

## **USAGE OF DIRECT MARKETING RESEARCH IN ESTABLISHING THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF MAMAIA RESORT AMONGST TOURISTS**

**DANIELA SIMONA NENCIU, MIRELA SECARĂ \***

**ABSTRACT:** *The entrepreneurs of the seaside Romanian tourism should display a real interest in direct marketing researches which can supply precious information in orienting them towards the choice and implementation of marketing strategies in order to win once more the lost tourist's markets. Direct research offers a more complete image onto the researched phenomena, consisting of the direct gathering of information from the tourists arrived on the Romanian seaside, in this case, Mamaia resort.*

**KEY WORDS:** *research, services, tourist's products, seaside, strategies*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

At present, after the adhesion to the European Union, the Romanian seaside tourism enterprises are confronted with especially complex exigencies of the unique Market's mechanisms, exigencies which imply competence and availability of assuming the risk. In order to ascertain these competences and availabilities, the policy-maker of the tourism company has to dispose of pertinent information to be able to take the decisions adequate to ensure to the company the place and role they have envisaged within the market.

This information can be supplied through direct marketing researches which can be realized on the Romanian seaside. Thus, the tourism enterprises have the possibility to supervise continuously the segments and categories of catered tourists, to study their purchasing power, to select the most efficient selling methods, to detect requests, opinions and appreciations of the tourists regarding the traded products and services or about the products which are to be launched, to substantiate the establishing

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\* Lecturer, Ph.D., "Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University of Bucharest, Romania,  
[nenciu75@yahoo.com](mailto:nenciu75@yahoo.com)

Lecturer, Ph.D., "Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University of Bucharest, Romania,  
[mirela\\_secara@yahoo.com](mailto:mirela_secara@yahoo.com)

of the tourist's fees, to ensure the control of the entire activity carried out for reaching maximum efficiency.

At present, the Romanian seaside is confronted with a significant decrease of the Romanian and foreign tourists, which prefer other seaside destinations where they can find similar tourist's services and products but qualitative and for acceptable prices. The research we carried out had as purpose the identification of those elements of the tourist's offer from Mamaia resort which make tourists choose it as a tourist's destination, in view of diversification, in the future, of the tourist's products and services which should satisfy the tourist complex requests.

The general used in the present research has been represented by Romanian and foreign tourists who choose as a tourist's destination the Mamaia resort and are present in the resort during the research period. The group has been composed of tourists at least 18 year old, both sexes, who benefit from tourist's services and products offered by the resort. This group formed the sampling base and, in the same time, the crowd to which the research's results were generalized. The survey unit has been represented by the tourists from Mamaia resort housed in different tourist's housing structures, with the age over 18 years, consumers of tourist's services and products, found in different areas of the resort.

In drafting the questionnaire we gave a special attention to all tourist's characteristics contained in the survey's objectives and program and the wording of the questions which were to be addressed to tourists. In establishing the questionnaire we followed the principle of the funnel, starting with general questions and continuing with more specific ones. The typology of the questions was different, existing in the questionnaire, open, closed questions (dichotomy and polychotomy) and question with scale answers. In this research the sampling method selected has been the non-random one. We started from the premise that: the number of housing places in Mamaia resort is of approximately 31,000; the occupation percentage for the month of July 2008 has been of approximately 45.6 %;

It results that the number of tourists housed in July has been of:

$$31,000 \times 45.6\% = 14.136 \text{ tourists} \quad (1)$$

We have grouped the population according to age, considering their regular share for Mamaia resort (table 1).

**Table 1. Obtaining the sample**

Age group	The tourist' share according to age	Number of tourists	Sample 2%
18 – 29 years old	16%	2.262	45
30 – 39 years old	21%	2.968	59
40 –49 years old	25%	3.534	71
50 – 59 years old	32%	4.524	90
60 years old and over	6%	848	17
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>14.136</b>	<b>282</b>

In order to obtain the sample we have extracted a percentage equal to 2% of each group of tourists, as a result of which appeared a sample formed of 282 tourists who belong to the five groups. The period of the research was 15-22 July 2008, considered the middle of summer and holidays.

## **2. PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH'S RESULTS**

For the present research we have used the following scales: the semantic differential, the ranks arrangement method, Stapel's scale and Likert's scale. The questions were followed based on the percentage calculus of the results according to the number of respondents or number of answers. The analysis of the data is not summed up only to the separate consideration of the variables but also to measuring their degree of association under the aspect of intensity, direction and statistic significance, being realized with the help of the significance test  $X^2$ .

The questionnaire has been used for gathering information from a sample of 282 tourists, the results being presented further on. Starting from the fact that the purpose of this research was finding the elements of the tourist's offer from Mamaia resort, which determine the tourists to choose it as a tourist's destination for their holiday, it has been considered in the end that, based on the information obtained, a analysis of the possibilities of diversification the offer, both under a qualitative and quantitative aspect, should be realized. The stating point has been that of finding the notoriety degree of the resort. The research's results pointed out the fact that the result has notoriety among tourists due to successively spending their holidays in this resort as well as due to its promotion lately.

Another objective was to ascertain the tourists' fidelity towards Mamaia resort. The answer confirms that more than half of the tourists used to spend their holiday in the resort. The tourists' fidelity is not influenced by the tourists' age, what represents a premise for continuing to trade certain services with an elastic demand.

The diversification of the tourist's products and services within the offer of the 2008 summer season has been noticed by most of the tourists. They appreciated firstly the arrangements realized in the resort, the modernization of the hotels, the arrangement of the beach, the cleanliness of the resort, the good organization of points of selling different merchandises and arrangement of walking areas.

The quality of the services has been considered better by a very small number of tourists. The rest of the tourists have not noticed any change in this regard. The quality of the tourist's housing and alimentation services rendered in Mamaia resort is one of the elements for which the most dissatisfactions from tourists have been registered about. Although in the last years, in Mamaia resort have been done significant investments and the tourist's offer has been diversified, the quality of the products and the services offered does not raise to the standards imposed by the European Union. Make the clients loyal and attracting new tourists' segments can be realized only by drawing up and implementing certain measures for increasing the quality of the traded tourist's services.

The resort's elements of attractiveness are differently perceived, according to the age group the tourists are part of. The natural surroundings make the main

attraction of the resort for most of the tourists of the resort, followed by accessibility, amusement possibilities and ambiance. The resort's accessibility reflects in the increased number of tourists who travelled an acceptable distance to reach the resort (three quarters of the tourists travelled a distance smaller than 400 kilometres). This accessibility influences the choice of the holiday companions.

Most of the tourists preferred family (one of the spouses and/or children), friends and relatives. Only a small part of the tourists preferred to come to the resort alone or with an organized group. One may say that Mamaia is a family resort.

The importance the tourists give to the basic tourist's services (housing, food and amusement), is influenced by age and occupation and also by the company of the persons who come with them. From the point of view of the importance given by the tourists the amusement services are situated on the first place, followed with insignificant differences by the housing and food services.

Regarding the tourist's reception structures, the hotels are situated in the top of the tourists' preferences, followed by camping, villas and bungalows. The positioning of the hotels on the first place is due to comfort and to the large number of tourist's services which the tourists can benefit from, as well as to the large share they own in the total of the tourist's reception units from the resort.

The tourist's food structures most visited by tourists are represented by restaurants, brasseries, pubs, pizza places and day bars. The preferred are the restaurants and bars which exist in a significant number in the resort.

In what it concerns the activities the tourists have in the resort, primordial is the helio-marine cure, which covers the largest part of the tourist's time, followed by walks, practicing nautical sports or other sports. It is ascertained an increase in the number of tourists who practice sports in the resort, indifferently of age.

In the evenings the tourists prefer amusement parks, especially those accompanied by children, walking on the beach, restaurants with artistic programs, discos, shows and night bars.

The tourists proved they have information regarding the tourist's attractions found in Constanta County. But considering all this they limit to visiting tourist's attractions from Constanta City only (the Aquarium, the Casino, the Dolphinarium, Tomis Port, museums, etc). a quarter of the tourists propose to themselves to visit the other resorts of the seaside but a limited number of tourists want to visit other tourist's attractions.

If about the new image of the resort the tourists agreed that the change "in good" is visible; regarding the quality of the services rendered the average opinion recorded is not favourable. The prices of the tourist's products do not reflect the quality of the tourist's products and services offered but the prices of the raw materials, fees and taxes, their level being considered high. As the services' quality can not be separated from that of the personnel employed in tourism, the tourists' opinion about the behaviour of the tourism's workers is considered acceptable.

More than half of the tourists have arrived from the urban environment, from distances between 200 and 400 kilometres, using in order to arrive to the resort, the car and the train, as main transportation means (very few have used buses and plane).

The social-professional categories of the tourists from the resort are represented mainly by office workers and highly educated persons, the rest being foremen, workers, entrepreneurs, pupils, students and, in a very small share, pensioners, home-makers, peasants and unemployed persons.

The intention, with little exceptions, of returning to the resort, points out the fact that the tourist's offer of Mamaia resort remains attractive for tourists.

By the investments and modernizations realized in Mamaia resort has been created a diversification of the tourist's reception structures, aspect appreciated by the tourists. Their dissatisfactions are linked to the service rendering of the employed personnel. In this purpose the instruction and the organization of professional training courses are measures absolutely necessary for the increase of the qualitative level of the services rendered by the workers in tourism.

From a quantitative point of view, Mamaia resort disposes of a significant number of tourist's and food reception structures, their qualitative level being on an ascendant slope due to the investments oriented towards the modification of the housing and food units on comfort degrees and their framing within superior comfort categories of 3 stars, 4 stars and 5 stars.

One of the tourist's services absent from this resort is balneal-therapy. Setting up unit for treating such illness as: asthma, bronchitis, stress etc, would attract also another segment of tourists. Creating modern treatment centres and employing qualified medical personnel are premises of the development of a balneal-climatic tourism in the resort. Thus the tourists arrived in the resort could satisfy besides their needs for rest, relaxation and amusement, also their treatment needs.

The quality of the food tourist's services represents another reason of dissatisfaction of the tourists. Although the resort has a lot of food tourist's structures special from the point of view of the location, specific equipments and service personnel, there still exist a lot of food structures which need serious investments. This is the case of restaurants in one and two stars hotels, as well as certain bars, terraces or pizza places which exist on the seaside, where the service equipments are not either adequate or used according to the principles of serving a meal.

The diversification of the menus is another objective which must be taken into consideration by the entrepreneurs from Mamaia resort. The culinary products range should be diversified and enlarged so that it should correspond to the taste and customs of the Romanian and foreign tourists who spend their holidays in this resort.

Also the Romanian cuisine is not put to its true value by the cooks from the food tourist's structures from the seaside. A correct use of the Romanian specific receipts could make Mamaia resort a destination for food lovers, gastronomy could become a motivation for the trip. Although the resort is on the seaside, the number of fish restaurants is low.

Regarding the personnel employed in this sector it should be considered an attempt of making them loyal by wages' motivation, warranting the work place outside the season, professional training courses in the field and by means of an adequate qualification. For this purpose is imposed the establishment of recruitment, selection and perfecting criteria for all workers in the field of tourism along side with ensuring civilized working conditions both for the personnel full time employed and also for the

part time employed personnel. Thus it shall be overthrown the rigidity of the tourism's employees and their inadaptability to the behavior of different tourists (which sometimes reaches indifference or carelessness), factors which determine at present most of the customers' dissatisfactions.

As a conclusion, the behavior of the personnel employed in different structures with a tourist's function depends firstly on their professional qualification and secondly on the degree of satisfaction of the personal needs, degree offered by the employer by means of a satisfactory wage, certainty of the work place, bonuses etc.

Regarding the tourist's amusement services this offer has been diversified, putting into maximum value the natural potential of which Mamaia resort disposes of. Besides the amusement park Aqua Magic, a lot of amusement units have been modernized in the entire resort.

Worldwide is more and more evident the tourist's preference for tourist's programs of the club type, clubs which reunite all tourist's services which can be offered in the resort. Within these clubs, the tourists are housed, eat meals, benefit from a different range of possibilities of spending time, they can shop, they can take walks, can rent cars etc. Using the advantages of these new directions of development of the tourist's services, a few hotels from the resort adapted the organizational type of the Mediterranean clubs to their own possibilities.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion the possibilities of diversification of the tourist's offer in Mamaia resort are numerous, given the fact that the resort disposes of natural resources which have not yet been sufficiently put into value. The increase of the quality of the tourist's services and the diversification of the services' offer should represent primordial objectives for the entrepreneurs from the Romanian seaside tourism. Thus the resorts of the Romanian seaside could be included in the international tourism circuits, could satisfy an external demand exigent from the point of view of comfort, quality of tourist's services and security.

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