality assessment, a survey shows that: 1) SPA services meet the requirements of customer for mental rest in the centre, less – for physical change. Relaxation in the centre is estimated very differently; 2) direct elements warranting the quality of services provided by SPA centre is estimated as middling (score “3”), so an assortment of services provided should be enlarged, also motivation of staff to behaviour in more appropriate way with a clients should be discussed; 2) indirect elements as a lot of alternative between various pools, baths, procedures, climate in the centre, motivation to supply qualitative services is estimated as good, but more attention should be paid to empowerment of personnel who consult the customers, permanent wish to improve a quality, professionalism of group training, competence of trainers performing water training, also safety of the equipment.

4. This pilot survey – a part of further complex research that will be performed in the different geographical zones of Lithuania, different size SPA centres, trying to develop quality dimensions not only from the customer’s viewpoint, but from the suppliers, too.
REFERENCE

Abstract: Religious tourism, sometimes called spiritual tourism, has gained an increasing role throughout the world. Due to its initial component, pilgrimage, it is often considered the oldest form of tourism, dating thousands of years back. Travels to the ancient holy places didn’t have today’s logistical support, but they had the same human motivation: faith. This faith, sometimes extreme, was the basis for shaping religions. Religions’ variety and complexity can be justified through human typology, the environment in which their adepts live, culture, and last but not least, society’s stage of development. The present paper wishes to investigate aspects related to religious tourism, identify some features it must react to, and highlight its determinants as well. Information is based on an up-to-date documentation, difficult to obtain in a field which hasn’t been thoroughly investigated. The results refer to some original aspects, such as identifying the stakeholders of religious tourism and the way they can be involved in order to support a tourist activity which is benefic especially for the local community. Other conclusions result from the analysis of data related to religious travels both throughout the world and Romania. At a global level, the cultural openness from the past few years is also benefic for religious tourism. The world is an interesting religious mosaic: it could be an interesting mosaic for religious tourism as well.

Keywords: religious tourism, pilgrimage, stakeholders

INTRODUCTION

Religious tourism, sometimes called spiritual tourism has gained an increasing role all over the world. It is certain that part of this position is due to the explosion of the overall tourism phenomenon supported by an increase in income, technology, by information circulation or promotion actions. However, religious tourism is growing especially in direct relation with people’s thirst for knowledge, understanding other religions than their own.

FROM HISTORIC PILGRIMAGE TO MODERN RELIGIOUS TOURISM

Due to its initial component, pilgrimage, religious tourism is often considered the oldest form of tourism, dating thousands of years back. Journeys to the holy places from the distant past (settlements, nature elements – waters, mountains, trees) didn’t have today’s logistical support, but had the same human motivation: faith. This faith, sometimes extreme, was the base point for founding religions. Their variety and complexity can be justified through human typology, the environmental conditions their adepts live in, culture, and why not, by how advanced their society is. Today, millions of people travel throughout the world in search of sacredness, spiritual guidance, reaching places considered holy and worshipped as such. The most concentrated tourist flows are still the religious ones:
Kumbha Mela in India, Hindu pilgrimage which gathers around 70 million people, and Hajj, Muslim pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia (which gathers around 2 million people). Other millions of people travel in order to express their devotion towards Buddha, Jesus Christ or other deities.

The leaders of religious organizations have initially rejected the association between tourism and religion. At the same time, they didn’t admit to the fact that pilgrims were regarded as tourists from an economic perspective. The latter were characterized as sinners, lost, living in promiscuity and lacking common sense, while tourism itself was a force that promoted idolatry, laziness, immorality and alcohol [1]. Moreover, the danger of mass tourism was similar to losing the sacredness. Thus, holy places weren’t accessible only to the faithful, the chosen ones, which made sacrifices in order to get there, but were open to anyone who had enough material resources. Religion’s strict spiritual explanation can explain the religious organization’s attitude toward non-pilgrim tourists up to a certain point. But what it can not explain is the fact that pilgrims also need to eat, sleep and travel to their destination. All these elements belong to the tourism area.

On the other hand, tourists who aren’t motivated mainly by faith – who visit certain places just out of curiosity – can come to discover new meanings of life, accumulate positive energies and even find the way to the holy ones. According to a high official of the Romanian church (IPS Antonie Flamadeala, ex-bishop of the Ardeal, deceased in 2005) there are enough people who enter the church as tourists and come out pilgrims: “I’ve seen tourists who, when entering a monastery or a church, change their clothes, cover certain naked parts, kerchiefs become skirts, luggage is left outside. Even if tourists have left to visit different places, become acquainted with their or other countries’ history and geography, when encountering the worship place they suddenly transform from tourists into pilgrims. You can see them light a candle and meditate for a few moments”. Thus, without any intention of unifying the different types of tourists, we can say that, by showing certain understanding, respect and behavior, each person who reaches a holy place can be considered a religious tourist.

The present’s economic reality, the impossibility of dislodging spirit from it, as well as the explanations offered, have contributed to the present day situation, when religious organizations accept including pilgrims among tourists.

Regarding religious tourism, some aspects have become undeniable [1]: the world is going through a time when some religions are expanding, while other are in decline; this is reflected in the number of adepts, the spreading area, the volume of donations; holy places are often free of taxes, because of the double function they fulfill: religious space, but heritage element as well; pilgrims, tourists devoted to their own religion, spend money when they travel; thus they sleep, eat, enjoy leisure activities as the other tourists (as long as these don’t offend religious beliefs and religious norms); the separation between mass tourism and the religious one is increasingly weaker; it is enough to look at the tourist flows from the big cities’ cathedrals or the monasteries from Meteora, Greece; religious tourist have become increasingly demanding about their traveling requirements, but also more available to spend large sums of money; almost everywhere on the globe, communities support tourism development, because it is an income source; communities around sacred public places also need jobs, tax and public services earnings; religious organizations, the ones who administer the holy places, cannot isolate themselves from the rest of the world; communities need the money coming from religious tourism, and religious organizations need the communities support.
In a world based on connections, partnerships, communication and information sharing, it would be a mistake from the religious organization not to accept the elements of present modernism.

Religious tourism’s development from the past years has led to the organization of the first International Conference on Religious Tourism (ICORET, 2006), under the aegis of the World Tourism Organization. It was held in Cyprus, at Nicosia, between 19 and 21 October. It was an attempt of bringing together all the stakeholders in this area. Moreover, they envisaged the analysis of religious tourism’s market position, the practices and tendencies, as well as establishing contacts between the various participants. Naturally, religious tourism proved to be a priority for everybody. The case studies presented underlined the diversity of religious resources and destinations, their worldwide currency. The conclusion reached was that the value of the religious tourism phenomenon is priceless.

In the XXI-st century, religious tourism must:

- Protect the integrity of religious spaces and respect their significance;
- It is well known that tourism can have both a positive and a negative impact. Because religious tourism deals with are many heritage tourist sites, frequent and universal, the risk is very high. This is why permanent control of the flows must be exercised, even if it means temporary closure in order to preserve the sites. An example is St. Peter’s Church from the Vatican, where because of the great number of tourists, the floor had started to deteriorate, and tourists’ breathing created condense. The church was closed for a while, and measures for protection were applied. Regarding the significance of religious destinations, we can talk about certain ethics, absolutely necessary for tourism as a whole, but especially for the religious one. Respect for religious symbols, processions and adepts (including here the clerics) must always be present. A few reference points are: following external and interior directions (program, outfit, photographing and filming interdiction, directions on the access to different areas of the site, etc.), paying the appropriate fee (admitting to the status – child, adult, pensioner, etc.), not disturbing the peace, donating a sum of money (especially when there is no entrance fee); not interfering with the processions.
- Assure benefits for the local community and offer its members priority when accessing the religious destinations;
- As it was highlighted, the religious community can not function on its own. Sooner or later, in a smaller or larger proportion, it will need the support of the local community. This is why total support must exist between the two parts, generating multiple benefices. Assuring priority and access for the locals to the religious places is more difficult to accomplish, especially when it comes to highly valuable tourist objectives. However, there are locations where personal ceremonies have a private character, of course. On the other hand, limiting access hours may produce overcrowding. A solution would be keeping the objective open during the night (especially during the times when large numbers of tourists come to visit).
- Provide a link between the different types of religious tourists, making sure that conflicts don’t arise between them.
- Pilgrims, as tourists motivated exclusively by the religious act, may consider they have primacy to the worship places, compared to the non-pilgrims. Moreover, they may feel offended by certain behaviors of certain categories of tourists. It is hard to manage such
conflicts. Where possible, religious locations have hired personnel in order to avoid critical situations.

Each tourism action is justified by different motivations and supported by certain factors. When it comes to religious tourism, 4 factors must be taken into consideration: religious belonging and practicing a religious cult; education and culture; professional occupation and income level; infrastructure quality (access ways) and tourism services provided.

Besides these factors, there are others, such as: language similarities, belonging to a common cultural space, political stability, fashion, inflation, etc. They can be grouped in psycho-sociological factors (traditions, fashion, individual character and temper) and socio-economic factors (economic, technical, socio-political). These exert a significant influence on the tourist when choosing a way of spending spare time. A cultural-religious tourist’s option for a religious tourism destination also comes from the manner in which he perceives the differences between the offers extant on the market. These differences come from the objectives’ value, access possibilities, product price. For a pilgrim, choosing a destination is connected more to the meaning the place or cultural objective has for that religion, the pilgrim often making compromises and sacrifices in order to fulfill his dreams. Religious tourism must support the respect for local traditions and customs and protect the environment. Pilgrimages must be seen as a way of bondage between different religious communities, while cultural-religious tourism means openness for knowledge, it means peace and evolution. All people are connected to the same level of spirituality, and religious tourism has the opportunity of promoting understanding and tolerance “through the wisdom promoted by knowledge” [5].

RELIGIOUS TOURISM’S STAKEHOLDERS

The dimensions of religious tourism and specialists estimations lead to the following conclusion: today we are dealing with a religious tourism industry, despite the seeming opposition of terms (industry – religion). Ignoring this reality would be a mistake for all the parties involved.
Figure 1. Religious Tourism’s Stakeholders

Figure 1 shows religious tourism’s stakeholders without regard for the order they are placed in. Thus, governments, through the structures responsible for cultural (and religious) activity, but also through the tourism related ones, can improve cooperation and support this type of tourism. In Romania, the National Tourism Authority’s (NTA) strategy dating from August 1st 2006, analyzes religious tourism separately in chapter IV, as an independent tourism product. According to NTA’s opinion “religious tourism consists of the adepts pilgrimages to the worship places, considered holy by various religions. Great religious celebrations, the titular saints of monasteries and churches attract an equally important number of tourists during the traditional religious feasts” [6]. The definition is somewhat limiting as it refers only to pilgrims. Religious tourism’s potential is also mentioned and it is split into areas. However, religious tourism isn’t analyzed individually from a strategic perspective, being included in cultural tourism. The only strategic guideline is “Promoting Romanian religious tourism internationally”, but it isn’t particularized through specific actions [6]. Our country has a vast religious patrimony, a consequence of its historic past and the Romanian people’s continuous fight for protecting it. The Church
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has provided strong support, especially during the hard times. Belief in God was sometimes
the Romanian nation’s sole resource. In these conditions, it is difficult to understand why
there isn’t more accent placed on religious tourism. Moreover, in the past years Romania
has become “motorized”. On December 31st 2006, the total number of registered vehicles
reached 3603437, 7% more than in 2005. Out of the total number of vehicles, 82% belong
to physical persons [7]. People often travel for tourism purposes (even if the trip lasts for
only one day). A strategic guideline for promoting religious tourism would also be
necessary.

Religious communities must be interested in this type of tourism at least for two
reasons: first of all, because of the possibility of gaining notoriety regionally, nationally and
even internationally, and secondly because income can be gained.

International organizations interested in the religious tourism phenomenon can belong to
both domains: tourism and religion. In this respect we must mention the foundation of the
World Religious Travel Association, in October 2007, based in the USA. Under the motto
“The source and voice of the religious travel industry”, WRTA wishes to reunite tour-
operators, tourism services providers, tourism agencies but also churches and religious
organizations. It is a way of creating partnerships, promoting certain tourism products
through the Internet. This association is the first of this kind, but if it will function properly,
it may be the incentive for other possible initiatives. The World Tourism Organization, as
the main tourism authority, was involved in organizing the first conference on religious
tourism, in Cyprus. This means international recognition for religious tourism.

A key stakeholder is the host community. Its “psychology” must be adapted to all
the religious tourists flow supposes. There must be positive, cooperation relations between
them and the community. A major risk of this type of tourism is its rejection by the
community. Here, the problems are complex and can be solved through the direct and
strong involvement of the authorities and church leaders as well. Strong rejection attitudes
may appear in the communities composed of many atheists and agnostics, and also if there
are many disorganized tourist flows. On the other hand, if the community accepts tourism
as an opportunity for development and raise of its social and economic status, it can gain
multiple benefits – direct and indirect.

Modern societies are based on national, regional and local structures. Some
function better, others worse. Some are more involved, while others are less. However, all
are preoccupied with obtaining income and spending it, according to their budget plan. A
permanent concern for the state authorities is infrastructure. Many socio-economic
activities depend on its quality and territorial distribution. In order to support and encourage
religious tourism, the local authorities can include the worship places in various protection
and preservation programs, including international ones. Thus, it easier to access funds for
infrastructure development, who’s indirect, but primary beneficiaries will be the host
communities. Local authorities have the duty of supporting religious tourism and
administering the profits it brings. Moreover, if the local population wishes to build new
worship places, authorities should consider financial involvement, in perspective for a
possible future tourist flow.

As the number of religion related travels increases, tourism tour-operators focus
in products of this kind. Without being a new market, it is a particular, requiring increased
attention when it comes to designing tourism programs. Thus, certain norms, traditions,
values, must be obeyed when it comes to pilgrims. Possible errors, such as delays, improper
alimentation, impossibility of visiting a certain worship place during key-moments may
ruin the entire travel. For cultural-religious tourists, other aspects are envisaged, such as assuring access to the worship places, providing a guide, avoiding overcrowding (too many tourism objectives in one day, for example). Increased attention must be paid by the tour operators for the tourism packages sold in other countries. The language barrier must be eliminated through the existence of the guide or if this isn’t possible, they must be warned, to know what to expect.

Transport companies which have a good product policy will take into account the religious events of different areas and ensure the necessary number of vehicles. This thing could mean additional income. Moreover, if the marketing staff observes an increase in the number of people visiting religious objectives, they can add new transport lines, either permanent or non-permanent (in certain days or at certain hours).

Local tourism services providers (accommodation, public alimentation, etc) may benefit directly from the increase in the religious tourist flows. A thing which must be taken into account is tourist typology. Thus, offer adaptation has to be highly rigorous when it comes to pilgrims. Pilgrims are in search for quiet places, where they can meditate and have their intimacy.

Moreover, the categories of food composing the menu must be taken into account (certain religious interdict alcohol, others certain types of meat, others are restricted during certain periods).

A service provider which operates in a pilgrimage area, will take this into account and will treat his clients according to their religion.

The academic environment is interested in religious tourism, as it can bring understanding to the dimension of this phenomenon. Through studies and research, it can provide information related to the number of tourists, their preferences, the possible disadvantages of tourism consumption etc.

In addition, it can disseminate information related to the tourists’ behavior, the ethic norms they must obey.

As the religious tourism phenomenon is monitored, specialists who are able to design adequate tourism products and correctly promote these products can be trained.

Other stakeholders of the private sector may be banks, who gain from the currency exchange, souvenir shops, libraries, and stores in general, etc.

Religious tourism’s stakeholders must work together in order to reach their individual objectives: meetings can be held, seminars debating religious tourism related aspects from certain areas.

Today is time for collaboration, involvement and finding advantageous solutions for everybody. Only this way can religious tourism be efficient socio-economically.

RELIGIOUS TOURISM IN FIGURES

In a world where information travels in a fast pace, where figures speak for themselves and are often quantified in money, tourism fits perfectly.

The number of tourists speaks about income, information quality and the way of transmitting it encourages or discourages tourist consumption.

Thus, supporters of the various tourism markets have a direct interest in researching, quantifying and publicizing data about the areas they act in. This way were obtained the information on the religious travels market.

The World Religious Travel Association has gathered part of this information and made them public. The figures serve the purpose of highlighting this form of tourism.
These figures may seem irrelevant, if they are solely considered. But when analyzing their evolution, significant growths can be noticed, a sign of obvious progress.

Thus, from 2002 to 2005, the number of Americans who have traveled for a religious purpose has increased by 28% (from 491,000 to 630,000 people). According to RCMA (Religious Conference Management Association), compared to 1994, when 4.4 million attended religious meetings, their number reached 14.7 million in 2006.

A particular element of religious tourism, tightly connected to religion’s initial vocation is volunteerism.

Thus, the United Methodist Church, registered an increase of 455% in the number of people involved in such actions (from 20,000 in 1992 to 110,000 in 2006). It is very interesting to notice that other categories involve in this type of activities, not necessarily people belonging to the same cult. The idea of doing something good must be fundamental here, the action of helping other people.

Tourism humanitarian travels are the newest types of market niches in tourism. Religious persons are more likely to resort to this type of travels, although the price for such a tourism product is pretty high: one week costs about 1700$, besides the airplane ticket [3].

Twelve percent of the 25% American tourists interested in spiritual travels have stated that they are more interested in this type of journey at present than they were 5 years ago.

Cultural openness, religious destination promotion, the tour-operators price-policies provide some of the explanations for these figures. Age doesn’t appear to be a dominant criterion, about a third of each age category (18-34, 35-55, over 55) expressing their desire for such a journey.

Important movements from the providers are occurring on the religious tourism market. Thus, if a great part of the religious travels were organized by churches and religious groups, at present tour-operators and travel agencies have penetrated this niche.

This is beneficial, as we are dealing with an increase in the offer, which means better travel condition, affordable tariffs and arrangements for the tourists.
Adepts don’t depend exclusively on the church or synagogue to which they belong to, they can resort to various tourism arrangements. Such an example is given by the famous tour-operator Globus, who opened a special department for religious travels in 2005. It is the leader in this domain. Many agencies don’t have a special department yet, but organize such journeys on demand.

Although initially set to satisfy the requirements of those who go often to church – the possible pilgrims – the agencies soon realized that they can also go to places which don’t belong to their religion, as cultural tourists. Today’s pilgrim hasn’t got a narrow mind, he may be a good cultural tourist if he can accept the existence of other religions.

Another relevant aspect is the fact that religious tourists don’t envisage especially poor accommodation or alimentation anymore, but a certain degree of comfort which can ensure them the necessary strength of visiting various religious objectives, especially if these objectives are far away from home.

This is why luxury products have emerged, such as cruises [2], which are very successful nowadays.

At present, religious tourism’s market is very dynamic and sometimes difficult to quantify, because of the cultural tourists flows, for which the religious aspect appears as a travel motivation in various hypostases (main, secondary or complementary reason).

The Romanian situation is similar. Most of Romanian travels have religious elements as well. This is due to the country’s potential, but also to the great number of adepts (mainly orthodox).

Almost all the country’s cities are religious objectives, having a considerable history. However, few are recognized internationally.

Through religious tourism, they can earn the place they deserve. A series of investments have been made over the past years, enlarging the worship places’ accommodation capacity, a series of buildings have been restored or built, in other words there have been created the premises for a sustainable development for religious tourism, especially pilgrimage.

For the year 2006 [8], data show a number of 92423 pilgrim tourists. A significant percentage belongs to women (Fig. nr. 2).

They are usually more open to the religious phenomenon, and more likely to engage in such travels.

Source: Tourism demand of Romanian residents in 2006, National Statistical Institute, 2007
As to the pilgrim’s age (Fig. nr. 3), most of them are between 45 and 64 years old. If we add the 29% of people older than 65, we can appreciate that Romanian pilgrimage tourism is specific for adult, mature people, who are past their youth, and are conscious of the role religion plays in life.

They are willing to respect certain traveling rules, which in the Romanian case mean little comfort (modest accommodation and transport).

*Figure 4 - Pilgrim Occupational Status In 2006*

Most pilgrims (43%) are pensioners which have enough spare time for such activities (Figure nr.4). An important percentage (14%) belongs to the agricultural entrepreneurs. Rural population is usually more religious, more connected to the church and its customs. This has been the environment where the church has played a special part, being an element of stability and continuity.

72% of the tourists have spent between 1-3 nights, pilgrimage being a short type of travel in our country. This can be explained by the fact that Christian religious celebrations are spread all across the year, evenly, at independent dates, which are rarely connected to each other. Another motivation would be the lack of accommodation space, being a known fact that pilgrims want to stay inside the monasteries or nearby. We must not ignore the fact that pensioners have low income in Romania. Only 14% of them have spent at least 4 nights as pilgrims. For the businessmen, the reasons for which everybody prefers a short stay are totally different. The resource they lack is time. As for employees, the distribution is somewhat equal, their larger income making the difference.

As to the favorite mean of transportation, the greatest percentage (68%) belongs to buses (Figure nr. 5). This is explained by the fact that Romanian pilgrimage tourism is largely organized by either religious organizations or tourism agencies. A great number of pilgrims arrive by train, while only 9% of the travels are made with the personal vehicle, which proves the poor material situation of the Romanian pilgrim.
Statistics aren’t very explicit when it comes to the beds available inside or closely near the worship places. They are included, most likely, in the “other accommodation resources” category, which has the highest percentage (42%) as it is natural (Figure nr. 6). The fact that the pilgrim is a less demanding tourist, sensitive, with strong values determines the 26% percentage corresponding to accommodation by “parents, relatives, friends”.

Romanian pilgrimage tourism starts to take shape. We mention here as an example, the over 1 million people who came to Iasi this year to see the relics of Saint Parascheva and Saint John Gura de Aur. Thus, there exist the premises for developing continuous pilgrimage tourism.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Gradually, religious tourist flows start to take shape in Romania. However, we must make sure they are managed properly. Romanian religious tourism must have sufficient accommodation and alimentation spaces, capitalize on the communities’ human potential, have a positive effect on tourists, effect which will make them want to come back.

Internationally, the cultural openness of the past years can only be benefic for religious tourism as well. Involving all the stakeholders in building successful models, presenting them on the occasion of international conferences and events offers clear examples of success, which could be followed by other local communities. The world is an interesting religious mosaic: it could also be an interesting religious tourism mosaic.
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THE URBAN TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: In the context of intensifying the efforts towards a sustainable economic development – development mentally supported by the fact that the changes within a system draw serious changes into the entire system – as regarding the touristic destinations drawn into tourism, they are assigned with new, complex tasks.

The tourism was adopted mainly in the last two decades and a half as a strategy of the economic development in many cities such as Drobeta Turnu Severin, but not without many questions and debates. The ones who criticized it needed to be explained that the value of the spent public money may find an answer only after a study of the impact. Given the prominence of the urban tourism, it is surprising the fact that so few people became enterprisers and so few could be considered as being worthy of trust. One reason of this situation may be the fact that tourism is hard to be measured. Anyway, the effects of tourism are spread along many sectors from the amusements for tourists to the hotels, shops, transportation and other activities, so that it is even harder to measure the impact it had. With no doubt, the evaluations of the effect that was generated imply many details, aspect that asks for money and time.

In fact, there are consistently made researches of small proportions using the simple soundings or borrowing the results from other cities or generally accepted points of view. As concerning the evaluation of the strategy that regards the urban tourism, there are many questions to be asked such as: is the number of visitors growing?; how is this rate of grow as compared to the national and international one?; how dynamic is the income from tourism?; in what measure there can be assumed the obtained success to the policies that were practiced?; etc. Once the answer to these questions was given, the cities will be able to evaluate the policy which was used and its modification.

The studies regarding the economic impact of tourism are mainly focusing on the entire tourism industry, though the evaluations may also consider the sector or individual projects of the investments in this field. The viability of the individual projects is usually studied by their sponsors before the aimed objective is materialized, no matter if it is a public or private initiative. The impact analysis may be resumed only to the restricted economic aspects but also to the ones with larger effects.

In fact, the methodology of the studies regarding the economic impact is relatively easy to be understood, these studies settling the number of visitors. Secondly, it is determined the amount of money spent by visitors in the local economy and the future impacts through multiple effects.

Or, the necessity to stop the economic decline and counteract the potential decoupling of some regions from the process of economic growth naming the urban and monoindustrial centres affected by the industrial reorganization which are facing problems of adaptation to the new activities, mining centres, rural areas and traditional undeveloped regions.

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In the present, there is a great risk that some regions of the country to be decoupled from the economic growth process due to the following factors which are strengthening each other, their influence upon the tourism being maximum:

- the ageing population
- high dependence upon a limited number of economic sectors with small added value and innovative capacity
- lack of the basic conditions to attract the investors
- employees insufficiently trained.

This situation is specific not only to the mining or rural regions but also to the monoindustrial cities or suburbs of the great cities affected by the industrial reorganisation which remained without the urban functions, especially in the service sector and require urgent actions to counteract these phenomena. The same thing can be stated about the excessive dependence upon some industries of certain regions still in severe industrial reorganisation process. The present and potential problems that the economic decoupling causes are different from one region to another, fact that asks for an approach adapted to the local needs.

A feature of the urban network in Romania is the numerous numbers of the small and middle size towns (90% of the total towns) with urban functions insufficiently developed and critical infrastructure. After the 90’s, the industrial reorganisation affected especially the monostructural urban centres which have already lost or are on the verge to lose their urban functions. The urban population decreased (from 12.4 mil. inhabitants in 1995 to 11.6 mil in 2003 and 11.00 mil. in 2007), powerful European phenomena. The main cause of the urban population decrease represented the migration towards the rural environment and abroad. In the same time to the decrease of the urban population there also contributed other demographical phenomena, as for example the negative natural growth, even if their proportions were smaller. As a result to these evolutions, the structure of the localities network has changed: the number of the small towns increased and the one of the big towns decreased. Although Romania has a dense urban network, many of the urban centres representing potential poles of the economic growth on the regional level, there are few economic relations among the urban centres and their surroundings, both urban and rural because their way of development was conceived independently to one another.

In spite of all the difficulties of the small and middle size towns, on the whole of the country there grow the disparities between the urban and rural environment from the general development point of view, being emphasized by the employment degree and training level of the population, infrastructural endowments of all types (accessibility – modernised roads, telecommunications, water and sewerage systems, public lighting, training infrastructure – schools, kinder gardens, libraries, hospitals etc.), number of investors and Small and Middle Size Enterprises of non-agricultural types etc. the economic activities from the rural regions are poorly developed and diversified: less than 3% from the total of the Small and Middle Size Enterprises were in the rural areas, they being in majority micro-enterprises involved into handicraft activities. One firm out of six, specialised in the non-agricultural activities, activates in the rural area but their productivity is way reduced in the urban environment.

The risk is very high for those rural regions which combine factors such as the reduced accessibility, low population density, very high level of the population working in the agriculture, high percent of the old population, poorly trained population, fact which results in a total lack of bringing the investors and the inexistence of some local
opportunities to hire the labour force. The same situation is specific to the regions in industrial decline characterised by the limited investments, poorly trained and old labour force and reduced or even inexistent possibilities to get employed. Even more, these urban centres are frequently poorly economically shaped and miss their urban functions, especially in the services sector.

Or, in this way there is explained the necessity to reenergise the urban centres with growing potential in order to allow them to act as movers of the economic growth and contribute to the diminution of the discrepancies between the urban and adjacent areas (urban or rural), poorly structured.

Even inside the big towns there are disparities caused by the high level of attractiveness of some regions from these towns, not necessary outlying. The most striking example in this way is the obvious difference among the prices of the lands. In the capital, for example, the prices of the lands from the north side, extremely desired, are 10 times more than the ones from the south and east, less desired by the investors and so the investments are more reduced. The spatial dimension of the economic growth will focus on the competition between Bucharest and the other south-eastern European capitals aiming the urban functions of high level in the same time with the promotion of the attractiveness and environment conditions of the middle and big urban centres which to make them able to act as regional centres/growth poles. This requires constant efforts to achieve programmes for the urban rehabilitation and cultural policies (especially in the capital) and especially investments in the basic and service public units (as for example, public transportation, health care, management of the water and wastes distribution systems) and in the rehabilitation of the unrigged industrial sites which might offer the necessary spaces to develop new activities. The investments of this type are a precondition for the ulterior approach of the economic, social and environment problems that the big urban agglomerations are facing.

In order for these urban agglomerations to fulfil high level urban functions, they will be supported in strengthening their role as regional urban centres/growth poles which will radiate the development into the adjacent areas fact that, on long term, will reflect a balanced territorial development and grow the economic and social cohesion in the country.

Romania started a process to decentralise the administrative responsibilities towards the local authorities. This implied not only a more clearly regulating frame for the municipal services (drinking water, residual waters, solid wastes, heating of the county and local transportation) but also new responsibilities for the educational, health care and social assistance fields. Though, this process is still in its implementing stage and requires a long period of time before drawing some conclusions. Acknowledging the whole truth of the principle of subsidiarity and that the local authorities are in a better position to assure the management of the public investments, there must be mentioned that it takes time and resources for developing the proficiency and labour experience within the European framework of the regional development based on European standards so that the planning performed at the regional level may replace, at regional and local levels, the national interventions. This fact is necessary although there must be mentioned that the level of these difficulties is changeable in different fields of intervention.

The general objective of the national strategy for the regional development was defined accordingly to the economic, social and SWOT analyses which identified the problems regarding the regional development that Romania is facing.

The general objective of the priority regarding the balanced regional development is: to diminish the disparities regarding the development among and within regions.
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(between: different regions, urban-rural environment, urban centres-adjacent areas) in the same time with supporting the development of some urban centres as potential poles of economic growth…

To accomplish this objective is so much more necessary as the sector investments within the priorities 1-5 tend, on long term, to deepen the gap between the regions.

The implementation of this priority will finally lead to the diminution of the interregional disparities and of those disparities within the regions, between the urban and rural environment, urban centres and adjacent areas, and in towns – between the attractive areas for investments and those not attractive, by supporting the creation of some real regional labour markets and better using the regional synergies including the urban rural and developing the processes that assure the administration and local management on all levels (on municipal, county, regional level etc.).

In order to achieve the general objective of the priority concerning the regional development, the strategy is being formed around the following specific objectives:

1. To grow the competitiveness of the regions as locations for businesses
   This specific objective is generated by the necessity to improve the general degree of attractiveness of the regions and assure a better distribution of the changes on regional level in order to draw the investments, including the direct foreign investments by improving their transportation, social and business infrastructure.

2. To support the regional/local economies affected by the industrial reorganisation or traditionally undeveloped (border, mountain regions etc.)
   This objective aims the development based on innovation of the regional and local economies encouraging the access of the Small and Middle Size Enterprises to the innovating technologies and services by creating some necessary connexions between the productive and research & development & innovation activities.

3. To turn the tourism and cultural potential of the regions to good account and grow the contribution of these regions to the areas development
   This specific objective is generated by the necessity to grow the attractiveness degree of the regions by using the specific tourism and cultural potential which exists in each of the eight regions of the country by creating proper infrastructures, developing alternative forms of tourism, promoting the natural and cultural patrimony.

4. To reenergise the middle and big urban centres with potential for the economic growth in order to become poles for the regional development
   This objective aims to strengthen the network of urban centres with developing potential in order to allow them to act as engines of the economic growth, contributing to the diminution of the discrepancies between the urban centres and adjacent areas (urban or rural), poorly structured.

   By accomplishing this objective there will be achieved a proportion between the urban/rural populations much more closely to the ones form the European Union, fact that imposes the assurance on the European standards of the administration and developing programmes management on all levels (municipal, county, regional, etc).

5. To promote the territorial cooperation on cross-border level
   Since 6 of the 8 Development Regions have a number of 19 counties along the frontiers facing special development problems due to their outlying position, it is kept in view that the social and economic development of these border regions must be stimulated also by the cross-border cooperation with the neighbour countries. This cooperation will be focused on the strategic priorities with a trans-national dimension such as the research &
development, environment, risk prevention and integrated management regarding the problems with the water. The cross-border cooperation programmes will be correlated with the ones regarding the investments in the economic and social cohesion for the following fields: investments in the business infrastructure, production sector.

There will be supported the development of the small and middle size enterprises, strengthening of the educational system, promotion of the cultural changes, measures for the environment protection, promotion of the common programmes for rehabilitation, modernisation and extension of the transportation, telecommunication and energy networks.

There is no accident the fact that a more and more interest is paid to the frontiers problems and border areas, especially inside the European Union. This phenomenon is related to the progressive settlement of the political demarcation lines and foreseen disappearance of the economic barriers. But, they particularly condense, focalise in their way the aggregate of the difficulties, limits and constrains that must be surpassed in order to achieve the European integration. In this way, the cross-border areas represent in fact the revealing tool, the catalyst of the development level of the European construction.

Regarded from this systemic point of view, the territory of the transfrontier regions should be looked at as a dense network of relationships, a field of socio-economic, political and cultural forces, a field which takes variable dimensions according to the domains which we make reference to – fields of cultural, social, economic, fiscal, educational relationships and so on. It is therefore of the greatest importance for the frontier areas to generate bridges, contractual links among the various actors within the main domains of transfrontier cooperation and according to their domains of competence.

Transfrontier tourism, actually seen as an opportunity for the socio-economic development of the “Middle Danube – Iron Gates” Euroregion, continues to be a sure way to know how to promote the touristic identity of the Mehedinti County and its real contribution to the diversity of the European Union. It is aimed at drawing and involving not sequentially, but continuously, businessmen, persons of culture, native people, local personalities who, undoubtedly, could initiate an organized movement, of quality achieved due to its gained experience, in order to transmit our transfrontier cultural and traditional messages to and into the European space.

Beside its other coordinates – political, economical, social – the European integration obviously comprises a cultural component. It is based first of all on the assumption of the cultural diversity within a European space in which no one should give up its traditions and its own cultural identity, but, on the contrary, to be an effective and informed participant in a real cultural European dialogue. This dialogue should be based on the concept which presents the diversity of the European traditions, cultures and languages as a specific asset of Europe, a characteristic specific to it, conferred upon it by its history and whose preservation and turning to good account could only be ensured within a framework in which the fundamental liberties and values of democracy are functioning. The democratic option is a guarantee of the fact that an administratively imposed cultural unification or homogenization will not be possible anymore.

Within the large framework of the interstate cultural exchanges, which should represent a concerted action, facilitated by the European communitarian institutions, the role of the local and regional communities is particular important. Exponents of some national cultures, they are featuring certain characteristics and are creating additional bridges of spiritual communication, obviously contributing to a more profound knowledge of their own cultural patrimony, to the promotion of mutual understanding and respect.
among partners. The European urban chart states a series of cultural principles, which I will comment further on.

First of all, this is all about the principle of subsidiarity. Thus, local authorities should promote cultural actions which to meet the desires of those who form the local communities which they administer. Consequently, local authorities should hold the human and financial resources capable of sustaining these actions. This is possible only to the extent in which, as an effect of decentralization, they have their own budget for culture and for the necessary cultural institutions.

Secondly, the cultural action should be conceived as a veritable cultural democracy, which entails a close collaboration between the local authorities and the basic groups, the associative and particular sectors. This means that the local authorities should be supported by a partnership to whom to assign responsibilities or even the organization of some actions. They should draw the industry and trade in the area, inclusive through fiscal facilities, within the limits of the law, in the financial support of the art and the cultural creation.

Without going into details, I will mention here the promotion of the cultural tourism and the drawing of investments into culture as a more stable alternative in the financing of the culture as compared to the sponsorships, which are mostly of an occasional and random character.

Holders of the honour diploma for the promotion of the cultural tourism, granted by the Cultural Centre of Mehedinti at the “Festivity of Culture” 2005, which is a symbol of the acknowledgement of the efforts made by the Eco-Urbis NGO (organization mainly composed of students) is a fact which obliges us and makes us responsible in this direction: transfrontier cultural cooperation.

Why cultural tourism? Because cultural tourism gives identity to the Mehedintian touristic potential (having a character of a sole exemplar) promoting cultural activities and experiences which are constantly drawing tourists and are making visits even nicer.

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) which created a Chart of the Cultural Tourism in 1976, defined cultural tourism from an animated point of view. This suggests that cultural tourism is that form of the tourism, whose object is among others, the discovery of monuments and sites. This exerts upon them an extremely positive effect as, in order to achieve its own objectives, it contributes to their maintenance and protection. This form of tourism actually justifies the efforts which their maintenance and protection require from the community due to the socio-cultural and economic benefits which they “transmit” to the population in question. As the domain of cultural tourism is a very large one, it comprises more sub-segments which are in great demand, and especially: archaeology, architecture, art, churches and cathedrals tours, historical towers, hydrotechnical museums, popular festivals and events, Romanian pastoral festivals and fairs and even pilgrimages. These sub-segments may be easily detected on the map of the Mehedintian tourism as “potentially” exploitable!

On the contrary, it is well known the initial prediction of the World Organization of Tourism which claims that the market for the cultural tourism will develop similarly to those belonging to the “baby-boom” generation. All Meheditian destinations, either urban or rural, feature cultural qualities which they can be proud of and have a story of their own which they can impart to the visitors.
It is essential to define what is unique in relation to the destination in question and to provide to the visitors the opportunity to pass the character and the traditions of the destination through the filter of their own knowledge and experience.

It is important that the community too involves in the development of cultural tourism together with the identification of product and also to stir interest in the product. Cultural tourism may be an instrument means of which to tighten the links within the community, and at the same time to draw new investors and along with them some new business.

It was precisely this the goal of the first edition of the Euroregional Fair of Tourism carried out in Drobeta Turnu Severin on the 17th-18th of May 2006, a fair which brought together all the actors involved in the carrying out of the touristic phenomenon, tour-operators, tourism agencies, owners of touristic pensions, tourism associations (ANTREC), local organizations and personalities which conferred cultural identity upon this region. The action was carried out in the three-side Euroregion: Mehedinti County (Romania), Bor and Kladova District (Serbia & Montenegro) and Vidin (Bulgaria), emphasizing the imperative character of the development and turning to good account of some touristic resources “in mirror” through a wide range of tourism forms and touristic programs of a high addressability, related to (activity) Romanian and Serbian folkloric traditions, cave tourism, cultural tourism, comfort tourism, sportive fishing, rural tourism and so on.

Thirdly, the educative and cultural policy of local authorities should not be discriminatory. It should be opened to innovation, to the specific contribution of all citizens irrespective of their ethnic origin. At the same time, local authorities should be preoccupied with the preservation and turning to good account of their own cultural patrimony, as the cultural identity constitutes a key element of the inter-regional cooperation programs.

A land which favours multiple cultural actions on which local and regional authorities may evolve both as regions and Euroregions, as well as actors, simply engaging other partners in the area – institutions, associations of some civil societies, individuals – is represented by the frameworks of the transfrontier cooperation. This is a special situation because it involves only the regions located near the common borders of the states and neither defines an arithmetic set, strictly determined and closed, of partners.

Transfrontier cooperation may extend into the territory of the states depending on the desire and interest of the potential adherents.

The importance of the transfrontier cooperation for the future European construction is continuously outlined in the documents of the European forums. I find it opportune to quote from the Declaration of the first Summit of the heads of states and governments of member States of the Council of Europe (Vienna, October 1993):

“The creation of a tolerant and prosperous Europe does not depend only on co-operation between member States. It also requires transfrontier co-operation between local and regional authorities, without prejudice to the constitution and the territorial integrity of each State.”

The promotion of such a point of view, courageous and innovator at the same time, up to highest representation level of the Council of Europe is the work of the regional and local representatives reunited in the Congress of the regional and local powers, who noticed while performing their functions, the importance of the cooperation with the neighbouring regions located on the other side of the border, to a common benefit.

Undoubtedly, the application of this new concept falls within the aforementioned militants, that is, the officials. The concept of region and Euroregion should be assumed with a broader and more comprehensive meaning. Essentially, a region is not only the
territorial division of a state which reproduces mechanically, but on a smaller scale, the state entity.

According to the present day conception, the region or Euroregion is a territorial body of public law established at the level immediately below that of the state which it belongs to. It is acknowledged by Constitution and organic laws, which establish its identity and level of organization and confers on it, its own competencies. Obligatory, it has a representative assembly (the County Council in Romania) consisting of representatives elected by universal, free, equal, direct and secret vote. The Executive of the Euroregion is politically subordinated to this representative assembly, which, taking into consideration the above mentioned ones, is the expression of the political spectrum of the regional community.

The Euroregion, in the meaning of the above mentioned ones, is able of evolving responsibly and for very good reasons, on the level of the transfrontier cooperation.

Further on, you have the reference points on this level, making appeal to the “Declaration on regionalism in Europe”, promulgated by the Assembly of European Regions at the yearly general assembly in Basel, on 4th December 1996: regions with common frontiers shall, in compliance with relevant domestic legislation and international law, promote transfrontier cooperation; regions, taking due account of domestic legislation and international agreements between states, shall be entitled to conclude transfrontier agreements in order to develop their cooperation within the limits of their powers; regions shall have the right within the legal framework of each state concerned, to establish joint deliberative or executive bodies; the actions of these bodies shall be subject to the procedures of the competent courts in the same manner as actions of regional bodies.

It is obvious even for the sceptics, that it is aimed at the facilitation of collaboration and that, under no circumstance, it is not intended the creation of some superstate institutions which to acquire the sovereign exercise of the states.

The advantage specific to the transfrontier Euroregions, which facilitates transfrontier action and communication is the existence of some multicultural, historical communities, whose ethnic segments are differently reflected in the competence of each of the partners located on the both sides of a frontier.

Unlike recent multicultural societies, established especially by affluxes of intra- and extra-European immigrants, the multicultural societies created along history have the advantage of a long cohabitation exercise, which made that the intercultural dialogue and communication to lose ground before some elements of contentious, sometimes invoked by extremist and conservatory minorities of the ethnical collectivities. To overcome the state of mistrust or even hostility towards the intercultural discourse and action may mainly be done through education, at school, at home, in society.

The institutional educational system should orientate curricular packages both to the promotion of the interethnic and intercultural open behaviour, and to the knowledge of the spiritual thesaurus, that of the traditions and values of the artistic creation, specific to all ethnic communities which populate the Euroregion. The spiritual thesaurus of a state includes the spiritual values created by both individuals and communities, those who lived and live on the territory of the respective state. Lawfully, the state promotes them equally and without any other discrimination, except for the criterion of value. As a consequence of the educative act, there should be an attitude of mutual respect not between the majority and minority, but between equal partners with equal rights. Such an attitude may eliminate
the artificial creation of a so-called discrimination which by the granting of a bonus preserves a state of inferiority for its beneficiaries.

Within this context, the great importance of the electronic mass-media forms, of the internet type, should be mentioned. Theoretically, the globalization of information gives access to each one of us, restricts the possibility of censoring it, and essentially stands for a democratization of the access to information. So that this access to be possible in practice, it is necessary that the financings made through programs of the European Community, should take into consideration first of all the provision of the necessary logistic and material support.

Or, as it concerns the MEHEDINTI County, there was settled on the 6th of October 2005, the Statute of Euro-region “Middle Danube – Iron Gates”, that includes collaborations on the following issues:

a) **economic relations**
   to elaborate some common programmes according to the economic possibilities of the parties;
   to elaborate and exploit a common information system;
   to support and stimulate the cooperation among Chambers of Economic;
   to support the settlement of some commercial enterprises and banks with mixed capital;
   to settle the cooperation relations as regarding the agricultural production and trade with agricultural products;
   to support the economic agreements' conclusion between the enterprises of economic profile;
   to achieve some commune, economic and financial activities on third markets;

b) **works of the transportation and communication infrastructure**
   to achieve some works of the transportation infrastructure (roads, railways, airways, navigation ways etc.);
   to support with the means that the local authorities have at their disposal the governmental steps in arranging some passing points of the frontier and modernizing the existing ones;

c) **environment**
   to harmonise the environment protection programmes;
   to harmonise the commune activities regarding the protection of the soil, air and water courses;

d) **tourism**
   to elaborate some commune tourism programmes;
   to develop the tourism infrastructure;

e) **science, culture, civic relations, health and sports**
   to propel the settlement of relations and connections in the field of science among universities, research centres and specialised institutions;
   to settle cultural relations and elaborate programmes regarding the cultural collaboration;
   to promote the collaboration relations between syndicates and civil organisations;
   to develop and settle collaborations in the fields of the health care and social assistance in specializes institutions;
   to organise sportive events.

Starting from the idea that the authorities play the role of creating the framework of the cooperation not only to its own benefit, but also to facilitate the cooperation among individuals, institutions and communities on this territory, efforts have been made to find...
the encouragement and support of their intentions to cooperate in domains of common interest: economic, touristic, cultural, social, of education.

In conclusion, it may be asserted that the framework of the transfrontier cooperation is extremely favourable to the intercultural communication in the frontier regions. The success of such an attempt is guaranteed by an association freely assumed by all its partners; a true partnership and mutual respect; a constructive mentality; the application of the principle of subsidiarity within the cooperation (without an excessive tutelage on the part of authorities); identical rules, equal positions for all the involved parties, especially with regard to the free circulation.

Finally, under the aegis of transfrontier cooperation, but also of the Euroregion “Middle Danube – Iron Gates”, we had the pleasure to organize three editions of the Euroregional Tourism Fair in Drobeta Turnu Severin, and at the second edition we were honoured by the participation of a delegation of the World Tourism Organization and of other representatives of the National Authority for Tourism. Also, the manifestation was attended by some specialists, tour-operators, managers in tourism, university staff of the Economic Science Academy of Bucharest, partners of the CBC program from Serbia.

Quite impressive is also the theme chosen for the edition of the Euroregional Tourism Fair on the 17th-18th of May: Sustainable tourism, transcendence points of the frontier, an action prepared and organized by the authors of this article and by the representatives of the Foundation for Youth of Mehedinti, but also by the volunteer students of the Eco-URBIS Drobeta Association within the University Centre of Drobeta Turnu Severin.

A community means more than the totality of the inhabitants of a town or of a country, more than dividing the same geographical space or sharing some assets. A community emerges when its members participate in the achievement of common interests, have common beliefs and share the same system of values. The limits of a community are established not by geography, but by the values and culture which define the inhabitant of a geographic area.

The European construction is sustained by elements of identity, which reunite in diversity, the member states of Europe. The European Community is being built on the basis of the Greek culture, Christianity, history and geography, the Roman civilisation. These fundaments are the ones which confer a common consciousness and identity upon the inhabitants of Europe. Romania is a state which belongs to Europe, a state which shares the same values and elements of identity with the members of the European community. The Drobeta Turnu Severin Municipality has made and continues to make a symbolic step towards the reassertion of its belonging to the European space and its values.

It is said that it is good to know your past so as to be able to control your future. From now on, we will be looking towards the common European future, which bears in itself, the Roman culture and civilisation, and with the tourism as one of its elements of identity.

REFERENCES

MODERN MEANS OF PROMOTING TOURISM DESTINATIONS

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Abstract: The sharpening of the competition requires adaptation to new market characteristics. In a continuously changing world, the degree of adaptability to change yields the success chances of a certain organisation. Anticipating new trends, market development lines, translates into more time for the organization and a significant competitive advantage. As the saying goes, “information is power, money…” Moreover, this is an age of information. To that extent, the current endeavor seeks answers to the following questions: What information do we send out? Whom do we send it to? How are we sending it? It is clear that an efficient information management system is the key to success in any promotion activity, especially in the services area, namely in tourism. A particular attention has been paid to the Internet, due to its underexploited potential and the low expense level it encumbers. The analysis focuses on an actual situation in Romania, Sucevita Township, by presenting every step that was made and offering suggestions to improving the activity of local tourism promotion.

Promotion activities entangle the transmittal of information, from the organization to the target population in particular and to the public at large, in general. The efficiency of promotion activity for a tourist objective town may be assessed by using indicators such as:

- Cash income;
- Number of tourists;
- Cost per arrived tourist;
- Evolution of average stay duration;
- Evolution of occupation degree.

and indirectly, by analyzing the evolution of tourism services and their raw number. As the tourist pool increases, so will a series of adjacent services and entertainment.

SEVERAL WAYS OF PERCEIVING PROMOTION MEANS

There are two activities which deal with transmitting information from the organization to the public. Each has a clearly cut role, complementary to that of the other.

Advertising – is, at the same time, “the science, business or profession of creating and disseminating messages (commercials), a social institution which affects the daily life of any individual, a force that shapes mass culture, a component of the marketing mix or an information source about products, services, events, individuals or institutions (companies)\textsuperscript{36}.”

A second definition, closer to the actual sense of the word, considers that advertising “is any type of communication through which its recipients are promised real benefits brought by the purchase of a certain good or service\textsuperscript{37}.”


Amfiteatru Economic
Public relations are, according to Dansk Public Relations Klub of Danemark, “a continuous and systematic managerial effort undertaken by public and private organizations, aimed at receiving understanding, sympathy and support from those types of public which they have available or which they intend to contact\(^8\).”

Another widely accepted definition, known as the “Mexican declaration”, considers that “the practice of Public Relations is the art and social science to analyze the trends, to foresee their consequences, to give counsel to the organizational leaders and to implement action plans which could equally serve organizations and public interest\(^9\).”

**STUDY REGARDING THE PROMOTION INTENTIONS ON SUCEVITA TOWNSHIP**

As shown above, the current project will focus on the Sucevita Township, in Suceava County\(^{40}\). In 2006, this was the birthplace of the Association for Tourism and Local Economic Development “Sucevita”, which aims: to promote and establish the basis for a quality oriented tourism, which will successfully combine traditional and modern elements, and, at the same time, to support the economic and social development of the population living in the target area, by developing a series of humane and cultural programs. With the aid of Sucevita City Council, several projects have either been implemented, or are currently underway, among which:

- Setting up a sanitation service which will collect all municipal refuse;
- Building a sewage water treatment plant;
- Building a water supply plant;
- Bringing public lighting system to modern standards;
- Bringing the natural gas pipeline to the township;
- Modernization of the main access road.

All these actions set the basis for developing an environment-friendly type of tourism, but do not automatically guarantee the townships’ tourism development. For this to take place, the following set of action was taken, completed by our proposals:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities proposed for consideration or already completed</th>
<th>Proposals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Design of the area promotion website: \[www.sucevitaverte.ro\]  
Even if, in early stages, it was intended to be a complex website for tourism information, to this day it only provides information on lodging available in the area. | Developing the website and adding various information such as: points of interest in the area, entertainment venues, cultural events, traditional feasts.  
The website should provide information in at least two international languages, of which one should be English. It must also be user-friendly and interactive. |
| Conception of a brochure | This brochure should provide general information on the township: |

\(^{38}\) Pricopie Remus, Introduction to Public Relations, SNSPA Publishing House, 2001, p. 6  
\(^{40}\) Area of Bucovina, renowned for its monasteries with beautiful murals.
| Creation of two folk dance groups: an adult and a children’s group. | These dance groups will bring additional value to special events that take place in the life of the local community, various tourism exhibits or by taking part to traditional meals organized for tourist groups. |
| Taking part in tourist exhibits. | Currently, the focus should be on the internal market, by taking part in events organized in Bucharest. |
| Cooperating with regionally-based associations: The Association for Tourism and Local Economic Development “Sucevita” is a member of the Association for Tourism Bucovina” | There are a number of associations which may become partners, even if their scope is somewhat different: rural tourism associations, eco-tourism associations, craftsmen associations, etc. |
| Organizing events: | 1. Event spacing throughout the year; 2. Taking part in regional events; 3. Creation of monthly events, with a repetitive pattern. |
| - celebration of Sucevita monastery on August 6; | | |
| - feast of fruit and forest mushrooms, at the end of August; | | |
| - the “toaca” festival in September; | | |
| - the people’s ball – October; | | |
| - winter traditions and customs – December; | | |
| - sporting events; | | |
| - Cultural events. | | |
| Setting up of a traditional sheep farm | Regional uniqueness element; Helps develop tourist services. |
| Setting up a traditional, beginning of the twentieth century village, which should display all elements present at that time (town hall, craftsmen shops, houses for tourist lodging) | May bring significant advantages if promoted accordingly, by becoming an element of uniqueness on a regional scale and an interest point, on a national one. |
| Setting up of a public access point to information (PAPI). This point should be connected to the internet and benefits all modern technology for data editing and processing: webcam, scanner, digital photo camera, and printer. | Through access to the PAPI, the tourists may learn new information on the township. The information available here may be the same as that available on the presentation website, but with more detailed information and image database, in addition to the possibility to use the data editing and processing facilities. |
All the activities listed above must be backed up by a consistent media promotion campaign. Promoting a tourist destination has other aims, aside that of increasing the number of tourists for a certain period of time:

- Providing information on natural resources in the area;
- Adding higher value to these resources;
- Creating a unique image;
- Harmoniously developing the local economic life.

### TRAITS OF THE MAIN MEDIA CHANNELS USED IN PROMOTION

In order to obtain all foreseen results and to efficiently spend the allocated budget, all traits of the intended media channels must be presented.

Table 1. Advantages and disadvantages of media channels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media Channel</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily Newspapers</td>
<td>Educated, mature public, over the age of 30; Flexible environment with opportunities for full color adverts, varying in size and shape; Read throughout the day, maintaining a high level of credibility as vehicle of advertising; Allow for a quick programming of the campaign.</td>
<td>Relatively high cost levels; Low print quality; Moderate audience among the young and very young.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazines</td>
<td>Extended duration of advert and considerable number of readers for one copy; Selective; Gives brands prestige; Excellent print quality.</td>
<td>High cost level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>Best impact: images in motion and sound; Low costs compared to coverage area; Selective by program choice; Extremely creative and flexible.</td>
<td>Crowded environment, message is quickly forgotten if not repeated; Channel surfing during commercials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>Extremely selective environment (both regional as well as audience base); High reaction time in case of market events; Excellent for frequency improvement; Mobile environment.</td>
<td>Does not guarantee message perception; Somewhat less precise audience studies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Mihaela Nicola, Dan Petre, Publicitate, ed. SNSPA, Bucuresti, 2004, pag. 153
Specialty/General interest magazines
A permanent exchange of information with the public at large allows, in time, for the creation of a certain image in the minds of potential consumers. As information sources, one may use: various cultural events which may be depicted in cultural magazines; folk fairs and events which may be presented in tourism magazines; the inauguration of the traditional village may be presented as a national event, widely presented by central daily newspapers. In this type of media, in order to benefit maximum impact, the message must be adapted to the magazine type and its public.

Radio
This communication channel may be used in short bursts for general events, with impact on a large number of populations.

Television
This media is not recommended due to the high cost level associated with a promotion campaign. As the client is a local community, financial resources are not abundant.

Aside locally coordinated events, new technologies also play a role – the aim of this study and they also increase regional and national competitiveness.

MODERN MEANS OF PROMOTING THE SUBJECT TOURISM DESTINATION PROPOSED FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Alongside the classic media channels, used so far, we propose a new and innovative promotion system throughout the Internet and mobile phones.

Internet
Adjacent to supplying information on the lodging possibilities, local resources and entertainment venues, internet and the website also present the possibility to engage in a wide variety of promotion activities. Local tour operators may contact tourism agencies and may keep under close scrutiny the competition in the area.

The newly created website, in order to work at full capacity, should be subscribed to search engines according to a list of terms such as: tourism sheep farm, tourism village, lodging mountain, tourism pension, etc. Furthermore, an internet advertising campaign may be added, through banners on websites with high traffic. The cost level is significantly lower than that of a regular, traditional promotion campaign; the listing times or number of clicks is actually paid, which is also an excellent assessment tool. On the internet, by selecting the websites where the campaign will take place, the exact target population may be reached. This ensures for an optimal use of available resources.

The most important aspect of internet is connected to setting up a database by using the website as a reference point. By organizing a contest having as first prize a free trip to the town, visitors will be asked to voluntarily supply information such as name/family name, address, contact data, studies/income level, age, etc. This way, a database is created which may be used for transmitting pinpointed information on current events, tour operators’ promotions, etc. By subsequently comparing the information from the database with that obtained from pensions/hotels, an accurate assessment of this means of promotion may be obtained.

By using this database, those who expressed an interest in receiving various types of information may regularly receive newsletters. For this purpose, the organization must be registered as an operator of personal data. Along with info mails, e-mails for special
events (such as birthday and other similar events) may be sent, contributing to an increase of the “friendliness” factor.

**Mobile phone**

The hot topic of the day is the promotional short messages. It is an area which is worth exploring as it may bring significant benefits to the township. This system is also based on the internet database. It will be constantly updated with information received from firms – these will hand tourists a questionnaire in order to evaluate their satisfaction degree. As opposed to e-mails, which are often deleted even before they have been read, the text messages are read in a higher percentage, thus enhancing the message’s chances of getting across. The cost level is also higher, though. They may be lowered by sending selective messages to people, based on criteria such as: duration of stay, number of returns, comfort category, etc.

**CONCLUSION**

The use of new technologies will help the township to attract a larger number of tourists and will contribute to an increase in competitiveness both on a regional and on a national level, by transforming the township in a genuine tourism attraction. All these activities should be based on a solid ground, namely a wide variety of lodging possibilities, meals and food choice, entertainment activities, quality services, an easy-to-understand signal system for tourist orientation, a unique image backed by area achievements and an efficient management system, adapted to the requirements of the 21st century.

**REFERENCES**

TOURISM GROWTH AND ITS EFFECTS IN THE ECONOMY

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Abstract: Tourism, both international and domestic, brings about an intermingling of people from diverse social and cultural backgrounds, and also a considerable spatial redistribution of spending power which has a significant impact on economy of the destination area. Early work on the impact of tourism upon destination focused primarily on economic aspects because such impacts are more readily quantifiable and measurable. Yet tourism, by its nature, is attracted to unique and fragile environments and societies and in this case it would have negative consequences. International tourism is an invisible export in that it creates a flow of foreign currency into the economy of a destination country thereby contributing directly to the current account of the balance of payments. Like other export industries, this inflow of revenue creates business turnover, household income, employment and government revenue. Domestic tourism has somewhat similar economic effects upon the host region of a country. Whereas, however, international tourism brings a flow of foreign currency into a country, domestic tourism redistributes currency spatially within the boundaries of a country. The benefits and costs of tourism accrue to two quite distinct groups of people: on the one hand, the visitors themselves receive benefits and incur costs in taking holidays, and on the other hand, the resident population of the host region benefit from tourism (not only financially) but at the same time incur costs of various types. The development of tourism and the figures for 2007 illustrates an important growth of tourists’ arrivals and receives, generates an increasing of its effects, both positive and negative. In this case, the problem is essentially one of resource allocation and of whether or not the development of a tourism industry offers the optimum of the resources available – in the other words an assessment of the cost and benefits of tourism development vis-à-vis alternatives.

Keywords: tourism, tourism growth, tourism industry, economic impact, socio-cultural impact, environmental impact.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism comprises the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places their usual environment for not more one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited.

Tourism is also one part of recreation which involves travel to a less familiar destination or country, for short-term period, in order to satisfy a consumer need for one or a combination of activities.

Tourism has a number of typical characteristics which influence to a large extent the economies of tourism or, with the other words, its impact on the economy, like that:
tourism is a particular industry, a sector which comprises firms that produce goods and services for the tourist’s needs. Tourism product is an amalgam – attractions, accessibility, amenities at the destination (accommodation, catering, entertainment, transport and communication, tour-operators etc.) and many intangible elements (such as atmosphere, ambiance and friendliness of the local population etc.). Tourism is a service activity. Tourism products are perishable. Tourism demand is characterized by seasonality – an unequal temporal distribution. There is an interdependence of tourism products and services or of destinations and resorts. Predominance of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) etc.

Measurement of tourism activity and in particular of its impact or effects is very important, but is not easy to do.

1. THE GROWTH OF TOURISM

During the last years, tourism become one of the most important and rapidly growing sectors in the world economy. In 2006, according to UNWTO estimates, international tourists arrivals increased to 846 million whilst international tourism receipts reached 733 billion $US (see Table 1.)

Table 1. Tourists arrivals and receipts from international tourism 1960-2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Arrivals (millions)</th>
<th>Receipts (billions of $)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>687</td>
<td>473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>803</td>
<td>676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>733</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UNWTO, Tourism Highlights

In 2007, international tourist arrivals grew by an estimated 6% to reach a new record figure of nearly 900 million. The tourism sector continued to enjoy above average results and recorded a fourth year of sustained growth. One notable feature of 2007 was the continuing healthy performance of emerging destinations, backed up by one of the longest

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periods of sustained economic expansion. All regions and subregions succeeded in achieving positive growth, although the regional averages mask some fairly mixed performances across different subregions and countries.

Over several decades, growth rates have proved to be resilient at least on a global scale – to factors such as economic recession, variable exchange rates, terrorist activities and political unrest in many parts of the world (see Table 2.).

Table 2. Growth rate of international tourists arrivals and receipts from international tourism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Arrivals</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996 - 1970</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970 - 1980</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980 - 1990</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990 - 2000</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 - 2006</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UNWTO, Tourism Highlights 1960 – 2006

Looking now at tourism receipts, during the 2000’s these grew in current US dollar terms at an average annual rate of 7.6 per cent (see Table 2.). It is also important to emphasize that international tourism receipts at a global level have increased faster than other important export sectors (according to WTO – WB – IMF sources).

The forecast data for the period 2000-2020, based on the UNWTO publication “Tourism: 2020 Vision” shows an annual growth rate of about 4.4 per cent of international arrivals and in terms of international tourism receipts an even higher growth rate can be noted.

2. THE IMPACT OF TOURISM ON AN ECONOMY

Tourism can have a great impact on countries, regions and, obviously, destinations. The dimension of tourism worldwide has an economical, social, cultural and environmental influence on tourism destinations, and the influence can be positive and/or negative.

2.1. The economic impact

A simple representation of an economy shows the major flows of goods and services, or money in exchange, and the major component “players”. The bulk of travel and tourism value in the economy results from domestic recreational and business tourism expenditure, inbound and outbound international tourism. These tourism expenditures circulate throughout an economy, and the sector may also be important in other areas.

Tourism receipts are transformed into payments for factor of production which swell income and provide consumption tax and income tax revenue to governments. Governments may stimulate development of a tourism industry through grants and loans, and by undertaking their own fixed investment; if the capital required is obtained from capital markets by government or private business, there is a direct increase in investment. Outbound tourists take expenditure out of an economy equating an import but the method of founding trips may also affect the economy: tourist intending long expensive
travels may put aside money towards the travel for some time, either in advance or by credit installments afterwards. In the short time this may represent increased savings, and less consumption of other terms.

Airlines and tour operators also affect short term capital markets in the same way. By obtaining payments in advance for many types of ticket and its they maximize saving on short and medium term money markets.

As tourism grows, the effects vary different flows in the economy according to the structure of economy and changes in the type of tourism.

The main aspects of economic impact can be classified into several major groups:
- income generation
- employment generation
- tax revenue generation
- balance of payments effect
- improvement of the economic structure of a region/country

The magnitude of the economic impact depends on a little factors such as:
- the nature of the main facility and its attractiveness
- the volume and the intensity of expenditure
- the level of economic development in the destination
- the degree to which tourist expenditure recirculate within the destination etc.

Standard macroeconomic analysis identifies feature which determine and influence the size and volatility of an economy’s national income. These include the level of saving and investment, the pattern of consumption, prices and interest rates, government and external sector imbalances, and the degree to which resources (including labor) are fully employed at any one time. Since tourism activity is involved in most of these areas, it follows that it can have direct influences on national income.

Within an economy, domestic tourism expenditure normally counts as part of consumption and investment and therefore is principally a relocation of consumers’ or producers’ spending for something else.

The main direct benefit to national income of inbound international tourism is the injection of money and demand from external source. This equivalent to an increase in exports regardless of whether the spenders are recreational or business tourists.

On a large scale, the development of tourism generate an important increase of GDP and national income. Figures shows that in 2007, at a global level, travel and tourism contribute with 10.4 per cent of total GDP and in countries such as Spain, Bermuda, Cyprus or other island states tourism proportion of GDP is much more.

The impact of tourism expenditure depends on the ways in which the receipts are allocated — which in turn depend on the ownership and resource utilization of tourism supplying sector.

Employment is together income generation, the most important benefit of tourism development

Travel and tourism has often been shown to be a high employer of labor per dollar of sector income. Thus many authorities have considered tourism development as ideal in soaking up unemployment in region which have few other employment opportunities.

The jobs value of travel and tourism depends on how one measures employment, and the nature of local labor markets. One method to the measurement of the employment impact can be called “employment in tourism-related sectors”, and it is simply an addition of the employment in sector that considered to be tourism-related, such as accommodation, restaurant, travel agencies, tour operators, transport undertakings, enterprises engaged in
marketing destinations etc. The result is an overestimation of the number of jobs. (For example, in 2007, the figure shows 231 million jobs in travel and tourism economy, which represent 8.3 per cent of total employment). Though many of the firms working in these sectors supply not only tourists but also, and sometimes almost only, local residents. Therefore this method has neither a scientific nor a practical value. In this case, many research considered necessary the use of the national accounts method to determine employment impact generated.

Tourism has a major influence on balance of payments. For a long time, earning foreign currencies was considered to be the main benefit of international tourism. For many developing countries earning hard currencies has a vital significance, and tourism is a welcome source of the foreign currencies they need to finance necessary imports. The relative importance of tourism with respect to foreign currencies is far less important for developed countries.

The effects of tourism on the balance of payments can be divided into three categories:
- effects of tourism receipts from abroad and payments of residents abroad
- effects of direct tourist expenditure as they percolate through the economy
- flows of currency not initiated by tourist expenditure (purchase of travelers’ requisites, export stimulus of foreign products etc.).

Finally, the travel account is drawn up according to two possible approaches: “survey method” is based on periodic surveys to measure tourist receipts and expenditure and “bank method”- based on financial regulations and exchange figures from bank and other financial institutions.

As tourism developments in destinations have become less sporadic and more organized, so their implications for a national economy and its balance of payments have become clearer and more important. In addition, the supply of tourism products designed for international customers has become the province, to a large extent, of multinational investors and organizations. So to assess the impact of tourism developments on a country’s balance of payments is necessary to identify as many items as possible within the tourism external account, rather than simple visitor foreign exchange receipts.

2.2. Socio-cultural and environmental effects

Wide cultural differences occur between different countries and sometimes between different regions within the same country. Frequently the existence of such differences may be one of the principal stimulants of a tourism industry. In some developing countries such traditional cultural behavior patterns of particular groups of people form one focus of the tourism industry. Sometimes, however, differences in physical appearance and, perhaps more importantly, differences in cultural behavior between visitors and residents, are so great that mutual understanding is replaced by antipathy.

The problem is exacerbated because tourists are, by definition, strangers in destination, and as strangers tourists are also vulnerable.

When the cultural distinctions between the residents and tourists from more prosperous countries and regions are strongly marked, local culture and customs may be exploited to satisfy the visitor, sometimes at the expense of local pride and dignity. In the other hand, the traditional dance and the skilled craftwork give way to chap imitation to satisfy the need of the visitor and to obtain money with the least possible effort.
In this case, only with a good management and planning, tourism can provide an impetus for the preservation of ancient cultures.

Many of the other socio-cultural problems associated with tourism are related to degree of intensity of tourism development. Although difficult to measure, there is a relationship between density and the growth of local resentment towards tourism. The flow of tourists into a region increases the densities at which people live and over crowds the facilities which tourists share with the local population. Overcrowding reduces the value of holiday experience and creates additional strain for the resident population.

Excessive and badly planned tourism development affects the physical environment of destinations. In many areas the uncontrolled commercial extension of tourism has produced unsightly hotels of alien design which intrude into surrounding cultural and scenic environment. In some case the architectural design has been planned to meet the supposed wishes of the visitor other than to blend into the local environment. The effects, moreover, are not solely scenic, since the waste and serves from these developments are often discharged in an unprocessed form and pollute the rivers and seas of the holiday areas.

Error and ill-conceived forms of tourism development also destroy irremediable natural environments.

However, it should be remember that tourism, both domestic and international, is at the same time a positive force in helping to conserve the environment of the holiday regions. Many of the disadvantages mentioned above can be offset by high quality planning, design and management and by education tourists to appreciate the environment.

The extent and nature of the environmental and ecological damage done by tourists is related to the magnitude of the development and the volume of visitors, the concentration of usage both spatially and temporally, the nature of environment in question, and the nature of the planning and management practices adopted before and after development takes place.

CONCLUSIONS

Tourism generates many effects on an economy. Those affected are either individuals not involved in tourism, or governments and societies collectively. The types of effects concerned are either directly economic or social and environmental impacts.

Tourism creates both positive and negative effects in the destination country or region. Planning should be designed to maximize the economic and social benefits of tourism to the resident population, whilst at the same time mitigating or preferably eliminating the adverse effects.

In the future, planners must take a more proactive role in controlling the nature and the dimensions of tourism development.

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Abstract: Conceiving their marketing-mix, the tourism firms’ majority goes from market’ demands and their own possibilities, based on products’ characteristics. In sustainable tourism approach, the elements of marketing-mix assembly have different level of importance, considering the destination product’ characteristics. The product must include some specific features that allow to be considered a good choice for sophisticated tourists and its price must reflect his high quality and the environmental care’s policies. On the other hand, this product is made and sold by certain tour-operators and tourism intermediaries which have a significant importance in sustainable tourism through there’s product design and quality. In the same time, the promotional policy is important because the tools that are used can inform people, can motivate tourists and influence the customers choice to buy a this sustainable destination product. In this paper, we are proposing to underline how the components of a tourism firm’ marketing-mix can contribute on achieving the sustainable tourism.

The tourism activity is based on elements of natural and human environment. These elements are considered as tourism attractions and together with some specific delivered services are components which allow to the tourism firms to conceive, assemble and sell tourism products, corresponding to the consumers’ needs of tourism.

Because tourism means depending activities on natural and human environment, tourism must involves in sustainable development problem and process.

Because tourism means depending activities on natural and human environment, tourism must involves in sustainable development problem and process.

In the spirit of sustainable development, the tourism activity must be developed going from some specific principles (Stanciulescu, etal, 2000, pp. 5):

• The value of natural environment for tourism is very high and the next generation must enjoy this value too
• The tourism must be seen as a positive activity, the environment, the local communities and the visitors must benefit of this activity
• The tourism-environment relation must be developed as to sustain tourism activity on long-term, on its turn, the tourism activity development must not affects the environment in a negative way
• The tourism activity must be developed respecting the ecological, social, economical and cultural characteristics of tourism destination’s place
• The tourism development process’ goals must always be to balance tourists and also, there hosts’ needs
• The tourism industry, environmental organizations of the governments and international organizations must respect these principles and must cooperate as to practice them.

Marketing must and can help to transpose in to practice the sustainable tourism principles. Through marketing activities, the tourism organizations can influence tourists’
behavior and associate the demand for different types of tourism and tourism products. The goals proposed by tourism firms can be achieved by generating more information about sustainable tourism products and directing this information to the tourist’s key-targets, offering them those tourism services and products that maximize the benefits and minimize the negative impact on local communities and their environment.

The complexity of the tourism phenomenon and the particularly aspects of tourism organizations’ activity, involves a special vision in marketing approach. Because of its specificity, determinate by the interaction of its material, natural and human’s creations structure and some specifically services, the tourism activities are joint parts of a homogeny assembly.

The tourism marketing strategies applied by every participant on that activity must be coordinated with tourism policy, such as to become a sustainable development support. The tourism firm use these natural resources patrimony or human’s creations results considered as tourism attractions patrimony as to satisfy the consumers’ needs and to appropriate the profit.

To conceive and develop in efficient manner theirs activities, to create the most appropriate tourism offer that respond to the tourism demand, the tourism firms must better know the market evolution, the tourism needs, the tourism services consumers’ behavior.

Because of the tourism firms’ activities specific, because the tourism consumption has some specific characteristics, the tourism marketing has some particularities (Balaure, etal, 2005, pp. 19):

- The tourism market function in the large sphere of services market, because, in their majority, the tourism firms are services firms and there’s offers is an assembly of specific goods and services assembling
- The particularities of tourism market is determined by its services component’ particularities (intangibility, inseparability of there’s’ suppliers, heterogeneity, perishable etc.)
- Reported to goods distribution, the tourism product transfer from suppliers to consumers is realized on a different manner (with the exception of transport services)
- The tourism products can be acquisitioned in advance, that gives tourists the right of its benefits but not the possession of services themselves
- Because of its abstract character (invisible, immaterial good), the tourism products cannot be seen, examined or possessed before its acquisition moment
- The fool satisfaction of tourists demand can be not assured by one single supplier, that’s why complementary relationships are created between different tourism services suppliers (hotel keepers, transporters, restaurants etc.), with the goal to create the appropriate tourism products, that can satisfy tourism consumers’ needs
- The relationships complementarily needs a good coordination of all tourism services suppliers efforts in a rational marketing policy, as to not compromise any supplier activity
- Because of this interdependence, the low quality of one supplier which acts in an area -considered as entity (resort, region, country) can has bad influence and can damage on the all offer
- The complementary character of tourism offer is completed by the of tourism attraction (natural or human’s creation results)
The tourist demand is very sensible on the action of different economical and extra economical factors that give a strong level of resilience etc.

Going from these particularities, from the market characteristics and demands, from general and marketing firms’ goals and from its own possibilities the tourism organizations which are preoccupied by sustainable tourism development must conceive their activities in a marketing-management process approach, according to the four key stages of the strategic planning process:

- Identification of the sustainable principles and of the correspondence between marketing and sustainable tourism development
- Formulation the master tourism strategy
- Implementation the strategy through marketing operational tools
- Monitoring and evaluation the appropriation of the sustainability of the tourism marketing strategy (Firth, pp. 6).

Tourism marketing management procedures need to be developed to influence the five variables central to achieving sustainability. Marketing needs to focus on: easy and means to influence visitors’ choices of location, access timing and product provision, and to develop local understanding and knowledge of tourism (Middleton, Hawkins, 1998, pp. 85).

As we can see, one step of this process is to implementing the sustainable tourism, step that means for the individual tourism firms to conceive a coherent marketing policy, an appropriate marketing-mix assembly (product, price, placement, promotion and, in many opinions, people component), in such a way as to influence consumers behavior towards a sustainable tourism goals.

**PRODUCT**

Economic sector, tourism and travel business is a complex and voluntary mixture between different tourism services suppliers and travel agencies that acts such intermediaries between the public and tourism products.

The tourism products are the result of associations, interdependences between resources (natural environmental elements and some result of humans’ life and activities) considered as tourism attractions and services (Barbu, et al., 1991, pp. 26; Bran, et al., 1998, pp. 67, Snak, 1975, pp. 338).

Even is assembled by a various heterogeneous components, in some opinion, the tourism product can be structured on next categories of elements (Balaure, et al., 2005, pp. 269):

- **Tangible (material)** elements, that means: natural environmental elements (mountains, seas, rivers, forests etc.) and some result of humans’ life and activities (museums, buildings, monuments etc.) + general infrastructure of the destination (transport and telecommunication network, electricity, water channels etc.) + tourism equipments (accommodation structures, restaurants, food beverages buildings, sport arenas and equipments etc.)

- **Intangible (nonmaterial)** elements: tourism services and psychological elements (ambiance, comfort, luxury, adventure etc.)

- Communications that refers to the tourism product (information about product transmitted through promotional policy techniques and tools (advertising, P.R., promotions etc.)

- Image of the product (what tourists think about the product).
Going from these elements, it can be identified some characteristics of tourism product, such as (Balaure, et.al., 2005, pp. 270; Gherasim, Gherasim, 1999, pp. 36, Muhcina, 2007, pp. 108):

- It’s an assembled product
- Every product represents a unique combination of elements
- It’s not mobile, because incorporates fixed attractions (mountains, buildings etc.)
- Is delivered only by order
- It’s submitted on law coercions
- It’s defined by some specific quality characteristics, as results of its composed elements’ quality etc.

In some opinions, there are five characteristics of a product that needs to be considered when attempting to make the existing or new products conform to the principles of sustainability (Middleton, Hawkins, 1998):

- Design of facilities
- Sustainability designed into business operations
- Presentation of the product
- Service elements
- Branding or the designed image of the products as communicated and promoted to targeted customers.

Considering these tourism product structure and characteristics sustainability can be achieved to different way such as:

- Designing the product going from sustainability principles (the tour-operators must consider how can environment be affected when they are assembling the products and when they choose the services suppliers)
- Rational utilization of the attraction elements that compose it
- Sustainable tourism services operation (using ecological raw materials, preserving the environment in the services activity and business operation etc.)
- Cooperation with local community from tourism destination concerning the problems that can affect sustainability
- Educating the human resources, which acts in tourism services in the spirit of sustainability etc.

PRICE

Price is an immaterial component of the product structure and the most directly and strongest tool for influencing demand, especially in the short term. In some opinion, price is used by commercial operators both strategically and tactically to manage demand around the available supply of products (Middleton, Hawkins, 1998, pp. 113).

Through its level, price contributes on the determination of the nature of tourists segments. Even not always the people with law incomes doesn’t respect the sustainability principles, mass-tourism means often chip tourism products’ acquisition, and so, a high level of prices can restricts the access of many tourists to some tourism destinations. In this way, high prices contribute to a better preservation of natural environment. When they are formulating a pricing strategy, businesses are considering various costs that need to be covered such as purchasing, equipments, paying stuff, training, and overheads, however rarely is the costs of environmental access, protection and management factored into the costs that need to be covered by product price. The environmental is often treated as a free public good, and as long this practice is used, the environmental degradation will continue.
to take place, this is the reason that’s way environmental costs must be factored into product prices, regulation and private sector collaboration will be necessary (Firth, pp. 31).

DISTRIBUTION

Because of tourism activities characteristics, the tourism distribution involves all the activities that contribute to effective tourism consumption realization. Through the various points of access, distribution assures the connection between consumers and tourism products.

Distribution can be realized in a direct manner, using direct channels (ensuring a direct connection between supplier and consumer) or indirectly, using intermediaries (the connection between supplier and consumer can be made by a short channel, with one single intermediary, or by long channels, using at least two intermediaries).

To get a sustainable distribution, it must approach and apply the sustainable principles on the all links of distribution chain, from services suppliers, to tour-operators and travel agencies.

By theirs’ power and position on the distribution channel, the most important role to assure a sustainable tourism it’s owned by tour-operators. Producers, and in the same time, wholesalers, the tour-operators can contribute to achieve sustainability through different ways:

- Understanding themselves and helping suppliers to understand the principles of sustainability
- Choosing those services suppliers which acts in sustainable spirit (use eco-resources, produce with care for the environment, collects offal etc.)
- Encouraging suppliers to develop theirs’ activities in sustainable conditions
- Designing sustainable products, going from a strong collaboration with those suppliers which are fallowing sustainability in theirs’ activities
- Collaborating with local community from tourism destinations and involves in environmental problems’ solutions
- Market targeting, identifying those tourists segments preoccupied to by and to make a sustainable tourism
- Getting the appropriate prices for the sustainable products
- Imaging and positioning the tourism destinations
- Promoting and distributing those products to travel agencies
- Informing the tourists about these sustainable products etc.

PROMOTION AND MARKETING COMMUNICATION

In tourism, the marketing communication and promotion techniques and tools are used to:

- Inform business partners, collaborators, medias, tourists etc., about services and products that are offered, about destinations, about the organization it self, or about its activity
- Create, maintain or consolidate the tourism organization or its offer’ image
- Influence consumers’ perception, expectations or opinion as to choose and buy certain tourism products
• Increase demand for certain tourism products etc.

To communicate the messages, the most utilized communication tools in tourism are:

• Brochures and catalogues
• Travel magazines
• TV or radio spots
• Press conference etc.

To increase the sustainable principles understanding and approach process, marketers must elaborate the promotion and communication activity as to:

• Conceive and transmitter messages containing information about sustainable destination
• Stimulate the motivation by commercial brochures and influence customers’ choice for sustainable products
• Communicate about prices that justify a sustainable product acquisition
• Increase the interest of the business partners for sustainable offers etc.

The tour operators are the most involved tourism organizations in the process of sustainable products promotion, but also, an important role has the local suppliers, and local or central government tourism managers. All these organizations are responsible to portray in a fair way the sustainability of destination products in their advertising and promotional messages.

In addition to the classic or traditional marketing mix elements (product, price, distribution, promotion), some marketing specialists consider that for travel and tourism a fifth category - people is relevant (Middleton, Hawkins, 1998; Firth, pp. 32). This category is important because substantial human interactions are inherent in the tourism experience.

Host community, employees and visitors interacts at the tourism destinations, and by theirs behavior can influence the destinations’ sustainability and the perception about these.

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THE ELEMENTS OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT SUPPORTING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

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Abstract: The article concerns the manners that support enterprise knowledge management activities. One of the most crucial elements that support knowledge management is particularly described. This element is human resourcing management. An article shows a key role of personnel department in the knowledge based enterprise and a range of new tasks to perform. An article highlights also an important role of such aspects of personnel department activities as: creating suitable organisational culture, conducting personnel development activities and staff motivating to realizing knowledge management initiatives or knowledge management program implementing. There is also stressed the matter of personnel assessment as a tool lifting the enterprise’s knowledge management level. More over the necessity of knowledge management strategy and human resources strategy linking is mention in an article. There is also indicates that the successful personnel department activities needs an engagement of executives. It also demands the suitability of enterprise organizational structure, introducing the systematically planning and necessity of knowledge management results measurement. These are the activities that facilitate the realizing of new human resourcing management mission in knowledge based enterprise.

An article is based on literature and empirical research view including researches conducted by its author.

Knowledge management, although it has accompanied our activities for many years is still regarded as the most up-to-date management conceptions. We may speak about a certain trend of the adopting knowledge management practice at the enterprises. The practical interest in this problem is transferred into the scientific environment, which more and more often attempts to investigate this conception of management. These investigations are not limited to drawing just mere sketches of this problematics, but penetrate into still deeper and deeper aspects, coming down to the lower levels of the analysis of this phenomenon. One of the example of such profound investigations is the search for the dependency between knowledge and other elements and factors, which might be applied in the supporting of practices in the sphere of knowledge management. One of such dependencies (confirmed by investigations) is the dependency between knowledge management and human resources management.

This dependency might seem even obvious. Once one of the most valuable resources of the enterprise (knowledge) is possessed by the employees and is their personal know-how, any activities immediately related to the employees will immediately affect the condition of knowledge management. What kind of effect will the best knowledge management program will acquire if it does not consider the system of recruiting and
selection of the employees (the appropriate characteristic and qualification profile of the candidates), without the system motivating the employees to learning and sharing knowledge with their fellow-employees? What will be its effect if personnel policy does not consider the aspects of the professional development? The logic prompts a very simple answer- the effect of such program will be poor!

As the results of some investigations demonstrate, such logical conclusion seems to be simplified. The dependencies between knowledge management and human resources management have at least two directions. Not only human resources management practices support knowledge management. In the opinion of some researchers, the dependency has a reciprocal character. Roberts-Witt wrote about the tendency to apply knowledge management practices for the supporting of activities related to personnel management, in particular, the activities related to the recruiting and retaining of the personnel in the organization (Roberts-Witt, 2003: 4).

Other researchers do not specify knowledge management as something new or independent, but as a new, developed form of human resources management (Yahya, Got, 2002: 460). According to this approach, human resources management would serve as a mechanism supporting human interactions and cooperation processes with the help of contemporary informational tools. In this case personnel management would have to be analyzed in the categories of strategic human resources management concentrated on acquisition, organization and motivation of these resources (Armstrong, 2000: 576-593).

However, there are more voices supporting the dependency of knowledge management from human resources management. Already at the beginning of the analysis we should be point out the fact that the majority of the knowledge management initiatives applied by the enterprises and the majority of adopted knowledge management programs commence in the personnel units. These units, alongside with their new roles, such as the encourager projector of new solutions, play a significant role in the sphere of strategies facilitating the knowledge management programs (Soliman, Spooner, 1999: 341). They have a leading role in the creation of knowledge management teams, they initiate the adoption of knowledge management programs, they establish rules and principles of knowledge management and actualize already adopted knowledge management programs.

The system of human resources management on the stage of the adoption of knowledge management conception has to be adapted to its aims, tasks and needs. The necessity of the adaption to the new conditions, particularly the necessity to act within the knowledge-based economy and knowledge management in the organization becomes obvious. (Mikula, Pietruszka-Ortyl, Potocki 2007: 2-3).

Other investigations also demonstrate a close relationship between knowledge management and human resources management. The investigations conducted by the Center of Management Studies of Leon Kozminski Academy of Entrepreneurship and Management in Warsaw in 2003-2005 were directed at the identification of relations between knowledge management and human resources management at the enterprise. The most commonly emerging factors of human resources management supporting the development of knowledge management are as follows:

- Organizational culture.

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41 The investigation was conducted considering the enterprises variability criterion, i.e. their competitiveness, for example. The subjects of the were divided into four categories: market leaders, enterprises with a position stronger than the position of major, enterprises with a typical market position, and enterprises with the weakest market position.
• Qualifications of the staff,
• Qualification of the employees,
• Motivation of the staff and employees.

Figure 1. The factors supporting knowledge management initiatives and the criterion of the market position of the enterprises

Source: author’s own investigation

At the enterprises with the strongest position at the market (leaders) the most frequently applied supporting factors were as follows: qualifications of the employees (89% of indications) and of management staff (84%) (Compare 1). Other supporting factors are the following: organizational culture (68%) and motivation of management staff and employees (51%). At the enterprises with a position stronger than the position of major competitors the situation looks differently. Thus, the most supporting factor is the organizational culture (79%), followed by the qualifications of the management staff (77%), qualifications of the employees (72%) and motivation of management staff and employees (54%). At the enterprises with typical market position the situation was close to that of the leaders. Thus, the most effectively supporting factors were the following: qualifications of the management staff and employees (81% indications each), organizational culture (50%) and motivation of management staff and employees (31%). At the enterprises with the weakest market position the supporting and equally effective factors: organizational culture qualifications of the management staff and employees (67% indications each). The most effectively supporting element was the motivation of management staff and employees (33%). The results of the investigation demonstrate that the strongest factor supporting the activities related to the applications of the knowledge management initiatives are qualifications (both of management staff and employees) and the organizational culture. The motivation of management staff and employees were less effectively supporting.
Besides, the results emphasized the essence of the system motivating the employees to
the engagement into knowledge management initiatives. In such case development
activities acquired the motivational character.

Motivation systems directed at the supporting of knowledge management processes were
identified at 62.89% of the investigated enterprises. Unfortunately as much as 37.11% of
the investigated enterprises did not have motivation systems. Considering the market
position of these enterprises, the following dependency does not seem to be surprising: the
higher the market position is, the more often we can meet systems motivating the
employees to the activities related to the acquisition, creation and sharing of knowledge
/ information at the enterprises (Compare picture 2). Such systems were apparent at 43% of
enterprises, which are market leaders, at 39% of enterprises with a position stronger than
the position of major competitors, 16% of enterprises with a typical market position and
only at 2% of enterprises with the market position weaker than that of their competitors.

Figure 2. Systems motivating to the actions in the sphere of knowledge management
and the criterion of the market position of the enterprises

This situation is quite typical, as it is well known that the most successfully motivating
factors are material benefits, and the enterprises with the weakest market position have
limited opportunities to provide these benefits.

The elements which most successfully motivated the employees to implement activities
related to knowledge management at the enterprises as market leaders were the following:
the system of the training of the employees (92%), the system of the training of
the managing staff (77%), the system of the development of the employees' qualifications
(69%) the system of the development of the qualifications of the managing staff (62%). The
enterprises with A position stronger than the position of major competitors most often
demonstrated the following elements of human resources management: the reward system
(76%), system of the training of the employees (68%), recruiting and selection system
(64%) the system of the development of the employees' qualifications (60%). The
enterprises with a typical market position, demonstrated the following elements of human
resources management: recruiting and selection system (60%), building of career
development ways for the employees (60%), system of the training of the employees
(50%) the system of the development of the employees' qualifications (50%). The
enterprises with the weakest market position named only one element of human resources
management, supporting the activities related to the acquisition, creation and sharing of knowledge / information. This element was the reward system (100% of indications).

Most often the enterprises indicated the activities with the development character, such as: training and the improvement of the qualification of employees and management staff. The weaker is the enterprise, the more often it applies elements like recruiting / selection, Carter development ways, sometimes instead of development and training activities. Perhaps, this dependency is related to the costs of the implemented activities. The training and development system was significantly limited at the majority of enterprises due to the serious budget cuts in the period of economic stagnation, even at the initial stage of the economic revival. In such cases only the employees who had remarkable achievements and engagement in the work were sent to the trainings, and these trainings had a motivational character.

Although the managers of enterprises seem to be aware of the importance of the problem of sparing knowledge and the significance of the motivation system for collecting and application of knowledge by the employees, it is obvious that the majority of the enterprises still lack the appropriate atmosphere for open sharing of knowledge, they also lack the effective system of reward, encouraging employees to be engaged in these knowledge-sharing initiatives (Pfeifer, Hanel, Greiser, Reiser, 2001: 46). Activities aimed at the motivation of employees to share knowledge are very difficult (Romanczuk, 2001: 190) and applied rarely, as we may conclude from the investigations of Reinold Hagen Foundation. Only 16% of the investigated enterprises had motivation programs encouraging employees to sharing knowledge (Pfeifer, Hanel, Greiser, Reiser, 2001: 44). However, the investigations of Main School of Commerce show a bit different picture. Thus, at 80% of investigated enterprises employees are motivated to sharing their knowledge and experience. In half of the enterprises participating in the investigation (47%), the attitude of the personnel towards these activities were considered while implementing the periodical personnel appraisal activities, and in 36% of organizations the mechanisms forcing the employees to share their knowledge were applied (Ploszajski, 2001: 10).

Besides, human resources management units play a major role in the supporting of strategies facilitating the adoption of knowledge management programs (Soliman, Spooner, 1999: 341). This support usually concerns the following:

- Creation of knowledge management teams,
- Initiating knowledge management programs,
- Establishing of rules and principles of knowledge management
- Actualization of knowledge management programs.

The support, which we mean here, is supposed to be based on a more serious effort (professionalism) in the implementation of selection and recruiting procedures, development, motivation, rewarding and promotion of the employees, their development and succession plans, adequate management philosophy and control (Soliman, Spooner, 1999: 343).

Alongside with the above-named task of human resources management units their main tasks is the implementation of the measuring of knowledge (mapping of knowledge, identification of knowledge gaps) creation and dissemination of knowledge within organizations, encouragement of employees’ usage of knowledge gathered at the enterprise and the monitoring of the periodicity in the application of knowledge bases. (Soliman, Spooner, 1999: 337-345). Human resources management activities should take into account the following spheres related to knowledge management:
• The attainment of the common direction to knowledge management and main business activity of the enterprise,
• Identification of benefits of the effective knowledge management activities,
• Selection of appropriate knowledge management programs,
• Adoption of knowledge management strategies,
• Creation of the environment supporting the adoption of knowledge management programs (appropriate climate),
• Application of information technologies supporting knowledge management programs,
• Creation of staff knowledge management teams,
• Creation of the leadership in the sphere of knowledge management.

The investigations of the role of the periodic personnel appraisal of the employees at knowledge management organizations also demonstrate a dependency of human resources management and knowledge management. These investigations enabled to specify a close relationship between personnel appraisal tool applied at the enterprise and the achieved level of knowledge management. The results were surprising, as numerous common features of personnel appraisal tools of the enterprises, which achieved the highest level of knowledge management were identified. Thus, organizations, which applied personnel appraisal tools with several common characteristic features, i.e. the tools, the structure of which was close to the ideal model and took into account the criteria specific for knowledge management, achieved two highest levels of knowledge management (interactive system of knowledge management - level III and platform system of knowledge management - level IV, the highest level). The organizations, which applied poor personnel appraisal tools, containing several constructional drawbacks, achieved only the basic level of knowledge management.

As it was mentioned before, the interdependence between human resources management and knowledge management at the enterprises is very complex. If knowledge management is regarded as a long-term strategy of the enterprise, then the role of the human resources management patricians in the general strategy of the enterprise, knowledge management enterprise and human resources management becomes very significant. The combined application of knowledge management and human resources management, as a rule, contribute to the improvement of the effectiveness of organization’s activities, which results in the improvement of the activity of the whole organization and its achievements. (Gloet, Berrell, 2003: 83-84).

As it was mentioned before, the activities of human resources management units are supposed to support knowledge management initiatives. However, in order to secure a high efficiency of these activities the following issues should be taken into account:

• Support of knowledge management initiatives by the management of the enterprise,
• Appropriate organizational culture,
• Planning and structure of the organization,
• Education and training,
• Measurement of the achieved results of work,
• Engagement of the organization’s members (Dale, Cooper, 1992: 83-84).

The support of the management of the enterprise, which will be discussed later, is necessary, as the decisions coming from the high management level has a major influence on the organization’s members. The support of the activities from such a high level often
determines their result and success. The managing staff of the enterprise, which notices the interrelations between knowledge management and human resources management, is also aware of the value of tacit knowledge, the power of human factor and importance of the proper management of this factor. The support of knowledge management initiatives from the management of the enterprise does not mean the engagement of only the top managers. The same attitude and engagement should be demonstrated by the mid-level management, as the representatives of this level of management are responsible for the transfer of the ideas into the organization.

In the opinion of I. Nonaka and H. Takeuchi, the mid-level managers (often called „knowledge engineers”) often play the leading and the most valuable role at the enterprise. In order to use their role in the most effective way, the model of management „middle – top – bottom” should be applied, as, in their opinion, it is the best one among the other models of management at the knowledge management enterprise. This is a model, which primarily facilitates the creation of the organizational knowledge. Describing the role of the mid-level managers we may use the metaphor „strategic nod or “bridge””, which perfectly reflects the specific character of their role. „The act as a ‘bridge’ between the distant ideals, emerging at the top, and chaotic the everyday activity of the employees” (Nonaka, Takeuchi, 2000: 160). This model emphasizes the role of mid-level managers. The importance of this level of management lies in the fact that the managers of this level make the attempts to solve the contradictions between what the top management wishes to achieve and what is really possible to achieve.

Knowledge management requires the change of the role of the top and linear managers from the reactive to the pro-active in the spheres of learning (mentoring, coaching), the creation of the business identity of the employees, development of the organizational culture facilitating the sharing of knowledge in the organization and the creation of the values essential for customers, employees and shareholders. Human resources management specialists, besides their actual roles, should play the role of the encouragers in the sphere of acquisition and creation of knowledge and the creators of changes. Human resources management unit, particularly on the central level of a large enterprise, should become the business partner of the administration of the enterprise oriented at the creation and adoption of personnel strategies, new methods and tools of human resources management, taking into account significant values of human capital of the enterprise.

The most difficult problems accompanying the adoption of knowledge management appear in the sphere of the sharing of the possessed knowledge / information by the employees with other employees, and in the sphere of the application of knowledge in practice (knowledge, which is either acquired from other people, or knowledge available in the databases). Thus, it is vitally important to attain the mutual credence of the employees and to develop the culture, which would help to identify the tacit knowledge and encouraging people to share this knowledge. Organizational culture is primarily supposed to encourage the continuous learning, sharing of knowledge by the employees, and facilitate the teamwork. The development of these aspects of culture enables to generate added value of the employees, regarded as the agents of the continuous progress (Dale, Cooper, 1992: 85).

One more element of human resources management is the systematic planning and the organizational culture, facilitating the proper distribution of the enterprise’s resources, developing the engagement of the employees and encouraging them to participate in knowledge management initiatives. The organizational structure is supposed to enable the construction of both formal and informal communication channels, applied as the tools of
the experience exchange between the employees. The value of the employees searching for the solutions of this problem by way of using these channels significantly increases in the organizations adopting knowledge management. Such “soft environment” facilitates the development of the strategy directed at the acquisition of the tacit knowledge of the employees. (Dale, Cooper, 1992: 85).

One more element in the sphere of human resources management supporting knowledge management is the development of the employees. A significant importance is attached to the activities related to the education and training of the employees at the enterprise. B. Dale and C. Cooper recommend drawing less attention to systems and tools, but more attention to processes and people, the activities should be directed at the learning of the employees, support the development of structures based upon teamwork, and encourage sharing and dissemination of knowledge. The element of the employees’ development is closely connected with the development and retaining of the organizational culture, supporting the processes of learning in the organization.

In the activities related to the knowledge management, as well as in all the organizational activities a significant importance is attached to the measurement of the acquired results. Thus, all the benefits acquired in the sphere of knowledge management should be measured by way of using both qualitative (if possible) and quantitative parameters.

The acquisition of the good results in the sphere of knowledge management initiatives requires the acquisition of credence, acceptance and engagement of all the employees to the activities of the enterprise at all the levels of its structure, By M. Santosus and J. Surmacz the key role here is played by the system of motivation and reward. However, in the process of the adoption of the program motivating the employees to the participation in knowledge management there might be a danger, that the employees will participate in these initiatives for the sole purpose of getting benefits from the motivation programs (awards, etc.) without and disregard the quality of their own contribution (information, knowledge, etc.). This program should be constructed in the way, which will enable the employee regard the participation in knowledge management itself as a reward (Santosus, Surmacz, 2001). This is a new challenge faced by the patricians of human resources management.

Global competition forces organizations to apply an innovative approach to the activities related to the management of the enterprise. Knowledge management, more and more often applied in practical business activities practice, is a manifestation of this approach. The acquisition of success in knowledge management requires certain activities, which have a supportive character. Knowledge management does not function independently; it enters into the interaction with various elements of the organization.

One of the most obvious interrelations is the interrelation between knowledge management and human resources management. Although we may speak about the mutual influence of these elements, the influence of human resources management is the dominating one in this interrelation. We should point out that the majority of initiatives in the sphere of knowledge management commence in the personnel units. The adoption of the knowledge management programs influences on the change of the role, which they recently played. These units have to implement new actions, i.e. the measuring of knowledge, mapping of knowledge, differentiation of knowledge gaps, creation and dissemination of knowledge or the monitoring of the periodicity of usage of knowledge bases by employees. However, personnel units should draw a particular attention to the organizational culture and development and motivational activities. Thus, organizational culture, qualifications and motivation of the employees and the staff of the enterprise have a major influence on the development of knowledge management practices. In the sphere of
periodic personnel appraisal procedures the significant role of the support of human resources by knowledge management becomes more and more significant. Personnel appraisal systems projected in the appropriate way have a major impact on the development of knowledge management and on the attainment of the higher levels of the development of these processes. We should point out, that personnel units do not only support the development of certain initiatives / practices of knowledge management, but should be concentrated on the supporting of the adoption of knowledge management programs. It should be remembered that the consolidated application of knowledge management strategies and human resources management strategies positively influence on the improvement of the efficiency of the enterprise and its achievements.

However, personnel units cannot be burdened with all the responsibility for the success of these activities. They need support (engagement) of the enterprise’s management, they also need the appropriate organizational culture, which encourages the open communication, eliminating the barriers for the communication, initiated by the organizational structure, they require a systematic planning, regular activities directed at the development of the employees, measuring of the results and overall engagement of all the members of the organization. Only under these conditions we may expect the significant effects of knowledge management.

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Abstract: The cultural and natural heritage has received worldwide attention during the last two generations. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee has accentuated a great number of objects as belonging to heritage of mankind. There are two kinds of objects, cultural and natural heritage. Here only cultural objects are considered. The sphere of interests touched by the two kinds of objects is quite different. The group of people engaged may be overlapping, and some of the arguments in the sequel may hold for both. Nevertheless there are differences with respect to tourism that cannot be worked out here.

The cultural objects shall be called “monuments”, though this notion may be somewhat doubtful in some cases such as archaeological sites, whole ensembles of buildings, or historic gardens.

Many people are interested in the conservation of outstanding monuments and traditional quarters. The engagement in these topics increases with the standard of living in a country. Poor nations with most people just fighting for satisfaction of their elementary needs are less inclined to care about cultural heritage. With increasing purchasing power additional aspects of lifestyle attract attention. The unprecedented increase of real income in the Western World after the Second World War has aroused an equally unprecedented interest into the witnesses of the past. This is a first hint that there is an economic dimension concerning monuments: Cultural sites must have a specific economic value insofar as much money is spent for them. On the one hand public and private means are invested into the maintenance and conservation of monuments on the other hand people spend money in order to visit them. We will discuss both aspects under an economic point of view.

1. MONUMENT PROTECTION

1.1 The Reasons for Monument Protection

All over the world human beings show at least some interest in the history and cultural achievements of their home land. This is not a matter of course, and we should ask why this is so. The immediate utility of cultural sites is negligible for most people. There are, however, social needs that go beyond the individual ones. People understand themselves as part of a nation, a region or a city just as they alternatively (or additionally) identify themselves with a football club, a firm, a brand or a profession etc. This is just a manifestation of man as a social being, and the very root of the interest in monument protection. According to this argument people appreciate monuments of their home land (region, city) as expression of their cultural identity. It is in the core argument for monument protection.

It may be asked what the attributes of buildings, streets, or even whole city districts are that make monuments out of them. An important part of the local population, at least some opinion leaders must have the feeling that there is something outstanding about an object that is called a monument. Specifically it may have one or several of the following distinguishing features:

1. It is an example of the architecture of a past period;
2. It is an extraordinary technical achievement of its time;
3. It is the location of important historical events;
4. It is intriguing by its generally accepted beauty and atmosphere;
5. It is a landmark or a symbol;

The first two features are in the forefront of traditional monument protection. They are justified by a second argument beyond identification, i.e. by documentation. A building e.g. may be considered as a masterpiece of the epoch or the prototype of a series of similar edifices thus having influenced future developments. This aspect, however, concerns in the first instance the academic representatives of the history of architecture or art, to a less degree the general public. Some of the academic representatives tend to consider a monument only as a document that should be maintained in a good state of repair but should be cancelled from protection once it has substantially been destroyed, since after reconstruction it would rather be an imitation or even worse a forgery. The Charter of Venice the fundamental declaration of monument protection comes pretty close to this position.

The documentation argument does not take the three other motives into account as the identification argument does. Insofar it falls short with respect to a full-fledged discussion of monument protection. Yet the documentation aspect has an exceptional weight. Those monuments that are really originals have their own charm. The World Heritage Committee (WHC) selects cultural and natural objects. It seems following the Charter of Venice to emphasize the documentation aspect but fortunately not too strictly. The above points allow of a considerably wider range of cultural monuments than the WHC does. Point 1 and 2 coincide essentially with the more detailed criteria of the WHC with respect to cultural objects. Locations of historical events (point 3) do not matter on the WHC level. The beauty of an object (point 4) has much more weight on a regional or local than on a world level. The value as a landmark or a symbol (point 5) is a purely regional or at best national importance.

The objects that are awarded with the title of world heritage are outstanding. Monument protection, however, must go farther and necessarily comprise a host of other objects that are national, regional or local heritage.

Modern totalitarian political systems realized the rank of identification. They wanted to create a new identity for their citizens with new historical consciousness. Therefore they neglected traditional monuments or even destroyed them. Only those monuments were appreciated and protected that could be reinterpreted according their ideology. This may be considered as a fake of history; yet we must be aware of the fact that the spirit of the time inevitably guides monument protection, and the views of the present generation will be challenged by the generations to come.

Monuments are scarce objects that are allotted a value by the public opinion. Not only the state, however, has engaged in monument protection but also private persons and organisations, churches, even firms, and similar institutions. The contribution of non-state agents to monument protection must not be underestimated. One may deplore, nevertheless,
that there is not done enough. Actually many people do and ask for more activity of the state. Hence monuments are economic goods, though somewhat different from “normal” goods.

1.2 The Economic Nature of Monuments

The economic theory of public goods renders an instrument to discuss the economic nature of monuments. Economists usually prefer the market mechanism as an – almost – universally appropriate means of distributing goods. Nevertheless there are some important exceptions where the market does not work properly work or even not at all.

One of the most important cases where the market fails is that of public goods. There are several categories of public goods. A prerequisite of the market mechanism to work are two requirements [43]:

- Non-rivalry: A fruit may be eaten by only one person (rivalry) a public park may be used by many persons (non-rivalry).
- Non-excludability: People may be excluded from a public park, where admission is possibly preserved only to members of a club or those who have paid an entrance fee. From fresh air, however, people are hardly excludable.

Fresh air is also an example for non-rivalry.

In the case of non-rivalry with excludability the market may work but only under certain restrictions. Lacking rivalry reduces the interest of users to exclude those who have not contributed to the costs. The situation is typical for clubs where an administration cares for order. In the case of non-excludability temptation is strong not to pay for the good, and to use it as a freerider. Most people when asked to pay for fresh air will think: “I others care for fresh air, why should I spend money for it?”

Normal private goods are given if both rivalry and excludability prevail. A table may illustrate the possible cases:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excludability</th>
<th>Rivalry</th>
<th>Private Good</th>
<th>No cases of Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Club Good</td>
<td>Collective Good or Pure Public Good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now a critical question is to be asked: Are monuments pure public goods? Most people do not consciously take much notice of monuments around them in everyday life. Occasionally they will guide visitors through their home place and show the monuments. That is all. If, however, cultural heritage is touched by public measures they tend to defend tradition and will even take part in demonstrations. It is the very nature of **identification** that people want monuments to persist; they need them for their cultural self-understanding. From a “usage” of this kind they can hardly be excluded. There is no rivalry either, since everybody just enjoys the imagination that the monument, the symbol of his culture, exists.

Against this line of arguments two objections may be raised. First, many monuments can be visited for an entrance fee. He who does not pay is, of course, excluded. This is, however, only a marginal aspect. The revenue is only a small contribution to maintenance and stays not in a reasonable relation to the real value of the objects. Moreover it seems that the outside appearance of a monument matters more for many visitors than the inside, and outside access is rarely excludable. Finally – and this is the main point - the identification argument requires not many visits; it rests on the awareness that the monument exists. Second there are certainly a few people who have a more intense relationship to one monument or to monuments in general, e.g. architects, artist and so on. All in all this also is a marginal phenomenon.

As a result we state that monument protection maintains a **pure public good**. It cannot reasonably be regulated by market processes. The bulk of the task must necessarily be done by the state in spite of marginal interference with private and commercial interests and activities.

2. THE “USE OF MONUMENTS” BY TOURISM

2.1 General Economic Effects of Monuments

The effects of monuments are present in the private economic world. The managers of firms tell their visitors with proud that some of the buildings they use have a tradition and a relation to some historical events. Cities e.g. compete with one another for firms, and firms compete for highly qualified employees. Highly qualified employees want to live in attractive places. Firms in such places have an advantage. One component of “attractiveness” – perhaps not the most important – is the endowment with monuments that contribute to a pleasant atmosphere. There are quite a few other more or less relevant examples. Here it is intended to probe into the role monument protection has for tourism. ICOMOS realizes the importance of monuments for tourism and adopted in the assembly of Mexico in 1999 the “International Cultural Tourism Charter – Managing Tourism at Places of Heritage Significance”. The organisation has, of course, only a minor interest in tourism much more, however, in allies of economic power that might support the idea of monument protection.

2.2 Notion and Nature of Tourism

The notion “Tourism” is not easily determined. According to Hunziker & Krapf - the Swiss experts of tourism and first authors of a textbook in this field - “tourism” is private travelling and must be strictly distinguished from vocational travelling. A hotel guest e.g. who stays in a place in order to visit business partners is no tourist. The economic literature on tourism has followed Hunziker & Krapf. This allows explaining phenomena of tourism using theory and experience of consumers’ behaviour. Travelling behaviour of
business men, research workers, people who go to an interview for a new job is different since the motives are different. This explains what a tourist is. Tourism is determined by tourists; all phenomena around tourist are tourism.

Now it seems appropriate to start off with the basic motives for tourism. There are roughly three basic motives of private travelling:

- Recreation (holidays in sea resorts, spas etc.)
- Pleasure (excitement, fun, hobby)
- Culture (Education, learning languages, information about foreign countries, pilgrimage etc.)

Usually we have a mixture of motives, though one may prevail, e.g. recreation in the case of a treatment in a spa.

Beside these motives there are some special events that let make people private trips that are hard at the borderline of what we would call tourism:

- Family meetings
- Congresses

Family meetings are (not only according to cynics) neither recreation nor pleasure and often of doubtful cultural value, but they are an opportunity to add some activities that coincide with normal tourism. This is actually done yet difficult to assess.

Participation in a congress is no tourism at all since it is vocationally motivated. Most congresses, however, have a social program, partly for the joining partners but also to create a private atmosphere among the members that allows of stimulating discussions. The social programs of congresses are tourism. There have been examples, where the congress could be suspected to be not more than pretence whilst the social program was the purpose. (Tax authorities often share this suspicion) By far most congresses are “normal” in the sense that the social program is appropriate. Congresses have even in the normal case a considerable tourist component. One can without mockery speak of congress tourism.

2.3 The Relationship between Monuments and Tourism

Now it is possible to discuss the role of monument protection for tourism. Monuments will certainly not find much attention when recreation is the predominant motive of private trips. The same is true for people who look only for excitement and fun. Cultural interests, however, will be inevitably go together with an interest in monuments. Since the decisions for private trips often rest on a combination of the above mentioned motives, it is not only a small minority that visits cultural sites during their vacations. Even people whose engagement for monuments is moderate will visit them when they are close to their vacation place. A hardly admitted but notwithstanding real motive is demonstration of cultural interests to friends and colleagues at home. It is a well-known fact that people visit monuments far away rather than those at home. Finally people feel forced to show some cultural interest as their social group does. Here we observe a special form of social pressure.

Congress tourism emphasizes these tendencies. It concerns on the whole better educated people with broader interests that are additionally under even stronger social pressure to appreciate monuments. Organizers of congresses are as well exposed to corresponding social demands. This has far-reaching effects on tourism as a whole. Congresses usually take place in cities. Big congresses are restricted to big cities because only big cities have the necessary facilities at their disposal.

Cities are the locations with most monuments. In rural regions monuments are scattered over large areas; they can be only reached by long ways. In contrast cities have
often many monuments concentrated in neighbourhood. Their prestige will be carried around a country or even the world by the guests where the members of congresses play an important part. Corresponding to these facts there has been a tremendous development of city tourism as a special branch during the last decades.

The splendour of cities does not depend on monuments alone. Other aspects of cultural and social life are at least as important. Exhibitions, theatres, museums, the number of fairs, and congresses that appear in the media, the beauty of the city and a manifold of other amenities add considerably to the attractiveness. Cities are in competition with one another not only as economic but also as cultural centres. Take them one of the essential factors, say the monuments; their position would be much weaker. The guests of a city carry the reputation into the world. Monuments and tourism are a hardly overestimated element of the competition between cities. All this is true not only for the big centres. Smaller places compete successfully on a smaller scale.

Cities are not isolated. They are centres of region. Tourism on the periphery is not completely independent both of the centres and of monuments; but tourists select the places according their predominant inclinations.

CONCLUSIONS

The UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organisation) proclaims tourism as a means of international understanding. Some doubts about this thesis may be allowed. Tourists from abroad are usually restricted to a sort of ghetto. They have contacts to one another and to service people. There are only sparse contacts to the “normal” population. If there are some loopholes in the invisible wall surrounding tourists, then they are caused by the interest in culture. The more educated fraction of the tourists fulfils here a path breaking task. Without exaggeration we may attribute the monuments an excellent part.

This applies much more for the European Union as an emerging nation. A very popular thesis states that people would overcome animosity when they become better acquainted with one another. This thesis is again doubtful. The causes of animosity, hatred, and distrust are rather conflicting interests. The framework of the European Union gives us rules of conflict resolution which have guided us to much more mutual understanding. Tourists from Europe in Europe admire the monuments and thin: This is our culture.

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THE ROLE OF THE CUSTOMS AGENCY IN THE FIGHT AGAINST COUNTERFEITING: THE FALSTAFF SYSTEM

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Abstract: In recent years counterfeiting has become a widespread phenomenon, which has grown out of all proportion and represents a serious threat to international security, to consumers’ health and to economic development. The law protects intellectual property rights. The most recent national and European legislation is represented by EC Regulation 1383/2003, which replaces and repeals the previous Regulation 3295/94, and the law of 24 December 2003 N° 350 (2004 budget law). In the latter law, art. 4, comma 54 allows for the setting up of multimedia database for the collection of characteristic data suitable for identifying the products to be protected. In accordance with this provision, in 2004 the Customs Agency started up a project called FALSTAFF (Fully Automated Logical System Against Forgery and Fraud), a system of new customs instruments for the fight against counterfeiting, which received an honorary mention in 2005 for one of the best e-government initiatives. The system consists of a multimedia databank of authentic products, inserted into the Customs Agency’s IT system. The databank is fed by the parties owning the rights and allows a comparison between the characteristics of suspect articles and those of the original products.

Keywords: counterfeiting, property rights, products identity

INTRODUCTION

From the 1970s onwards forgery and piracy of original products has become a constantly growing problem of worldwide importance, with negative effects on an economic, social and fiscal level.

Within the EU, the statistics on action by Customs in relation to the fight against counterfeit and piracy are drawn up by the European Commission, based on the data transmitted by the EU Member States, in accordance with the Community’s relevant customs legislation. In the European Union in 2005 Customs seized 75 million articles, involving 26,000 cases; in 2006, they intercepted more than 250 million counterfeit and pirated articles, involving 36,486 cases. Data show an enormous increase in the goods seized, in almost all sectors of goods, as well as in the Customs activities in this area. Close cooperation between Customs services inevitably played a role in the increase in seizures made during 2006.

In the 1970s counterfeiting regarded luxury goods for which the difference in price from the legal product was often very significant, but in recent years even commonly used goods have been subjected to counterfeiting. Particularly worrying is the increase of
counterfeiting in medicines and products for personal care, as these products could potentially harm the health and safety of consumers.

Figures 1 and 2 show data of registered cases for the years 1999-2006 and articles seized by type of product in 2006 are respectively reported.

The considerable increase in the number of cases involving seizures, from 26,000 cases in 2005 to over 36,000 cases in 2006, suggests more effective risk management and customs controls.

The data in figure 2 reflect the trend towards diversification in the products that are subject to counterfeiting and piracy.

Numerous countries are producers of counterfeit goods. In terms of overall quantities seized, China, with over 80% of all articles seized, remains the main source for counterfeit goods, followed by the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Malaysia, India, Hong Kong, Turkey, et.(fig 3).
Some countries specialise in the production of specific goods. For example, India is the main producer of counterfeit medicines, thanks to its considerable technological development; it is followed by the UAE and China. These three countries together are responsible for over 80% of the counterfeit medicines seized. In the food and electrical equipment sectors the main producers are Turkey and Malaysia respectively. However, with regard to the number of cases dealt with by Customs, the range is far more widespread and China only accounts for a third of the cases. However, it has become much more difficult to identify which countries counterfeit products come from, since they are not always exported by a direct route from the place of production to the market. Certain countries may be identified as the source country where significant numbers of transhipment operations are carried out, rather than the actual manufacturing of the fake goods themselves.

According to the type of goods seized, Customs record few cases concerning enormous quantities of seized articles, as is the case for cigarettes, where 214 cases led to the seizure of the huge number of 156,652,675 packets, and there is a growing number of cases involving fewer articles. For example in the case of clothing and accessories (belts, bags, glasses etc), the 23,040 cases registered led to the seizure of 30,256,061 articles. This could be explained by the fact that more traffic has been detected in postal and air traffic, possibly due to booming internet sales.

Seizures made by Customs increased in almost all Member States, though the results of the German customs authorities warrant special attention with 142,259,986 cases, followed by Greece (26,000,452), Slovenia (22,416,958), Belgium (18,744,113) and Italy (18,044,705). With reference to the means of transport used, it can be seen that almost 80% of the total of all cases regard air (54%) and postal (23%) traffic. Due to the nature of the different types of transport, cases involving sea traffic, about 7%, invariably lead to bigger seizures per case.

Most counterfeit products pass through Customs, so European regulations granting customs authorities stricter and better organised controls may be a further effective instrument in the fight against counterfeiting and piracy.
THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK


Amongst other things, the above mentioned regulations have widened the field of application of previous dispositions, also allowing for the protection of rights relating to national property for plant varieties, to appellation control and geographical appellation, so as to guarantee effective protection for high quality products of considerable commercial value and thus particularly subject to the phenomenon of counterfeiting by third countries.

EU Council Regulation 1383/2003 is the fundamental regulation, granting customs authorities a series of powers, including that of suspending the release of goods suspected of violating an intellectual property right. Action can be taken directly by Customs or at the request of the owner of the right.

Regulation 1891/04 contains the procedural rules of the fundamental regulation.

Council Regulation EC n. 1383 of 22nd July 2003 distinguishes between counterfeit goods and usurpatory goods.

Counterfeit goods are:

- goods, including their packaging, on which there are trademarks placed without authorisation, identical to those officially registered for the same types of goods, or which cannot be clearly distinguished from such trademarks and thus violate the rights of the owner of the trademark in question;
- any distinguishing marks (including logos, labels, leaflets, etc.), even if presented separately;
- packaging carrying marks of counterfeit good presented separately.

Usurpatory goods are:

- goods which are, or contain, copies produced without the permission of the owner of the copyright or similar rights or of the owner of the rights relating to the design or model, whether registered or not, according to national law, or of a person authorised by the latter in the country of production.

As most Member States have implemented the simplified procedure provided for by Article 11 of Council Regulation (EC) n 1383/2003, there is a decrease in the amount of cases involving the seizure of counterfeit articles, pursuant to other legislation. The majority of the cases leading to seizures occur during import procedures.

A widespread form of counterfeiting is that of the false indication of the origin of goods, in other words the false “made in ...”. In Italy, Law n. 350 of 24th December 2003, art 4 comma 49 (Budget Law 2004) reinforced protection of the “made in Italy” mark. In this law, in order to strengthen the instruments used in the fight against counterfeiting, legislators provided for agreements between the Customs Agency and producers, at the request of the latter, in order to set up a multimedia databank for the collection of...
characteristic data suitable for identifying the peculiarities of products needing protection, without additional costs for the public purse.

Following directorial decision n.282/UD of 28th February 2004 the databank was set up at the Customs Agency and is fed by data included in the requests for protection made by the owners of intellectual property rights. When the authorities discover the violation of an intellectual or industrial property right during import, export, sale or distribution they can seize the counterfeit goods if authorised by judicial authorities, to whom they must make a report. After three months the goods can be destroyed, if possible at the expense of the offenders. Samples must be kept for use in legal proceedings (art 4 Law 30/2003 comma 80).

The violation of intellectual property rights takes place every time goods carry an indication of origin which is not the real one, or when there are distinctive signs, logos and so on that induce consumers to believe that the goods are of Italian origin, for example a T-shirt with the label “made in Italy”, or with the Italian flag, or the Italian logo, or any other indication that brings Italy to mind.

The law protects intellectual property rights, in other words all those various forms of innovation that are susceptible to economic use. One classic example is that of copyright, that is to say the right over the creation of a work of creative intelligence (novels, films, soundtracks etc). The law also protects industrial property rights, such as patents, designs, models etc., Industrial property rights also include trademarks. A trademark consists of a word, symbol or a combination of the two, used to identify a product or service and to distinguish it from competitors. A patent gives its owner the right to prohibit others from producing, using, selling or importing the patented object. A patent can be surrendered or granted under licence subject to payment of the owner. Industrial property rights also concern new plant varieties, thus it is possible to protect plant varieties which are new, homogenous, stable and different from existing ones.

The protection of intellectual property rights in Italy is contained in articles 473 and 474 of the penal code, which identify various possible offences.

In 2004 the European Parliament issued Directive n° 48, with the aim of creating equal conditions for the protection of intellectual property rights in member states and the internal market. This Directive was adopted in Italy by Legislative Decree n°140 of 16th March 2006.

On 25th April 2007 the European Parliament approved Directive IPRED2, which targets counterfeiting and piracy, introducing heavy penalties for counterfeiting offences and for violation of intellectual property rights. After 2 years of intensive negotiations between politicians and representatives of the sector, the Strasbourg Parliament approved an ambitious law against organised crime groups engaged in the counterfeiting of medicines, goods, cosmetics, CDs and DVDs, but which, at the same time, protects Web users from prosecution. The Directive excludes penalties for those who violate copyright for private use, excluding from the field of application of the Directive “acts carried out by a private user for personal use, without making a profit”.

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**In Italy the law (248/05) already punishes with a fine those who buy goods which, by their quality, the conditions of those offering them or their price, lead one to believe that the rules on origin of goods and intellectual property have been violated. If the purchase has been made by a trader or somebody else who is not the final consumer, the law imposes a fine of up to a million Euros.**
The intention is that of protecting businesses and consumers from counterfeiting, a practice that costs Europe’s GDP 8 billion Euros a year and often puts people’s health at serious risk. Counterfeiting and piracy give vital support to organised crime and the fight against these phenomena is not helped by the fragmentary laws in force in the EU.

THE FALSTAFF MULTIMEDIA DATABANK

In accordance with Law 350/2003 the Customs Agency in Italy set up the multimedia databank known as FALSTAFF (Fully Automated Logical System Against Forgery and Fraud), which collects technical information and images relating to legal products.

In order to use this instrument, the owner of intellectual property rights presents an online request for protection, in accordance with European Regulation 1383/03, listing the products to be protected and, for each one, the characteristics of the product and known forms of counterfeiting. The request may be accompanied by models, files, images of brands, explanatory leaflets or brochures and any other element that may be useful in recognising the original model and discovering counterfeit ones. The request consists of:

- a company profile: (company name, VAT number, address, name of the person acting as contact, phone number);
- a product profile: technical characteristics, packaging, customs routes;
- signs of counterfeiting (e.g. for running shoes the original ones are have uppers with non-retention punch holes which allow a slow shrinking effect and very fast swelling, while in the counterfeit product compression and decompression happen at the same speed).

All the information contained in the profiles feed the risk analysis system and the system of screening of customs declarations that accompany goods when crossing frontiers.

Before the FALSTAFF IT system came into operation, request were made on paper and were filed, along with accompanying documentation, by the anti-fraud office of the Customs Agency, who then sent the information to all national or European customs services. This system, while having exactly the same principles as the new multimedia one, was difficult to consult and slow to respond.

By using the FALSTAFF system, the owner of an intellectual right presents the request online to the Agency, which verifies it and validates the data it contains, entering these into the Agency’s IT system. From that moment on the data are instantly accessible in all the Agency’s offices. During inspections, officers can consult all the information provided by producers and contained in the FALSTAFF databank, facilitating the identification of counterfeit goods or those not conforming to quality and safety standards. If there is a suspected case of counterfeiting, the goods are blocked for a specified time until experts inspect them.

Associations and bodies operating in these areas contribute to the training and instruction of the officers who carry out checks and provide continually updated and directly useable information for distribution to consumers. Companies set up and update web pages and operational guides for the identification of authentic products and their conformity with quality and safety standards. This information is used directly by customs officers and offers fundamental support for effective, selective, fast and uniform checks.

On the basis of the information in the FALSTAFF databank, Customs carry out targeted checks, integrated into the automatic risk analysis system and the system of automatic selection of the import, export and transit operations to be verified.
The FALSTAFF project has proved to be a useful instrument in the fight against counterfeiting due to its ability to use all the positive aspects of technology and large scale information sharing. The FALSTAFF project received an honourable mention in the 2005 eEurope Awards for eGovernment, with the following motivation given by the jury: “FALSTAFF is an innovative and ambitious project for fighting the phenomenon of counterfeiting in the EU market and may be an excellent example for other European customs authorities to follow in improving effective co-operation between member states and the EU.”

CONCLUSIONS

The intervention of the customs authorities with regard to counterfeit or usurpatory goods, or those violating intellectual property rights, when they enter the EU, are exported, re-exported or in transit through EU territory, helps to keep these goods off the market and to fight the spread of illegal activities effectively, without obstructing the free movement of legitimate goods. The intervention of the customs authorities takes place with the prohibition of the release for free circulation, export or re-export of goods suspected of being counterfeit, usurpatory or of violating certain intellectual property rights, or with the blockage of these goods for the time necessary to ascertain whether they are counterfeit or not. If this is the case, the goods are seized.

The harmful effects of the illicit trade in counterfeit goods are well known. Various strategies are used to protect intellectual property and the authenticity of goods, whichever category they belong to. European regulations state that member countries must pass on information relating to seizures, description of the goods, the quantity, their origin, the means of transport used and the type of intellectual property right violated. By studying the data collected it is possible to gain useful information for an efficient analysis of counterfeiting in the EU and this allows Customs to take appropriate countermeasures in order to fight the phenomenon. The EU data can be shared with the customs services of other countries in a global co-operation programme.

Within the fight against counterfeiting carried on by the Italian Customs Agency, the FALSTAFF IT system is of particular importance. It is a databank containing all the requests for protection made by companies and the details of the goods to be protected, so that customs officers can intervene directly and block suspected counterfeit goods at the frontier during inspections.

The fight against counterfeiting is also carried on through European or bilateral co-operation agreements, joint customs operations, workgroups within the World Customs Organization (WCO). Joint targeted checks with the customs services of other EU countries are also carried out in order to fight the phenomenon of counterfeiting, to discover new routes and new channels taken by counterfeit goods, checking frequently, every 10-15 days, all the goods belonging to particular categories, arriving from particular countries considered to be at risk.

45 The World Customs Organization (WCO) is an intergovernmental organization that helps Members (Governments usually represented by Customs administrations from 170 countries) communicate and co-operate on customs issues. It was established in 1952 as the Customs Co-operation Council; it adopted its current name in 1994.
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8. European Commission Taxation and Customs Union - Summary Of Community Customs Activities On Counterfeit And Piracy- Results At The European Border – 2006
MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS OF SELECTED NATIONAL GROUPS
TO TRAVEL TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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Abstract: Different studies showed that people travel because they are pushed by physiological, psychological, intangible and internal factors, which include desire for escape, rest and relaxation, shopping, health and fitness, adventure, prestige, social interaction, novelty seeking behavior, and exploration; and people travel also because they are pulled by the unique things a destination features, such as image, recreation facilities, education, safety, quality consciousness, appreciating scenery, enjoying drinks and foods. The aim of the paper is to analyse basic motivation in general and motivation to travel and emphasizes the importance of cross-cultural attitude to the promotion of destination Czech Republic. Some examples of the most important push and pull motivational factors of some nationalities visiting the Czech Republic are outlined at the end of paper.

Keywords: Motivation, motivation to travel, push and pull motivational factors, cross-cultural travel behavior, promotion of destination Czech Republic

INTRODUCTION

Face of the world today is changing very quickly due to scientific progress, technological and economic development. “Each day, the geographical, economic and political boundaries that once divided the world into isolated compartments, crumble a little more. Countries that once seemed immensely distant from each other can be contacted almost instantly today.” (Romano Prodi). People want to live and work together (an example of this present trend is the European Union) but we should be aware of the fact that the cultural diversity among the peoples of the world remains great, as some books and surveys demonstrate.

“What people believe and value, and what they want out of life, varies from country to country. The growing globalization of the world makes it increasingly important to understand the cultural diversity,” Romano Prodi says.

Tourism as a fast growing industry should reflect this fact that peoples were historically shaped by a wide variety of religious, political and cultural traditions. It is important to know that each country, each nation or ethnic group has its traditions, customs and habits which have been formed in the course of their history. We should understand and appreciate their distinctive worldviews.

The aim of paper is to examine motivational factors in general and motivational factors to travel of selected national groups to the Czech Republic. The paper based on my studying of literature and my work and own experience with various ethnic groups in the field of International trade and Tourism industry
The booming interest in traveling has become a worldwide phenomenon esp. in post-communist countries after 1989 when they liberated from communist repression. Since 1989 a greater number of people have been showing an interest in getting to know not only the Czech Republic, but also other post communist countries such as Slovakia, Hungary and Poland - in short – the V4 group which are very attractive for overseas tourists especially. The V4 countries offer their visitors a wide selection of tourist attractions – mountains with well-equipped centers for skiing and winter sports, historic towns, numerous buildings, castles and chateaux. Wildlife regions offer many opportunities for sport and tourism, game hunting, fishing. Some visitors may be attracted by the countries’ numerous spas and spa towns. Many of them such as Carlsbad, Marienbad and Franzenbad in the Czech Republic, Piešťany, Trencianske Teplice in Slovakia have been known for a long time. Major events promoting tourism, held in the V4 countries, include international fairs, exhibitions, film and music festivals. Foreign visitors can also spend their holiday at family farms, because agro-tourism is becoming an important part of the V4’s tourism industry.

I tried to examine what kinds of the driving force affect individuals’ decisions about traveling and visiting around the Czech Republic and other V4 countries.

**Motivation in general**

Many people know motivation as the driving force behind an action, which is the simplest explanation about motivation. I can be also considered the state of having encouragement to do something. There are many types of motivation in general and motivation theories and classification of needs. Some of the major ones are described below:

**Achievement** – this is the motivation of a person to attain goals. The longing for achievement is inherent in every man, but not all persons look to achievement as their motivation. They are motivated by a goal. In order to attain that goal, they are willing to go as far as possible. The complexity of the goal is determined by a person’s perception. To us, the terms “simple” and “complex” are purely relative. What one person thinks is an easy goal to accomplish may seem to be impossible to another person. However, if your motivation is achievement, you will find that your goals will grow increasingly complex as time goes by.

**Socialization** – Some people consider socialization to be their main motivation for actions. This is especially evident in the situation of peer pressure. Some people are willing to do anything to be treated as an equal within a group structure. The idea of being accepted among a group of people is their motivation for doing certain things.

**Incentive motivation** – this motivation involves rewards. People who believe that they will receive rewards for doing something are motivated to do everything they can to reach a certain goal. While achievement motivation is focused on the goal itself, incentive motivation is driven by the fact that the goal will give people benefits. Incentive motivation is used in companies through bonuses and other types of compensation for additional work.

**Fear motivation** – When incentives do not work, people often turn to fear and punishment as the next tools. Fear motivation involves pointing out various consequences of someone
does not follow a set of prescribed behavior. This is often faced with a reward and punishment system, wherein they are given incentives of they accomplish a certain goal, but they are given punishments when they disobey certain policies.

Change motivation – sometimes people do things just to bring about changes within their immediate environment. Change motivation is often the cause of true progress. People just become tired of how things are and thus, think of ways to improve it.

Motivation for travel

From the historical point of view, the first motivation for traveling was motivation religious, motivation for keeping fit and commercial motivation. During the last four decades many other motives have appeared in consequence of the growth of tourism.

People travel because they are pushed and pulled by motivations. Berkman and Gilson (1978) stated that motivation was only one factor in explaining tourist behavior, but it was regarded as one of the most important variables, because it was an impelling and compelling force behind behavior. Motivation in the sphere of tourism is the drive to satisfy needs and wants, both physiological and psychological, through the purchase and use of products and services.

Berkman, Lindquist and Sirgy stated that motivation was the drive to satisfy needs and wants, both physiological and psychological, through the purchase and use of products and services. Dann, G. (1981) pointed it out that tourist motivation was a meaningful state of mind which adequately disposed an actor or group of actors to travel, and which was subsequently interpretable by others as a valid explanation for such a decision. Berkman, et al. (1978) stated that motivation was only one factor in explaining tourist behavior, but it was regarded as one of the most important variables, because it was an impelling and compelling force behind behavior.

Mountinho (1987) pointed out that behavior was motivated by both the tourists´ variables and the products´ variables. Therefore, motivations in tourist behavior were characterized as either pull factors, those related to the destination or tourist facility, and push factors, those internal factors which affected behavior. According to Baloglu and Uysal (1996), people traveled because they were pushed and pulled to do so by “forces”. These forces described how individuals were pushed by motivational variables into making a travel decision, an how travelers were pulled by the characteristics of destination areas. Most of the push factors, which were origin-related, were intangible or intrinsic desires of the individual travelers such as the desire for escape, rest and relaxation, health and fitness, adventure, prestige, and social interaction. Pull factors were those that emerged as a result of the attractiveness of a destination as it was perceived by the travelers. They included tangible resources such as beaches, recreation facilities, and historic resources as well as travelers´ perception and expectation such as novelty, benefit expectation, and the marketed image of the destination.

Crompton (1979) stated that push factor for a vacation were socio-psychological motives. The pull factors were motives aroused by the destination rather than emerging exclusively from within the traveler himself. The push factors that he mentioned were: escape from a perceived mundane environment, exploration and evaluation of self, relaxation, prestige, regression, enhancement of kinship relationships, and facilitation of social interaction. The two pull factors were novelty and education. Muller (1995) stated three factors that affected travelers´ post-visit attitudes, which were security, recreational
elements, and avoidance. **Weaver, McCleary, Lepisto, and Damonte** (1994) defined seven attributes considered important in selecting a vacation destination: life style stimulation, stress-coping strategies, price consciousness, novelty-seeking behavior, impulsiveness, the importance of convenience, social information seeking behavior, fashion consciousness, quality consciousness, and various types of shopping behavior.

There are many ways of classifying motivational factors in tourism but I will now go on to outline some most important of these.

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<td>Make new friends</td>
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<td>Need to satisfy others</td>
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It is necessary to recognize that the motivational factors that make people wish to take a holiday are not universally present. Every tourist is different and is determined by a range of other factors, including:

- The personality and lifestyle of the potential tourist
- Their past experiences
- Who they are planning to take a vacation with
- Their demographic characteristics
- How far in advance they book their trip

**MOTIVATIONS AND NATIONAL AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES**
A number of cross-cultural studies of the motivational factors support that cultural effect is one of the important factors to explain a certain pattern of individual thought and behavior from the psychological aspects. Despite the fact that more and more researchers all over the world have become interested in cross-cultural studies, relatively few cross-cultural studies exist to help us understand the complex interactions between the peoples of the different cultures. In fact, each country has its own way of seeing and doing things, based on unstated rules, and these hidden differences often make understanding difficult. Some motivational factors are universal, such as nostalgia and romance, and the desire to see sights, although the actual behavior will be influenced by the nationality and culture of tourist. Many people around the world seek home form of spiritual fulfillment – however, the desire for such fulfillment, and the wish to embark a pilgrimage to find it, is more common generally amongst Muslims than Christians these days.

Many writers suggest a relationship between values and culture. Culture is a system of shared values of its members, differences in values indicate cultural differences in thinking, acting, perceiving, understanding of attitudes, motivations and human needs. Values seem to be superior to other concepts. Pitts and Woodside (1986) found values to be indicative of the motives and needs a particular attraction satisfies. Differences in cultural values could predict visitation to tourist attractions. Pizam and Calantone (1987) found that travel behavior was significantly associated with a person’s general and vacation-specific values. They concluded that values predict travel behavior.

Cross-cultural differences are not only limited to language, food or dance, but are also experienced in a variety of human interactions between international tourists and their holiday’s destination, including their non-verbal behavior, religious beliefs, time orientation, attitude to privacy, their manners, customs, forms of address, body language or gestures.

I would like to make a contribution to international understanding and to help reduce tensions that result from the many different “silent languages” people use. I am aware of the fact that there are individual differences – including ethnic differences - within every country. This is particularly true of countries such as the USA, Germany, France, Spain whose many regions have various minicultures of their own. However, this is not the aim of my study to analyze in detail some of the major cultural patterns that we need to keep in mind when dealing with people from other countries.

It is useful and practical to examine if there are significant differences on the motivational factors affecting incoming tourists’ decisions to travel to the Czech Republic.

I agree with the citation of Mike Robinson (2000, book Expressions of culture, identity and meaning in tourism): “There are many reasons for the growing interest in studying the relationships between tourism and culture, identity and meaning. Forms of tourism such as mass-, package-, eco-, rural-, urban-, health, and sustainable have all emerged and developed (and in some case, declined) over time, and vary in nature from place to place. Different forms of tourism may usefully be examined in relation to their social and cultural contexts. There is also a practical need for the tourism industry, policymakers and host communities to understand tourist cultures and the meanings that people bring to and take away from their travel experiences.”

I think that the tourist authorities take various travel motives into account, however, they do not engage in ethnic and cultural motives at all. For example, when promoting our country the CzechTourism Authority takes into account a foreign language as the only ethnic distinctness. In my opinion – by translating an identical promotional text into 15 foreign languages we cannot talk about the ethnic attitude to the right promotion of
the country. It would be necessary to point to other possibilities of the promotion and use knowledge of cultural anthropology, ethno-linguistics and cross-cultural psychology for tourism.

EXAMPLES OF PUSH - PULL MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS OF VARIOUS NATIONALITIES TO TRAVEL TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC

TOURISTS FROM GREAT BRITAIN
The must-go-place is Prague for 90% of British tourists coming to Prague.
Main motivational push and pull factors are:
Segment of young men:
Escapism – beer, sex with young Czech Girls (trips called “stag parties”)
Segment of middle age and seniors:
Visit to the historical sights – Prague, Cesky Krumlov
Relaxation and health – famous spa towns Marianske Lazne and Karlovy Vary
Shopping – Christmas markets in Prague
Segment of young single women:
Relax and wellness – prolonged weekends in Karlovy Vary, Marianske Lazne (trips called “hen parties”)

TOURISTS FROM RUSSIA
Status: Exclusivity and fashionability, indulging luxury – shopping in the luxury
magazines, staying at the most luxurious hotels and resorts
Relaxation and health – visit to must-go-place Karlovy Vary
Sightseeing – visit to known historical places: Prague, Cesky Krumlov, Kutna Hora,
Karlstejn or Konopiste

TOURISTS FROM USA
Experience new Cultures – dining at the Czech restaurants, beer trips to the Czech
Breweries
Sightseeing - visit to the historical places and castles Prague, Cesky Krumlov, Holasovice
in Southern Bohemia,
Escapism - shopping of national souvenirs, Christmas decoration, glass

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