*CĂTĂLINA LACHE* [1]
*CARMEN MARIANA CODREANU*[2]
                                                              The progress of ideas

# PARTICULAR ASPECTS OF CONSUMER'S SATISFACTION REGARDING TOURISM PRODUCTS

*Abstract*

The paper provides an overview of consumer's satisfaction regarding tourism products. Doing particular research in this distinct field of consumption is necessary because the standards of holiday and travel consumers (expected quality) are achieved in the absence of the actual product, depending on the providers' forms of presentation, travel guides, on-line sites, the impressions of other persons, the reputation of "fashionable" destination and, to some extent, depending on the affective and cognitive abilities, the personal and social values of the tourists, their culture, their previous experiences and consumption symbolism. The subjectively perceived quality regarding a consumption experience only partly depends on the objective quality.

In this paper the authors aim at: (1) completing the issues related to the satisfaction survey, customizing them for the field of tourism; (2) achieving a consumer satisfaction rating scale for the field of tourism, (3) completing the research process regarding consumer's satisfaction regarding tourism products by using a mix of methods, namely: The Method of Attributes – Consequences – Values analysis (ACV), based on the idea of the hierarchical organization of elements that contribute to achieving satisfaction under the form of means – goal linkages; Lickert Scale type Analyses; Analyses based on the regression and correlation method; the Interpretation of the achieved results by using the Tetraclasse model.

The theoretical and practical analyses, as well as the results presented are intended to induce the fellow researchers to approach and refine the studies regarding consumer satisfaction for the particular field of tourism.

*Keywords:* measuring tourism services consumer's satisfaction, cognitive and affective components, quality, loyalty, tourism products.

## 1. Contribution statement

Previous research mainly focuses on testing the methods and scales of measuring consumer's satisfaction regarding tourism services, by combining the cognitive and affective components that contribute to its achievement in terms of values and desires (Oliver, 1980; Parasuraman et al, 1988, Cronin et al, 1992, Westbrook, R.A., Oliver, R.L, 1991), and the level of generalization mostly corresponds to the expected quality or ideal quality, focusing either on the aspects regarding the performance of the product's attributes or on the elements of the service system. Or tourism products consumers only partially retrospect to these issues; their expectations, according to the motivation attached to the purchase, largely regard the psychological, cultural, aesthetic, socialization, self-fulfillment aspects, which the classical instruments of measuring satisfaction are unable to capture (Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V.A., Berry, L.L., 1988; Oliver R.L., 1993; Evrard, Y., 1993; Rust, R.T., 1996).

In this paper the authors aim at: (1) completing the issues related to the satisfaction survey and customizing them for the field of tourism; (2) achieving a consumer satisfaction rating scale for the field of tourism, (3) completing the research process regarding the satisfaction of tourism products consumers by using a mix of methods, namely: The Method of Attributes – Consequences – Values analysis (ACV), based on the idea of the hierarchical organization of the elements that

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[1] *PhD Associate Professor of Marketing in Tourism and Consumer Behavior, Department of Economics, „Petre Andrei" University of Iaşi, Romania, 13 Grigore Ghica Vodă Street, Iaşi, ROMANIA, Postal code 700469,e-mail:* catalina_lache@yahoo.com
[2] *PhD Associate Professor of Statistics and Economic and Financial Analysis, Department of Economics, „Petre Andrei" University of Iaşi, Romania, 13 Grigore Ghica Vodă Street, Iaşi, ROMANIA, Postal code 700469* codrcarmen@yahoo.com

contribute to achieving satisfaction under the form of means - goal linkages; Lickert Scale type Analyses; Analyses based on the regression and correlation method; the Interpretation of the results by using the Tetraclasse model (Llosa, S., 1997).

### 2. Theoretical views

Tourism consumption is the expression of a very diverse set of needs and motivations: rest, relaxation, escape from the everyday environment and satisfaction of cultural, aesthetic, emotional aspirations, based on the principle of pleasure, of individuals' integration in their social environment as well as their possibility to retrospect to their own personality, their desire to achieve new personal or family experiences.

Although the needs, motivations, attitudes, personality, preferences and the interest centers that individualize tourism products consumers are extremely varied, they will inevitably be influenced by the emotional nature and quality of the social contacts and interactions, with important repercussions on satisfaction.

Consumption is the process by which final users are able to appreciate the quality of the products/services purchased and that will ultimately lead to the consumers' satisfaction/dissatisfaction.

If consumption is generally based on products and services that are well defined by certain determining attributes, which will provide utility, value and satisfaction, in the case of tourism consumption utility plays a secondary role. Recent studies provide a new, different perspective regarding consumption and consumers (Halle, 1992; Holbrook, 1994; Holt, 1995). The new current of thought highlights four particular dimensions of the act of consumption (Holt, 1995), in which the experiential aspects of consumption occupy a special place.

In experiential terms, consumption points out the need to overcome the notions of utility and use-value (Holbrook, M.B., Hirschman, E.C., 1994) and to examine consumer behavior also by using methods that are specific to socio-human sciences, which are capable of highlighting their emotional and subjective reactions in relation to the consumption situations.

Tourism services generate relaxation, fun, emotions and excitement or activate imagination. These consumption experiences are based on hedonism, surprise and achieving satisfaction thanks to a variety of emotional states and social contacts that cannot be pertinently explained by the theory of utility. Cultural consumption, artistic consumption and entertainment in general are included in this category. Contemplating natural monuments, visiting a museum or a "museum city" and watching theatre plays involve an intense emotional activity, spiritual satisfaction and deep experiences, both during the actual consumption as well as under the form of the continuation of the state of pleasure and emotion, by reliving those experiences. The subsequent interpretations will relate both to the conduct of the actual acts of consumption as well as to the context, the environment, the global affective reaction and sharing feelings with the other spectators, tourists, etc.

The experiential aspects need to be taken into consideration and analyzed for all the types of travel services, including those that can be analyzed in terms of utility (balneary tourism) and framed into a well-defined functional register. Utility is reduced at the level of all luxury tourism products, where the atmosphere, peripheral services, physical evidence of the environment, posture and professional training of the providers, as well as the design are likely to cause deep emotional reactions. However, the importance that must be given to the experiential aspects varies by product category or typology of tourism services, but also according to the user classification. The typology of tourism consumption has important consequences for consumer satisfaction.

Specific literature provides many different definitions of customer satisfaction. We share three views that have particularly come into prominence:

- **The Howard-Sheth concept** - considers satisfaction/dissatisfaction to be a psychological state that reflects the adequacy/inadequacy of the effort made by the buyer in order to

purchase certain products and/or services, with its expectations regarding the quality – price ratio  (Howard J.A., Sheth J.N., 1969);

- **The Hunt concept** considers satisfaction to be an evaluation based on the knowledge and experience of the consumers, which, based on these, requires a quality level for the respective product/service (Hunt, S.D., Morgan, R.,M., 1994);
- **The Cadotte, Woodruff and Jenkins concept, 1987** considers satisfaction to be the feelings developed as a result of evaluating a consumption experience (Cadott, Woodruff and Jenkins, 1987).

We believe that tourism services consumer's satisfaction is equally a psychological, emotional, affective and cognitive response, which develops during consumption, through the overall assessment of the multitude of services and consumption experiences that make up the overall tourism product. After consumption, the evaluative judgments can be relieved on each service or experience. Because it is, by excellence, an experiential consumption, which can only rarely refer to similar, past consumption situations, the expectations and perceptions of the individual can be strongly influenced by both the cognitive dissonance as well as the consumer's imagination; the perceptual distortions are easily produced due to the influence of the forms of presentation used by different suppliers, but also due to the influence of the impressions expressed by the entourage members, family members, opinion leaders or reference groups.

The essential elements of the tourism products consumer's satisfaction can be summarized as follows:

- Consumer satisfaction is simultaneously an emotional, affective and cognitive response;
- The response has a specific target (expectations, consumption experience); it is relative and subjective;
- The concept of satisfaction is situational, punctual and has a transitory character;
- The response occurs at certain moments (during or after consumption) and will refer to the concept of equity;
- If it is not a repetitive but experiential consumption, post-consumption impressions will not evolve over time and will not generate loyalty.

Satisfaction is generally presented as a one-dimensional concept that sets two factors against on a scale: satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Maddox, 1981). (Figure 1) presents the model of achieving satisfaction, individualized for tourism products consumers.
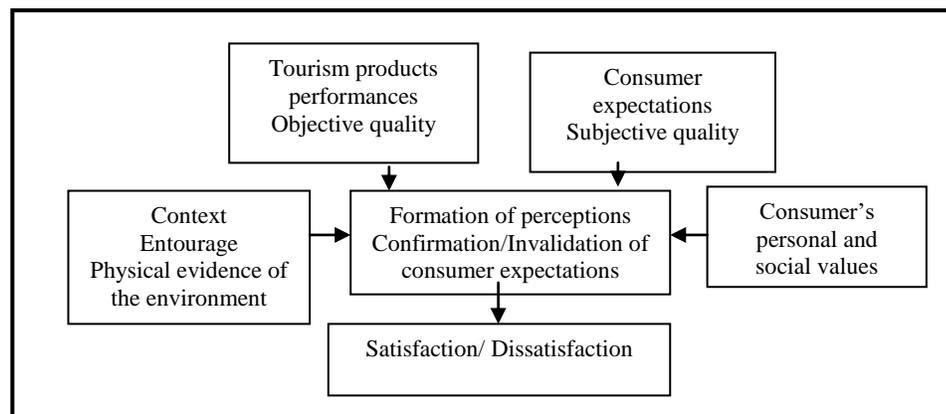


**Figure 1. The model of achieving tourism products consumer's satisfaction**

We share the view that has been expressed by several marketing specialists, according to which tourism products consumer's satisfaction corresponds to the paradigm of confirming/disconfirming consumer expectations (Figure 1).

In the context of the model presented in (Figure 1), satisfaction is achieved as a consequence of the comparative process, with five main components[3]:

- The assessment of **tourism products performance** during consumption or post - consumption corresponds to the **quality, which is subjectively and punctually perceived** with respect to a consumption experience, and only partly depends on the **objective quality**, expressed by the characteristics of the offer; the context, the entourage, the physical evidence of the environment and the consumer's personal and social values will have a major impact on its perceptions and attitudes, especially due to the fact that, at the place of providing the tourism services, the presence of heterogeneous groups with different motivations, values and behaviors may either be a disturbing factor or a favoring factor in achieving satisfaction;

- Consumer expectations prior to purchase or consumption correspond to the **expected performance or quality** and represent a **reference standard**;

- Comparisons between performance and expected and perceived quality as a result of consumption lead to the confirmation/disconfirmation of expectations (positive, negative, neutral experience).

- Confirmation will generate customer satisfaction and disconfirmation will generate dissatisfaction. **The concept of confirmation** characterizes the result of the confrontation between the initial expectations and the perceived quality and is formed both in relation to the cognitive as well as the affective aspects, as follows:

  - The differences between the initial expectations and the perceived quality from the cognitive point of view refer to the attributes that provide the product with utility. In the case of new experiences, the convergence of new experiences with those derived from previous experiences leads to the formation of expectations, which will be assessed within the consumption process. The consumption context may yet be completely different when surprise is generated, which can also lead to satisfaction/dissatisfaction;

  - The affective aspects (happiness, ecstasy, passion) are derived from the symbolic and imaginary components of the products and services, based on assigning a unique sense to the product or its attributes. The difference between expectations and their confirmation/disconfirmation will generate positive or negative affective states, pleasure or displeasure. Pleasure is a fundamental dimension of tourism consumption, constituting a major factor that contributes to the quality of life, achievement and self-fulfillment.

- In the case of the products in whose case consumption occurs repetitively, the quality corresponding to expectations has a concrete support, that of the past experiences, while in the case of tourism consumption, expectations are general and abstract in terms of values and desires, which are formed solely on the basis of expectations. In tourism, the experiential consumption is the rule, not the exception.      Although specific literature has proposed a multitude of definitions, concepts,

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[3] Adjusted after: Engel, J.F., Kollat, D.T., Blackwell, R.D. (1978) - *Consumer Behavior,* New York, Holt, Rinehart & Winston; Oliver, R. (1980) - *A Cognitive Model; The Antecedents and Consequences of Satisfaction Decision,* Journal of Marketing Research, November, 17, pp. 460-469; Oliver, R.L. (1993), *Assessing the Dimensionality of the Consumer Research,* June, 20, pp. 23-45; Westbrook, R., Reilly, M.D. (1983) -*Value Percept Disparity: An Alternative to the Disconfirmation of Expectations Theory of Customer Satisfaction,* Advances in Consumer Research, Associations for Consumer Research, pp. 256-261; Evrard, Y. (1993 )- *La satisfaction des Consommateurs: Etat des Recherches,* Revue Francaise du Marketing, 155/145, pp. 53-65; Lache, C. (2005) - *Măsurarea satisfacţiei clienţilor (Assessing customer satisfaction),* the volume - The Romanian economy in the context of European integration, UPA Yearbook, Volume XV, pp. 349-359; Maddox, R.N. (1980) – *Two Factor Theory Consumer Satisfaction: Replication and Extension –* Journal of Consumer Research, 8.

methods and multi-item evaluation scales, which are valid and reliable for identifying the elements that contribute to the formation of evaluative judgments and the measurement of consumer satisfaction, by combining the cognitive and affective components that contribute to its achievement in terms of values and desires (Oliver, 1980; Parasuraman et al, 1988; Cronin et al, 1992; Westbrook, R.A., Oliver, R.L, 1991), the level of generalization mostly corresponds to the expected quality or ideal quality, focusing either on the aspects regarding the performance of the product's attributes or on the elements of the service system. Or tourism products consumers only partially retrospect to these issues; according to the motivation attached to the purchase, their expectations largely regard the psychological, communion with nature, spiritual enrichment, cultural, aesthetic, socialization and self-fulfillment aspects, which the classical instruments of measuring satisfaction are unable to capture (Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V.A., Berry, L.L., 1988; Oliver R.L., 1993; Evrard, Y., 1993; Rust, R.T., 1996).

However, tourism destination marketing heavily relies on these items. Oliver R.L (1997) points out that the level of generalization is sometimes much higher, and the attribute that consumers are seeking for is, in fact, the materialization of an aspiration, being subject to a process of reification, such as for example the case of aesthetics or gladness, cheerfulness. For the case of tourism products consumers in particular, we propose the gradation of consumer satisfaction, by presenting a grid for measuring the elements that contribute to achieving satisfaction/dissatisfaction, with various levels of profoundness. This grid complements the customer expectations in regard to the qualitative standards set out in the tourist offer, as follows[4] (Table 1):

**Table 1. The elements of achieving tourism products consumer's satisfaction**

| State of satisfaction/dissatisfaction | Level of the tourism products consumer's satisfaction/dissatisfaction | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Affective dimensions | | | | | | |
| Evaluation scale | -5 | -3 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| Pleasure | Very unpleasant | Unpleasant | Moderately unpleasant | Neither/nor | Pleasant | Excellent | Hedonism |
| Beauty | Very ugly | Ugly | Moderately ugly | Neither/nor | Beautiful | Superb | Fascinating |
| Cheerfulness/ Gladness | Very sad | Sadness | Melancholy | Neither/nor | Relaxation | Cheerfulness | Happiness |
| Surprise | Revolting | Indignation | Regret | Neither/nor | Surprise | Overwhelmed | Enthusiasm |
| Contentedness | Extremely discontent | Discontent | Indifferent | Neither/nor | Content | Very content | Delighted |
| Interest | Very boring | Boring | Ordinary | Neither/nor | Moderately interesting | Interesting | Exciting |
| Attractiveness | Disagreeable | Unattractive/ Boring | Moderately unattractive/ Moderately boring | Neither/nor | Moderately attractive | Very attractive | Irresistible |
| Authenticity | Ordinary/ Common | | | Neither/nor | | | Authentic |
| Novelty | Very old | Out-dated | Moderately old | Neither/nor | Relatively new | New | Totally new |
| Passion | Extremely | Disgusting | Unpleasant | Neutral | Moderately | Thrilling | Ecstasy |

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[4] Beckman S.C. (1999) - *Emotions and Consumer Behavior,* Consumer Research and Economic Psychology, P.E. Earl, S. Kemp eds., pp. 182-187; Derbaix, C., Pham, M. (1989) – *Pour un développement des measures un marketing: synteses des pré-requis,* Recherches et Applications en Marketing, pp. 71-87; Russel J. A., Pratt G. (1980) - *A Description of the Affective Quality Attributed to Environement,* Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 38, August, pp. 311-322

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | disgusting | | | | thrilling | | |
| Achievement/ Self-fulfillment | Without signification | Minimum signification | Indifferent | Neither/nor | Contributes to personal development | Heavily contributes to personal development | Achievement/Self-fulfillment |
| Cognitive dimensions | | | | | | | |
| Importance of the service/ attribute | Without importance | Minimum importance | Indifferent | Neither/nor | Moderately important | Very important | Extremelyi mportant |
| Equity | Disappointed | Frustrated | Moderately inequitable | Neither/nor | Moderately equitable | Equitable | Above expectations |
| Hospitality | Hostile | Inhospitable | Moderately hospitable | Neither/nor | Hospitable | Very hospitable | Total empathy |
| Security | Very dangerous | Dangerous | Unsafe | Neither/nor | Safe | Very safe | Total safety |
| Comfort | Very uncomfortable | Discomfort | Modest | Neither/nor | Comfortable | Very comfortable | Impeccable |
| Trust | Total distrust | Distrust | Partial distrust | Neither/nor | Partial trust | Trust | Total trust |
| Quality | Inappropriate | Satisfactory | Moderately good | Neither/nor | Good | Very good | Irreproachable |
| Communication/Socialization | Inexistent/Weak | Sporadic/ Mediocre | Satisfactory | Neither/nor | Good | Very good | Irreproachable |
| Personalization /empathy | Inexistent/Weak | Sporadic/ Mediocre | Satisfactory | Neither/nor | Good | Very good | Irreproachable |
| Conative dimensions | | | | | | | |
| Intention to repurchase/Loyalty | Inexistent/Weak | Sporadic | Minimum probability | Undecided | Medium probability | High probability | Certainty |

The elements listed in (Table 1) simultaneously reflect the attitudes, perceptions and the consumers' level of involvement in relation to the consumption experience/tourism services analyzed, connecting them with their value system. We share the opinion according to which the attributes of the tourism products generate evaluative judgments on a set of consequences or benefits that correspond to the values reflecting the tourism products consumer's preferences and motivations, constituting the behavioral source (Rokeach, 1968). The idea of organizing the elements that contribute to achieving satisfaction hierarchically, under the form of means-goal linkages, has been introduced into the marketing specific literature by Gutman, J., 1982 and has been presented in the works of Zeithaml V., 1988, Reynolds T.J. and Gutman J., 1988.

Tourism products consumers are guided by different values when choosing a tourism destination and the services that they purchase, each of them selecting certain attributes that they consider to be important for obtaining the expected satisfaction, thereby generating a variety of cognitive linkages. Reaching the goals, namely the terminal values (Rokeach, M., 1973) will lead the tourism products consumers to achieving the expected satisfaction, to a greater or lesser extent.

## 3. Research objectives and methodology

In the field of marketing, Gutman (1982) adapts the idea of linking the consumer's behavior to the attributes of a product by associating the different cognitive/emotional levels to the product or brand. The author defines the various hierarchical levels, which, in fact, are attributes of the product, the expected benefits under the form of the consequences associated to consumption and individual values of the consumer. Thus, the method allows highlighting the links between **Attributes - Consequences - Values**.

We have used this method because it highlights the different levels of generalization of the consumers' judgments and allows a better understanding of the border between the attributes of the tourism product and the values shared by the individuals, reflecting their preferences and motivations and justifying their behaviors (goals, means of reaching the goals) and therefore their different levels of satisfaction.

### 3.1. Research objectives

The research objectives are focused on studying the particular dimensions of consumer satisfaction associated with the tourism destination "Iasi" and on the dependence of the tourism products consumer's satisfaction on their abstract needs, as follows:

1. Identifying and validating the elements (attributes) that contribute to the formation of the evaluative judgments, the consequences and values associated with tourism consumption;

2. Determining the share of the different criteria that lead to the achievement of overall satisfaction;

3. Assessing the levels of satisfaction;

4. Highlighting the correlation between the levels of overall satisfaction of the customer segments and the attributes of the tourism offer, the consequences of the purchase and the value system that determines the purchase of the tourism services.

The research goal is improving the elements of the tourism destination marketing mix, based on the importance of the elements that lead to the achievement of satisfaction, according to the value system underlying the evaluative judgments and the achievement of the best possible customer segmentation.

### 3.2. Research methodology

In order to reach these objectives, the research has been conducted in three distinct phases. In the first stage, we have used the laddering method (Reynolds, J.T., Gutman, J., 1988).
We have conducted a thorough group interview, based on which we have established a list of the most important elements (attributes) that consumers have had in mind when building their concept of satisfaction. Evoking each of these elements was then justified by the associated benefits (consequences), based on the answers to the question "why is this important to you?"; afterwards, they were correlated with the personal, individual or social values of the individuals.
Based on this semi-directive, direct interview, which was applied to a group of 49 consumers, a list of attributes-consequences-values was structured. The most important attributes, the consequences related to the attributes and the associated personal values, according to the principle of cause-effect cognitive linkages were retained. The consequences we considered to be quasi-similar or the recurring ones were merged, and those that were mentioned by too few respondents were eliminated. Twenty-eight attributes, consequences and values were selected, according to Table 3.

In the second stage, a formalized questionnaire for assessing the levels of satisfaction with Likert scale was built based on the elements mentioned by the respondents.
The results were analyzed by using the correlation and regression method in order to highlight the level of intensity of the relationship between the overall satisfaction of the tourists and each of the attributes-consequences-values variables, so that we would be able to validate the research hypothesis, according to which the level of consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction is subjective and depends not only on the quality characteristics of the overall tourism product and its attributes, but also on the personal and/or social values associated to the tourism product.

### 3.3. Sample characteristics

The sample characteristics are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Sample characteristics**

| Sample characteristics | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Total sample | 49 | 100 |
| Sex : - feminine (F) | 19 | 38.77 |
|     - masculine (M) | 30 | 61.23 |
| Age:    - 15-24  years | 2 | 4.00 |
|     - 25-54   years | 32 | 65.30 |
|     - 55-64   years | 12 | 24.60 |
|     - over 64   years | 3 | 6.10 |
| Education        -    General and professional education | 0 | 0 |
|     -    High school and post-secondary studies | 15 | 30.60 |
|     -    Higher education | 34 | 69,40 |
| Economic activity:    - Active | 35 | 71.43 |
|     - Non-active | 14 | 28.57 |
| Number of persons per household: | | |
|     -    1-2 Persons | 8 | 16.32 |
|     -    3  Persons | 5 | 10.20 |
|     -    4  Persons | 36 | 73.48 |
|     -    5 Persons and more | 0 | 0 |
| Subjective self-evaluation of the financial situation: | | |
|     -    Very good | 19 | 38.77 |
|     -    Good | 22 | 44.90 |
|     -    Average | 8 | 16.33 |
|     -    Satisfactory | 0 | 0 |
|     -    Unsatisfactory | 0 | 0 |
| Tourism destination choice was made: | | |
|     -    Personally | 27 | 55.10 |
|     -    By another person (head of the family,  professional association) | 22 | 44.90 |
| Frequency of visits to destination: | | |
|     -    first visit | 38 | 77.55 |
|     -    second visit | 5 | 10.20 |
|     -    third visit | 2 | 4.05 |
|     -    annually | 4 | 8.20 |

As shown in Table 2, 38.77% of the respondents are females and 81.23% are males. The sample is relatively homogeneous: most of the respondents (65.3%) are aged between 25-54 years, graduated from a higher education program (69.40%) and are active persons (71.43%). The household consists of 4 members in the case of 73.48% of the respondents. The subjective self-evaluation of the financial situation shows that 38.77% of the respondents have a very good financial situation, 44.90% have a good situation, 16.33% have an average situation and no respondent considers having a satisfactory or unsatisfactory income.

The tourism destination choice was made personally by 55.10% of the respondents, while for 44.9% of them it was made either a the professional organization/association or another person within the family.

Most of the respondents, 77.55%, are at their first visit, thus for them the tourism destination is a new experience.

The group is relatively homogeneous, with a high education level, which allows an interview of this type.

The study was conducted from February to April 2011, with support from the managers of Europa Hotel in Iasi.

### 3.4. Results and discussions

Since the data were collected based on a direct, unstructured, in-depth, group interview, the collected data were classified into categories, according to the laddering method: attributes, consequences and values.

The main eight attributes mentioned by the respondents generated cognitive linkages, associating them with 13 consequences and 7 personal values, as shown in Table 3, which also presents their citation frequency. The elements with the same scores and those that generated the same cognitive linkages were merged.

**Table 3. The categories associated to consumer satisfaction**

| Categories | Citation frequency | Centrality coefficient |
|---|---|---|
| **Attributes** | | |
| 1.Hospitality | 41/83.7% | 0.209 |
| 2.Gastronomy | 39/79.6% | 0.191 |
| 3.Culture/Spirituality | 39/79.6% | 0.191 |
| 4.Hotel services | 31/63.3% | 0.152 |
| 5.Price | 19/38.8% | 0.093 |
| 6.Personalization/empathy | 11/22.5% | 0.054 |
| **Consequences** | | |
| 7.Safety/security | 39/79.6% | 0.191 |
| 8.Spiritual enrichment | 39/79.6% | 0.191 |
| 9.Communication/Socialization/Friendship | 38/77.5% | 0.186 |
| 10.Health | 37/75.5% | 0.183 |
| 11.Pleasure/contentedness | 37/75.5% | 0.183 |
| 12.Novelty | 35/71.4% | 0.172 |
| 13.Symbolism | 12/24.5% | 0.060 |
| 14.Equity | 10/20.4% | 0.049 |
| 15.Avoiding negative consequences | 8/16.3% | 0.039 |
| **Values** | | |
| 16. Self-esteem | 36/79.6% | 0.176 |
| 17. Self-fulfillment | 35/71.4% | 0.172 |
| 18.Comfort/Quality of life | 24/48.9% | 0.118 |
| 19.Hedonism | 12/24.5% | 0.059 |
| 20. Group membership | 11/22.4% | 0.054 |
| 21. Responsibility | 10/20.4% | 0.049 |

The graphical representation of the linkages within the system of consequences - values - attributes is shown in Figure 2. Associating the attributes with the expected consequences and the values of the consumers has generated 28 cognitive linkages.
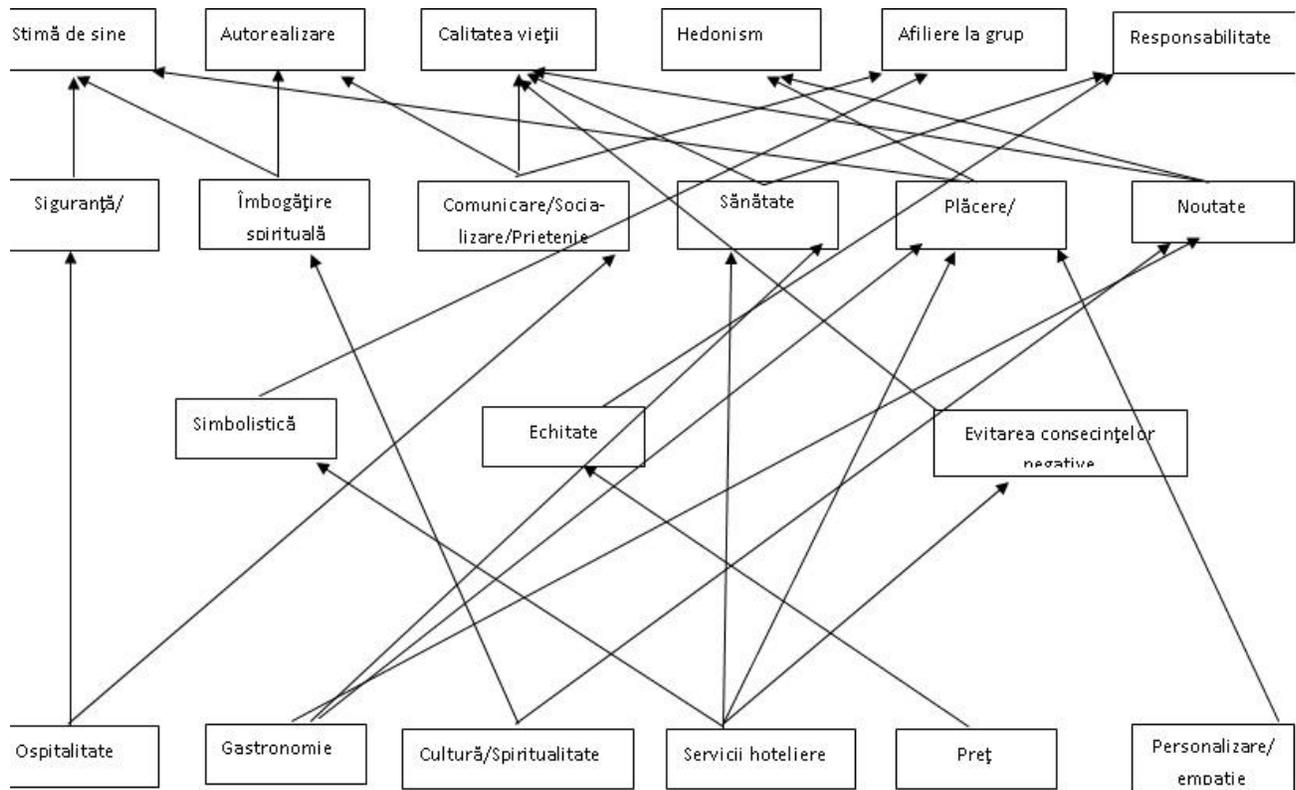
**Figure 2. Graphical representation of the cognitive associations between attributes –
consequences – values**

Since we collected the data by using the laddering method (Reynolds, J.T., Gutman, J., 1988) and since we conducted an in-depth, group interview, without any formalized support, a variety of very abstract elements was generated, especially regarding the associated consequences and the values.

The levels of choice for the cognitive linkages were selected freely, with no restrictions regarding the number of combinations; thus, only three attributes (50%) generate one single direct consequence, and safety/security is the only consequence related only to an individual value (self-esteem), the rest having more corresponding values. An average of 1.75 cognitive linkages resulted for every participant in the interview. This is inextricably related to how the data were collected.

The attributes selected by the surveyed consumers rank, in order of importance, the main attributes based on which they will make judgments regarding the quality of the tourism destination. We note that hospitality, which defines the local population, is first, and culture/spirituality, defined by the historical and cultural sites, art, ethnography, folklore, etc., which create the image of the destination, is third. The aspects regarding the quality of the hotel services and gastronomy are not included in the first place, although most of the studies on tourism products consumer's satisfaction focus on the quality of these attributes and usually the idea of meeting more elevated values is completely ignored.

In order of importance, out of these attributes, the respondents mention: Gastronomy - 39/79.6% Hotel services - 31/63.3%, Price - 19/38.8%; Personalization/empathy - 11/22.5%.

The analysis of the attributes selected by the respondents reflects the fact that, ever since the first level of substantiating the evaluative judgments regarding satisfaction, the importance of the cultural and spiritual aspects is outlined; they will have psychological and aesthetic consequences that will generate satisfaction by reaching the terminal values (goals), which guide them both

personally and socially: personal and family safety, family responsibility, inner harmony, social recognition, friendship, group membership, self-esteem, quality of life, hedonism, self-fulfillment.

After analyzing the consequences and values that determine consumer satisfaction with the tourism destination Iasi, we may characterize the group of consumers as being mainly motivated by self-esteem and spiritual enrichment (79.6%) and the quality of life (71.4%), and secondly by self-fulfillment (24.5%), hedonism (24.5%), group membership (22.4%) and responsibility (20.4%). Service personalization is important and ensures satisfaction for a relatively small number of respondents (22.5%). Their satisfaction also derives from the fact that the tourism product has met their need for safety/security (79.6%), for spiritual enrichment (79.6%), communication/socialization/friendship (77.5%), it has provided them with pleasure and contentedness (75.5%), it has met their need for trying something new, different from their previous experiences (71.4%), at a fair price (20.4%). The fact that respondents mentioned, to varying degrees, that these factors led to the decision regarding the destination choice, subsequently contributing to the achievement of satisfaction, does not reflect the respondents' level of satisfaction in relation to the selected elements.

Therefore, in the second phase of the research, the respondents were given a formalized questionnaire, quantified under the form of the Lickert scale, where they checked the level of satisfaction corresponding to each generalization element identified in the first part of the research, as well as the level of overall satisfaction.

The levels of satisfaction associated to the image of Iasi city are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Assessing the level of the tourism products consumer's satisfaction**

| State if satisfaction/dissatisfaction | Level of the tourism products consumer's satisfaction/dissatisfaction | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attributes | | | | | |
| Evaluation scale | -5 | -3 | 0 | 3 | 5 |
| Hospitality | Inhospitable | Moderately hospitable | Neither/nor | Very hospitable | Total empathy |
| | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9/18.4% | 40/81.6% |
| Gastronomy | Inappropriate | Moderately good | Neither/nor | Very good | Excellence |
| | 0 | 0 | 5/10.2% | 4/8.2% | 40//81.6% |
| Culture/ Spirituality | Ordinary/ Common | | Neither/nor | | Authenticity |
| | 0 | - | 6/12.2% | 2/4.1% | 41/83.7% |
| Hotel services | Inappropriate | Moderately good | Neither/nor | Very good | Excellence |
| | 0 | 0 | 1/2.0% | 3/6.1% | 45/91.9% |
| Price/Equity | Disappointed | Frustrated | Indifferent | Equitable | Above expectations |
| | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11/22.4% | 38/77.6% |
| Personalization/ Empathy | Inexistent/Weak | Sporadic/ Mediocre | Indifferent | Very good | Irreproachable |
| | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5/10.2% | 44/89.8% |
| Consequences | | | | | |
| Safety/security | Dangerous | Unsafe | Safe | Very safe | Total safety |
| | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2/4.1% | 47/95.1% |
| Spiritual enrichment | Very weak | Weak | Mediocre | Good | Very good |
| | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 49/100% |
| Communication/S | Inexistent | Weak | Sporadic/ | Good | Irreproachable |

| ocialization/Friendship | | | Mediocre | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 49/100% |
| Health | Inappropriate conditions | Moderately good | Neither/nor | Very good | Excellence |
| | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 49/100% |
| Pleasure/contentedness | Discontent | Moderately discontent | Neither/nor | Content | Very content |
| | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 49/100% |
| Novelty | Very old | Moderately old | Neither/nor | New | Totally new |
| | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 49/100% |
| Symbolism | Without importance | Minimum importance | Neither/nor | Important | Extremely important |
| | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 49/100% |
| Avoiding negative consequences | Without importance | Minimum importance | Neither/nor | Important | Extremely important |
| | 0 | 0 | 49/100 | 0 | 0 |
| Values | | | | | |
| Self-esteem | Without significance | With minimum significance | Neither/nor | Important | Extremely de important |
| | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 49/100% |
| Achievement/ Self-fulfillment | Without significance | With minimum significance | Contributes to personal development | Heavily contributes to personal develop.t | Achievement/ Self-fulfillment |
| | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 49/100% |
| Quality of life | Without importance | Minimum importance | Neither/nor | Important | Extremely de important |
| | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 49/100% |
| Hedonism | Very unpleasant | Unpleasant | Neither/nor | Excellent | Hedonism |
| | 0 | 0 | 0 | 16/32.7% | 33/67.3% |
| Group membership | Weak | Sporadic | Medium | Very good | Irreproachable |
| | 0 | 30/61.3% | 7/14.3% | 1/2.0% | 11/22.4% |
| Responsibility | Very low | Low | Neither/nor | High | Very high |
| | 0 | 0 | 0 | 39/79.6% | 10/20.4% |
| Conative dimensions | | | | | |
| Intention to repurchase/Loyalty | Inexistent/Weak | Minimum probability | Medium probability | High probability | Certitude |
| | 40/81.7% | 0 | 2/4.1% | 3/6.1% | 4/8.1% |
| Overall satisfaction | | | | | |
| | Dissatisfied | Moderately satisfied | Neither/nor | Satisfied | Very satisfied |
| | 0 | 0 | 8/16.3% | 10/20.4% | 31/63.3% |

The analysis of the tourism products consumer's level of overall satisfaction shows that 63.3% of them were very satisfied, 20.4% were satisfied and 16.3% were rather indifferent, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Disloyalty regarding the tourism destination is highlighted by the fact that the intention to repurchase the tourism product is inexistent in the case of 81.7% of the clients, despite the high level of satisfaction.

In the third stage of the research we used the method of the regression analysis in order to make judgments regarding the variation of the dependent variable - consumer satisfaction - in relation to each of the factors taken into consideration in the study, as being responsible for the

achievement of the tourism products consumer's satisfaction. The descriptive analysis of the options expressed by the consumers in relation to the overall satisfaction and the elements that contribute to its achievement (Table no. 4) allow calculating the mean and standard deviation of each variable influencing consumer satisfaction - Table 5.

**Table 5- Descriptive Statistics**

|  | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall satisfaction | 3.78 | 1.863 | 49 |
| Hospitality | 4.63 | .782 | 49 |
| Gastronomy | 4.33 | 1.573 | 49 |
| Culture | 4.31 | 1.673 | 49 |
| Hotel services | 4.73 | .884 | 49 |
| Price | 4.55 | .843 | 49 |
| Empathy | 1.94 | 3.008 | 49 |
| Security | 3.96 | 1.154 | 49 |
| Spirituality | 4.31 | 1.475 | 49 |
| Communication | 4.06 | 1.701 | 49 |
| Health | 3.71 | 2.061 | 49 |
| Pleasure | 4.80 | .612 | 49 |
| Novelty | 3.73 | 2.018 | 49 |
| Symbolism | 4.59 | 1.383 | 49 |
| Avoiding negative consequences | 2.61 | 2.255 | 49 |
| Self-esteem | 4.84 | .553 | 49 |
| Self-fulfillment | 4.80 | .612 | 49 |
| Quality of life | 4.67 | .747 | 49 |
| Hedonism | 2.49 | 1.869 | 49 |
| Group membership | -.65 | 3.333 | 49 |
| Responsibility | .61 | 1.222 | 49 |
| Loyalty | -3.49 | 3.324 | 49 |

After analyzing the data in Table 5, we can say that the variables with the greatest influence, according to the calculated mean, are: self-esteem - 4.84 and self-fulfillment - 4.80, both being categorized as *values* within the Attributes - Consequences – Values cognitive linkage, followed by pleasure - 4.80, hotel services - 4.73, quality of life - 4.67 and hospitality - 4.63. The calculated means of these variables, as well as the means of price, symbolism, gastronomy, culture, spirituality have values that are close to 5 on the evaluation grid, respectively - extremely important, very content, excellence, extremely important, total empathy, above expectations, extremely important, excellence, authenticity, very good. The means of the variables such as security, novelty or health have values that are close to 3 on the evaluation grid: very safe, new, very good. The means of the variables such as empathy, responsibility, group membership and loyalty are very low, which shows that these indicators have little effect on the tourism products consumer's overall satisfaction.

Table 6 - *Correlations* presents the Pearson correlation coefficients the significance (Sig.) for each correlation coefficient and the number of cases considered in the study (N). For our study, it presents the simple correlations of each independent variable with the dependent variable - overall satisfaction.

Table 6. **Correlations**

| | Overall satisfaction | Hospitality | Gastronomy | Culture | Hotel services | Price | Empathy | Security | Spirituality | Communication | Health | Pleasure | Novelty | Symbolism | Avoiding negative consequences | Self-esteem | Self-fulfillment | Quality of life | Hedonism | Group membership | Responsibility | Loyalty |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overall satisfaction | 1.000 | | | | | | | .703 | .837 | .905 | .557 | .690 | .732 | .611 | .639 | .611 | .690 | .905 | .378 | .473 | .336 | .305 |
| Hospitality | **.886** | | | | | | | .537 | .858 | .863 | .574 | .711 | .491 | .629 | .658 | .629 | .711 | .931 | .270 | .338 | .240 | .218 |
| Gastronomy | .495 | | | | | | | .535 | .495 | .460 | .606 | .547 | .566 | .541 | .582 | .541 | .547 | .447 | .246 | .308 | .219 | .199 |
| Culture | .457 | | | | | | | .414 | .510 | .498 | .344 | .429 | .561 | .415 | .444 | .415 | .429 | .282 | .239 | .298 | .212 | .192 |
| Hotel Services | .545 | | | | | | | .561 | .734 | .648 | .872 | .745 | .567 | .846 | .825 | .846 | .745 | .560 | .173 | .216 | .153 | .139 |
| Price | **.863** | | | | | | | .580 | .884 | .362 | .506 | .627 | .565 | .554 | .580 | .554 | .627 | .821 | .306 | .383 | .272 | .247 |
| Empathy | .625 | | | | | | | .357 | .447 | .525 | .256 | .317 | .596 | .280 | .294 | .280 | .317 | .415 | .605 | .757 | .538 | .488 |
| Security | .703 | .737 | .535 | .414 | .561 | .580 | .357 | | | | | | | | | .446 | .460 | .516 | .519 | .648 | .461 | .418 |
| Spirituality | **.837** | **.858** | .495 | .510 | .734 | **.884** | .447 | | | | | | | | | .880 | .856 | .849 | .271 | .338 | .241 | .218 |
| Communication | **.905** | **.863** | .460 | .498 | .648 | .362 | .525 | | | | | | | | | .719 | .813 | .869 | .318 | .797 | .282 | .256 |
| Health | .557 | .574 | .606 | .344 | **.872** | .506 | .256 | | | | | | | | | .913 | .807 | .616 | .155 | .194 | .838 | .125 |
| Pleasure | .690 | .711 | .547 | .429 | .745 | .627 | .317 | | | | | | | | | .884 | 1.000 | .763 | .892 | .240 | .171 | .155 |
| Novelty | .732 | .491 | .566 | .561 | .567 | .565 | .596 | | | | | | | | | .557 | .529 | .494 | .961 | .451 | .321 | .291 |
| Symbolism | .611 | .629 | .541 | .415 | **.846** | .554 | .280 | | | | | | | | | 1.000 | .884 | .675 | .170 | .212 | .151 | .137 |
| Avoiding negative consequences | .639 | .658 | .582 | .444 | **.825** | .580 | .294 | | | | | | | | | .927 | .926 | .707 | .178 | .222 | .158 | .143 |
| Self -esteem | .611 | .629 | .541 | .415 | **.846** | .554 | .280 | .446 | .880 | .719 | .913 | .884 | .557 | 1.000 | .927 | | | | | | | |
| Self-fulfillment | .690 | .711 | .547 | .429 | **.745** | .627 | .317 | .460 | .856 | .813 | .807 | 1.000 | .529 | .884 | .926 | | | | | | | |
| Quality of life | **.905** | **.931** | .447 | .282 | .560 | **.821** | .415 | .516 | .849 | .869 | .616 | .763 | .494 | .675 | .707 | | | | | | | |
| Hedonism | .378 | .270 | .246 | .239 | .173 | .306 | .605 | .519 | .271 | .318 | .155 | .892 | .961 | .170 | .178 | | | | | | | |
| Group membership | .473 | .338 | .308 | .298 | .216 | .383 | .757 | .648 | .338 | .797 | .194 | .240 | .451 | .212 | .222 | | | | | | | |
| Responsibility | .336 | .240 | .219 | .212 | .153 | .272 | .538 | .461 | .241 | .282 | .838 | .171 | .321 | .151 | .158 | | | | | | | |
| Loyalty | .305 | .218 | .199 | .192 | .139 | .247 | .488 | .418 | .218 | .256 | .125 | .155 | .291 | .137 | .143 | | | | | | | |
| Overall satisfaction | . | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .004 | .000 | .009 | .017 |
| Hospitality | .000 | . | .002 | .002 | .000 | .000 | .001 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .030 | .009 | .048 | .066 |
| Gastronomy | .000 | .002 | . | .006 | .000 | .010 | .002 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .001 | .044 | .016 | .065 | .086 |
| Culture | .000 | .002 | .006 | . | .000 | .000 | .003 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .008 | .001 | .000 | .002 | .001 | .002 | .001 | .025 | .049 | .019 | .072 | .093 |
| Hotel services | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | . | .001 | .024 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .118 | .068 | .146 | .170 |

| | Overall satisfaction | Hospitality | Gastronomy | Culture | Hotel services | Price | Empathy | Security | Spirituality | Communication | Health | Pleasure | Novelty | Symbolism | Avoiding negative consequences | Self-esteem | Self-fulfillment | Quality of life | Hedonism | Group membership | Responsibility | Loyalty |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Price | .000 | .000 | .010 | .000 | .001 | . | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .016 | .003 | .029 | .044 |
| Empathy | .000 | .001 | .002 | .003 | .024 | .000 | . | .000 | .001 | .000 | .038 | .013 | .000 | .025 | .020 | .025 | .013 | .001 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| Security | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | . | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .001 | .000 | .001 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .001 |
| Spirituality | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | **.000** | .001 | .000 | . | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .030 | .009 | .048 | .066 |
| Communication | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | . | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .013 | .002 | .025 | .038 |
| Health | .000 | .000 | .000 | .008 | .000 | .000 | .038 | .000 | .000 | .000 | . | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .144 | .091 | .173 | .196 |
| Pleasure | .000 | .000 | .000 | .001 | .000 | .000 | .013 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | . | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .093 | .048 | .120 | .144 |
| Novelty | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | . | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .005 | .001 | .012 | .021 |
| Symbolism | .000 | .000 | .000 | .002 | .000 | .000 | .025 | .001 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | . | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .122 | .072 | .150 | .174 |
| Avoiding negative consequences | .000 | .000 | .000 | .001 | .000 | .000 | .020 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | . | .000 | .000 | .000 | .111 | .063 | .139 | .163 |
| Self-esteem | .000 | .000 | .000 | .002 | .000 | .000 | .025 | .001 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | . | .000 | .000 | .122 | .072 | .150 | .174 |
| Self-fulfillment | .000 | .000 | .000 | .001 | .000 | .000 | .013 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | . | .000 | .093 | .048 | .120 | .144 |
| Quality of life | .000 | .000 | .001 | .025 | .000 | .000 | .001 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | . | .041 | .014 | .061 | .081 |
| Hedonism | .004 | .030 | .044 | .049 | .118 | .016 | .000 | .000 | .030 | .013 | .144 | .093 | .005 | .122 | .111 | .122 | .093 | .041 | . | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| Group membership | .000 | .009 | .016 | .019 | .068 | .003 | .000 | .000 | .009 | .002 | .091 | .048 | .001 | .072 | .063 | .072 | .048 | .014 | .000 | . | .000 | .000 |
| Responsibility | .009 | .048 | .065 | .072 | .146 | .029 | .000 | .000 | .048 | .025 | .173 | .120 | .012 | .150 | .139 | .150 | .120 | .061 | .000 | .000 | . | .000 |
| Loyalty | .017 | .066 | .086 | .093 | .170 | .044 | .000 | .001 | .066 | .038 | .196 | .144 | .021 | .174 | .163 | .174 | .144 | .081 | .000 | .000 | .000 | . |

The correlation coefficients have values between -l (showing the existence of a perfect and inversely proportional connection between the variables) and +1 (showing the existence of a perfect and directly proportional connection between the variables). Value 0 indicates the total independence of the variables taken into consideration[1].

We note that the value of the correlation coefficients on the diagonal is equal to 1 because each variable is correlated with itself.

We find that the most significant correlation between the attributes and the consequences is that between price and spiritual enrichment, the value of the coefficient being 0.884 and indicating a very strong and direct correlation between the variables, with a significance value under 0.01 (0.000). We also note strong correlations between hospitality and communication - 0.863, between hospitality and spirituality – 0.858, between hotel services and health – 0.872, between hotel services and tourism product symbolism – 0.846, and between hotel services and avoiding negative consequences – 0.825.

Strong correlations are also shown between hospitality and security, between hospitality and pleasure, self-fulfillment (the coefficient reaches values over 0.700), between hotel services and pleasure, spirituality.

Regarding the relationships between attributes and values, the strongest correlation can be noticed between hospitality and the quality of life – 0.931. Strong correlations can also be seen between hotel services and self-esteem and between price and the quality of life.

The strongest correlation between consequences and values are those between avoiding negative consequences and self-esteem – 0.927, between avoiding negative consequences and self-fulfillment – 0.926, between health and self-esteem - 0.913, between pleasure and hedonism – 0.892, between novelty and self-fulfillment – 0.884, between pleasure and self-esteem – 0.884, between spirituality and self-esteem – 0.880, between communication and the quality of life – 0.869, between spirituality and self-fulfillment – 0.856, between spirituality and the quality of life – 0.849, between health and responsibility – 0.838, and between communication and self-fulfillment – 0.813.

The overall satisfaction is strongly correlated with the independent variables quality of life and communication - 0905, with hospitality – 0.886, with price – 0.863, with spirituality – 0.837 and with novelty – 0.732. Weaker correlations can be noticed for security, pleasure, self-fulfillment, avoiding negative consequences, empathy, symbolism and self-esteem.

Although the direct correlation between some variables such as avoiding negative consequences, health, responsibility, security and others and the overall satisfaction is weak, by analyzing the contribution of these variables to the tourism products consumer's satisfaction, according to the Tetraclasse model, we can emphasize that these variables are part of the **fundamental elements or risk factors**; although they do not have a major contribution to the achievement of satisfaction, their absence would create a major impact on satisfaction, generating profound dissatisfaction (Llosa S., 1997). According to the same model, some key elements such as price, equity, quality of life and spiritual enrichment were able to generate maximum satisfaction, any variation of these elements being prone to result in profound dissatisfaction. The Bonus element is represented by tourism service personalization/empathy; although it was cited by a relatively small number of respondents as strongly influencing the tourism product choice, it was an important satisfaction factor for the whole group, representing an element of surprise.

In (Table 7) we have used the regression method in order to validate the correlations between the variables.

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[1] Carmen Mariana Codreanu – The statistical analysis of  prices variation of agrifood products,  Ed. Junimea, Iasi, 2007, p. 119

**Table 7. Model Summary** [b]

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Change Statistics | | | | | Durbin-Watson |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | R Square Change | F Change | df1 | df2 | Sig. F Change | |
| 1 | .982[a] | .964 | .942 | .448 | .964 | 44.465 | 18 | 30 | .000 | .804 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), loyalty, health, culture, empathy, hospitality, gastronomy, novelty, hedonism, self-fulfillment, price, security, hotel services, responsibility, symbolism, communication, quality of life, avoiding negative consequences, group membership

b. Dependent Variable: global satisfaction

The determination ratio $R^2$ indicates the ratio of the variation in the dependent variable through the regression model and is used for assessing the quality of the adjustment (choice of the model)[1]. $R^2$ takes on values between 0 and 1. If $R^2$ is equal to 0 or has a very small value, then the regression model chosen does not explain the relationship between the variables; the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variable does not coincide with the chosen model. If $R^2$ is equal to 1, then all observations fall on the regression line and therefore the regression model perfectly explains the relationship between variables.

In our case, 96.40% of the overall satisfaction is explained by the independent variables chosen. The adjusted R square tries to correct the R square in order to better reflect how the model fits the sample of the consumers investigated.

The standard error of the dependent predicted variable (Std. Error of the Estimate) indicates the standard deviation of the tourism products consumer's satisfaction, the value of the independent variables of the model being known. Since the change interval is small, this means that the independent variables correctly assess the dependent variable, customer satisfaction.

Overall satisfaction is the result of conjugating the influence of the variables analyzed.

## 4. Conclusions

The contribution of the paper regards the theoretical as well as the practical level. At the theoretical level, the paper aims at highlighting the sources and levels of satisfaction of tourism products consumers on different levels of generalization, issues that have been conferred little attention by specific literature so far. The research methodology combines the profoundness of the laddering method with the evaluations made by using the Lickert scale, the method of analyzing the relationships between the variables by using the correlation and regression model, as well as the interpretation of the results by using the Tetraclasse model.

The practical contribution regards more aspects.

Emphasizing the abstract aspects of the sources of satisfaction, such as, for example, the personal and social values of the tourism products consumers can be a source of inspiration for reconsidering the way of approaching marketing communications as well as for management practices. Beyond the specific elements which are attributed to the tangible elements of the tourism product, an important source of differentiation is represented by the intangible elements, which are more difficult to express, but can be found within the tourists' cognitive linkages. Even if some of

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[1] Carmen Mariana Codreanu – The statistical analysis of prices variation of agrifood products, Ed. Junimea, Iasi, 2007, p. 155

these issues do not contribute greatly to achieving satisfaction, such as the issues related to personal safety, avoiding negative consequences, abiding the conditions regarding hygiene, health care, their lack would have led to profound dissatisfaction. The research highlights the importance of the surprise, bonus elements in achieving satisfaction. These items such as service personalization/empathy can be important sources of satisfaction. This highlights the importance of integrating customer satisfaction into human resource management within the tourism activities and the need to correlate technological development and innovation with helpfulness, kindness and the personal attention given to each client.

One of the shortcomings refers to the fact data collection, due to the method used, was laborious and took a lot of time and it did not allow us to investigate a larger sample. The data collection method refers to an individual, in depth interview; thus, the results could not be generalized for all consumer groups. The fact that the examined group was relatively homogeneous and satisfied with the tourism destination and the tourism services consumed does not exclude the occurrence of dissatisfied customers, of other groups that retrospect to different personal and social values, thus having different opinions.

Further research could validate the importance of combining methods of analyzing customer satisfaction and could relieve more abstract levels of the tourism products consumer's satisfaction.

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