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DOCTORAL THESIS

Summary

SERVICE DIVERSIFICATION MANAGEMENT IN TOURISM FIRMS

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INTRODUCTION IN THE FIELD OF RESEARCH

We start this paper having the certainty that it will bring significant contributions both in filling and enriching the existing scientific background, and in the increasing of the efficiency of tourism units, in general, and of hotels, in particular, at least nationally, in terms of actions of diversification of services provided within them.

The critical analysis of management practices which are oriented towards the diversification of services provided by tourism units, corroborated with the tracking of the trends recorded nationally and internationally in the tourism field will highlight the multiple sources which may be the basis of the diversification through innovation of the tourism services. Also, they will shape the correlations which have to be set out between them to maximize the economic efficiency of tourism units and of tourist's satisfaction.

Our **motivation** to do research about management of services diversification in tourism firms is: the high interest in this theme, the complexity of the scientific background, the directions of research which have generated a range of discussions which haven't led to a general acceptance, and equally, the attached economic implications, namely the increasing importance given to this by the managers of tourism firms.

Tourism services delivery becomes more and more difficult because of the rising competition and because of tourists' demands, so that managers of tourism units are forced to develop the tourism services, in what concerns originality, diversity, quality and prices.

Also, the dynamism that characterizes the tourism sector leads to the necessity of continuous improvement of existing travel services, to the development of new tourism services, diversification of distribution channels, improvement of the professional profile of staff, use of new information and communication technologies, strong promotion of tourism destinations, proper operation of tourism resources, development of new forms of

tourism, and the involvement of local communities, managers and tourists in the process of tourism development, part of the experiences economy.

We considered it appropriate to detach ourselves from this overall view and to focus on the diversification of services offered within tourism units, more exactly within hotels. The benefits brought are multiple both for the hotel services delivery units and for the tourists or for the economy of our country.

In the specialized literature it is seldom met the principle according to which diversification of services provided must be a permanent concern of the managers of the tourism units, this becoming a requirement to achieve performance, regardless if this performance is understood in terms of any satisfying financial indicators, of any valuable human resources, of the notoriety, or of high satisfaction among tourists.

But, for the implementation of this principle is necessary to understand the general framework of the progress of the tourism activities in terms of the tourism and travel services, developments and trends registered in this sector nationally and internationally, but also from the point of view of tourists' expectations of their travel experiences.

Therefore, "Which are the characteristics of tourism?", "What managerial implications arise from the specific features of tourism services?", "What is the diversification of tourism services", "Which is the goal of the innovation?", "In what consists the innovation's sources and orientation – main activity for diversification of services" are apparently simple questions, but whose answers imply high complexity, dynamism and lack of consensus on a conceptual level, until now.

Various studies prove the fact that the success and the competition of the hotels greatly depend on: human resources employed in the units, orientation towards quality, innovative activity, the use of new information and communication technologies and the actions of competitors. Thus, the managerial practices oriented towards these directions must become priorities in the current business of the hotel units. Hence it is legitimate to

ask: “What are the sources which underlie to the diversification of the services provided in hotels which must be in the center of attention so as to achieve benefits in terms of effectiveness hotels?” This research is set up as an analytical approach trying to provide scientifically argued answers to all the questions mentioned above.

Of course we can't talk only about the benefits from the tourism units, but also about those recorded in the entire complex sector of tourism; the diversification through innovation will bring to the global development of the tourism, this being considered a business sector whose development positively influences the economy of any country.

Besides the brought benefits, we have to discuss the fact that there is the possibility that innovations developed in order to diversify the services in tourism may not be successful, especially since studies conducted in services field suggest that four out of ten innovations fail on the market (Ottenbacher, 2007:432). We believe that the tourism managers can remove to some extent this risk if their decisions taken in this regard are well founded, the present research being a solid base in this purpose.

At the same time, **we are motivated** to start this research by the manager's interest to enrich and improve their supply services and their management practices in order to develop those sources that contribute to diversification of the services, simultaneously with achieving a high economic efficiency.

The choice of the research took into account the interest of the author for the scientific development of this field, the requests came from the managerial practice and the relevance of the topic for the management field.

OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH RELEVANCE

Below are discussed objectives which are behind the undertaken scientific approach, highlighting the main questions of the research regarding both theoretical and applicative

levels. It also deals with relevance and purpose of the led study, and the lines of inquiry are permanently discussed.

This paper deals with a topical issue having a variety of implications for the theory and practice of tourism. The topic of this paper is the more interesting as the current studies and the hotel business admit the need for further research, analysis and efforts to identify the best sources of innovation in order to support the activity of diversifying the travel services so as the managerial practices to focus on these activities.

This research presents both unanimously agreed issues and critical aspects or disagreements. We thus point out our efforts to clarify some terminological issues that are real challenges both in theory and in practice.

According to the complex general topic of the studied field, there were defined several objectives that will be presented below.

The **main objective** of this research is to identify the sources of innovation which lie on the basis of the diversification of services in hotels and to the extent to which the managerial practice is focused on that, in order to achieve a high economic efficiency. Therefore we want to show that hotel units that focus on certain sources that contribute to the continuous diversification of services provided are more efficient from economical point of view.

Thus, we undertook an analysis among the hotel managers, showing, on the one hand, the managerial practices within the hotels, and on the other hand, the value of some evaluation indicators of economic efficiency.

The specific objectives derived from the primary objective were defined both from theoretical and practical point of view.

From the theoretical point of view, the set out objectives point:

- Theoretical clarification and delimitation of concepts belonging to the sphere of tourism management

- The analysis of the complex characteristics of tourism in order to understand the general background of the progress of the tourism units' activity
- The analysis of the specific features of the travel services in terms of managerial implications for the diversification of services provided in hotels
- The analysis of the main approaches of innovation - the main activity which leads to the diversification of services
- The identification and analysis of the evaluation methods of the efficiency of services diversification

From the practical point of view, the set out objectives point:

- Understanding and testing the phenomena which are specific to the innovation of the travel services
- The analysis of the managerial practices which lie on the basis of the services diversification process
- The identification of differences in what concerns the management practices oriented towards the diversification of services according to: the classification category of the hotels, targeted market segments and the ownership form
- The identification of the management attitude towards innovation on the following five lines (human resources, technology, orientation towards quality, general management directions if they belonged to a hotel chain, market and competition), depending on the hotel category classification and the placement in a certain travel destination
- Identifying the causes for the lack of actions concerning the diversification of the services provided within the hotels

As we had already anticipated, the **relevance** of this research consists in the complete and rigorous study of specialized literature, especially of the international literature. Thus, the fundamental research carried out summarizes a significant amount of data, outlines some ways of reaching a consensus in debates and controversies existent in the specialized literature in what concerns certain concepts, and outlines further research directions in

tourism management in general and in travel services diversification management in particular.

On the other hand, the quantitative research carried out brings an important contribution by the fact that it is the first from the country which approaches the relationship between the diversification of the services and the efficiency of hotels. Also, the innovative element is given by the methodology proposed for evaluating the efficiency of services diversification, Data Envelopment Analysis. If, nationally, the empirical study carried out is an element of novelty, internationally, the approached topic is not an absolute novelty, but still, the novelty is given by the partial different results obtained in this context.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Regarding the current state of knowledge in this field, many studies and researches which approach the management in tourism focused especially on: the quality of tourism services provided the performance of the employees or on the role of new technologies of information, and less on the diversification of the services on the economic efficiency of the tourism units. At the same time, if we take into account the studies carried out in the country, the studies conducted approach the diversification of services in terms of expectations and satisfaction of the tourists, rather than managerial concerns, as our approach is.

Therefore, the interest in researches on innovation-based diversification of services in tourism units is recent and less thorough, although the tourism practice has greatly evolved in this regard (Hjalager 2010:1), due to many positive implications observed.

We believe that the reason why this area of research is not thorough yet takes into account the following argument: research in tourism is involved in many scientific debates regarding the industrial character of the tourism, which is the coverage of the hospitality branch. All these divergent opinions lead to the absence of any clear unanimously accepted definitions of the complex concepts of tourism, hospitality branch

or tourism product. Thus, an unclear conceptual basis in tourism research makes difficult the further travel services diversification through innovation research. But this didn't stop us, because for each concept whose definition implies contradictory opinions in the specialized literature we have outlined a personal opinion, justified.

Moving from this stage, we noticed that in the specialized literature there isn't any conceptual background that could bring together all sources which can lead to the service diversification in hotels. In this regard, studies led by Wang and Qualls, 2007; Han et al., 1998, Johns and Mattsson, 2003; Ottenbacher and Gnoth, 2005; Hjalager, 2002, Ottenbacher, 2007; Cases et al., 2005; Moutinho, 2010, Martinez-Ros and Orfila-Sintes, 2009, Villa et al., 2011, Zhou et al., 2005 are just a few that enabled us to outline a personal conceptual background of diversification sources and which also prove the interest in the research field approached.

Therefore, an important part of the empirical studies in this field aim to show the fact that the managers' efforts to diversify the services provided in hotel cause the gain of a competitive advantage, but the number of studies that establish a clear link between all sources which lie on the basis of the services diversification and economic efficiency are lower, especially in Romania.

The structure and organization of the paper

For a balanced contextual approach and in order to achieve the above mentioned objectives, this PhD thesis is divided into six chapters. After presenting the introductory aspects of chapter one, chapter two, three and four present the current stage of knowledge in our field of research and makes clear the concepts which are on the basis of the empirical study, presented mostly in chapter five.

In the **second chapter** we carried out a study on the evolution of concepts that are used in tourism. Analyzing such a complex business area and performing a classification of factors which influence it, it is absolutely needed to approach the social and economic impact of tourism on the economy so that we could point out that this sector entails the

development of the national economy. One of the pillars which lie on the basis of the tourism development takes into account the diversification of the services provided by the tourism units, and because of this, we decided to do research in this field. At the same time, in order to understand the management practices oriented towards the diversification of the services provided by the tourism units, it is necessary to approach the general background where the travel activities take place in general. In this context, we performed an analysis from macroeconomic perspective of national and international tourism, so that we can see the trends and the perspectives within the sector of activity, in order to correlate them with the managerial actions oriented towards diversification.

In the **third chapter**, we have analyzed the specialized literature regarding the services, which constitute the main component of tourism units. For an as accurate as possible analysis of the actual stage of knowledge, we used a double analysis: in terms of the established theories from the specialized literature regarding to the management of travel services as well as in terms of empirical research carried out throughout time. This chapter also brings forward the viewpoints of Romanian and foreign economists regarding to: the characteristics of services, specific features of travel services and their implications on management practices, or the extremely complex typology of travel services. For each aspect that involves divergent opinions, we have outlined in personal manner definitions or taxonomies. We will observe the complexity of this sector in the analysis carried out by processing the existing national statistics on the importance of travel services in the economy and businesses providing travel services.

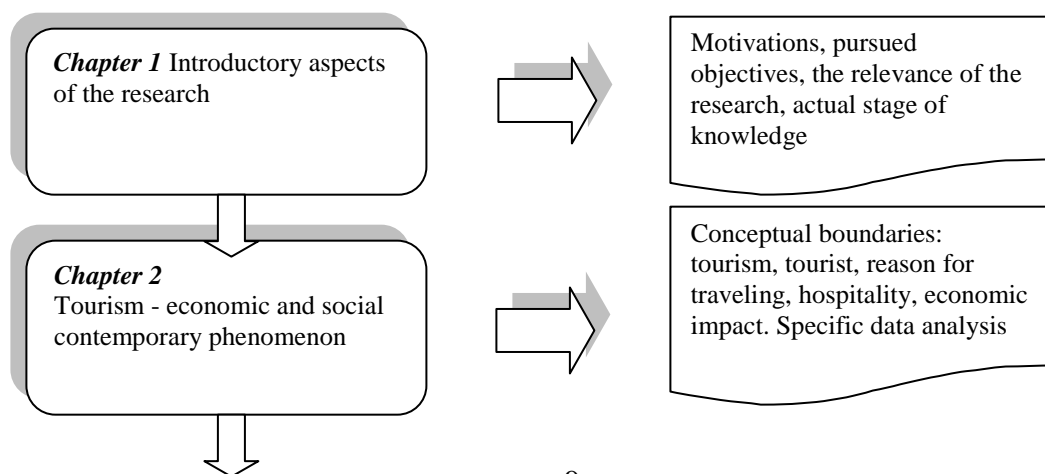
The **fourth chapter** introduces our vision regarding the management of services diversification in tourism units, starting from a detailed study of the specialized literature. After presenting the diversification of services from conceptual point of view, it is necessary to review the guidance and sources of innovation from our perspective. These will provide us a basis to present the methods of evaluating the efficiency of services diversification, focusing especially on the Data Envelopment Analysis model.

The **fifth chapter** presents the research method, and here are thoroughly approached technical and procedural aspects. At the same time, in this chapter we aim to achieve the following objectives: to determine the role of innovation of the services provided within the hotels, to identify the role of management practices oriented to achieve objectives related to quality, human resources, information and communication technology in support of service diversification actions in hotels, to identify the causes of the low economic efficiency of the hotels compared to the present level of diversification of services provided, as well as the management practices aimed in this direction, a link between the economic efficiency and the degree of services diversification supported by the membership of a national or an international chain of hotels.

To better respond to the objectives mentioned above, the present research shows, on the one hand, the attitude of managers concerning the management practices oriented towards services diversification and, on the other hand, the economic efficiency from the point of view of some relevant economic indicators.

We want to emphasize the fact that, in these chapters, the theoretical and practical aspects are not presented in two separate plans, but they interfere and recover each other, providing a complete, complex and interesting perspective, bringing an extra value to the present PhD thesis.

In order to form an overview of the structure of this paper, we suggestively present the plan of the PhD thesis:



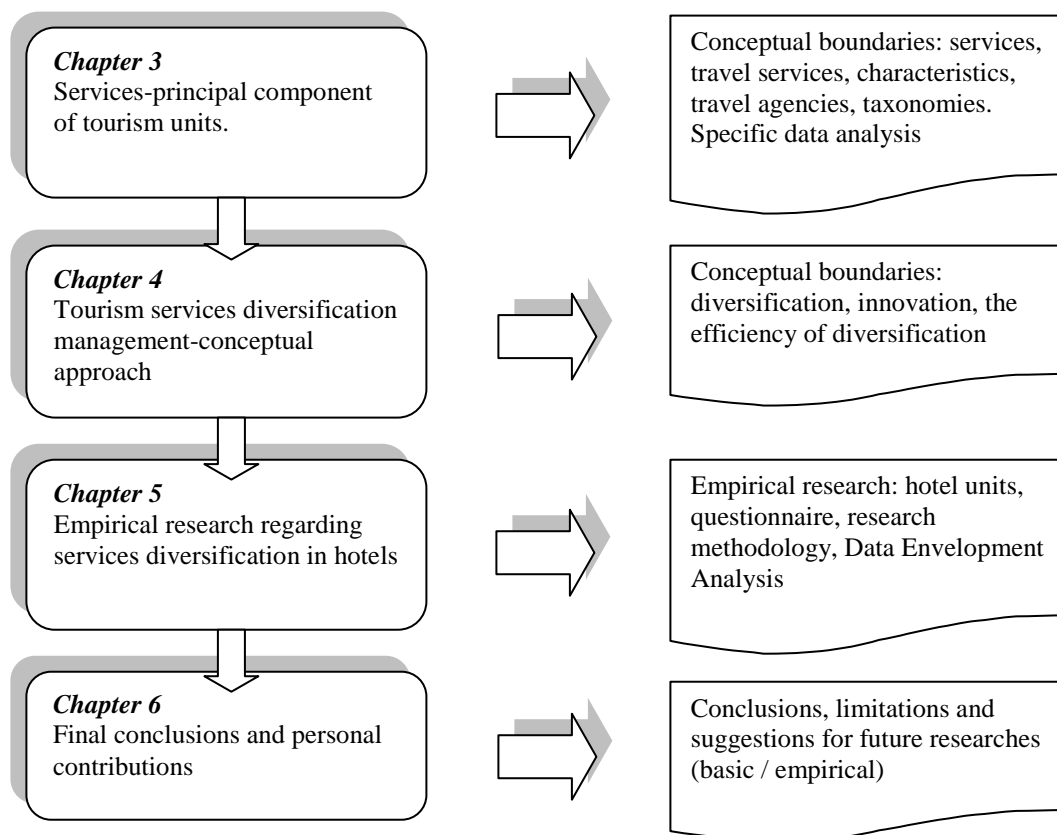


Figure 1. The organization plan of the PhD thesis

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Within our scientific approach we aim to achieve the following **objectives**:

- To test and to validate the questionnaire
- To identify the managerial practices oriented towards employees, information and communication technology, quality, market and competition, which contributes to a greater extent on the diversification through innovation of services provided within the hotels
- To identify the links between the managerial efforts oriented towards diversification through innovation and the results achieved by hotels
- To assess the economic efficiency of the hotels from the point of view of managers' efforts towards the services diversification through innovation

- To apply the Data Envelopment Analysis model concerning the assessment of the efficiency of the services diversification within the hotels
- To use the opportunity provided by exploratory study of hypotheses generation
- To test the research hypotheses

Assumptions are specific forms of scientific thinking which enables the transition from the knowledge of facts to the knowledge of the laws of their production (Chelcea, 2007:104). Given our scientific approach, we have drawn the following hypotheses:

H1: There are differences between hotels in Cluj County and those from Braşov County as concerns: the number of employees, the number of accommodation places, the number of seats in the restaurant, or the number of seats in the conference hall.

H2: There is a narrow set of factors that determine the continuous diversification of services, supporting the managerial decisions of the hotel.

H3: There are significant differences between the managerial efforts of the hotels from Cluj County and those from Braşov County.

H4: There are links between the managerial practices oriented towards human resources, technology, market and competition, which support services diversification through innovation.

H5: The results acquired from the managerial practices oriented towards services diversification through innovation are different in the hotels from Cluj, in relation to those from Braşov.

H6: There are links between the managerial practices oriented towards services diversification through innovation and the acquired results.

H7: There are differences between the hotels having different scores of innovation.

H8: There are differences between hotel groups regarding the factors of diversification.

H9: The hotels which are interested in the diversification through innovation of the recreational services are more efficient.

For the present research, the **target population** is the hotel units. Within the context in which the entire population analysis is difficult, it is necessary to use a sample, a segment

of the population studied chosen to be a representation of the whole. For that purpose, we started from the statistics from the report “Listă structuri de primire turistică cu funcțiuni de cazare clasificate” (List of tourism receiving structures with functions of classified accomodation) provided by the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism in Braşov and Cluj counties for the 3, 4, and 5 star hotels. We chose the hotels having at least 3 stars because the one or two star hotels are not interested in the diversification of services, because of the lack of financial resources for such activities. Because in 2011 the reports show that there are 103 hotels in Braşov County and 46 hotels in Cluj County, so the investigated population is less than 500, we used the Taro Jamane formula/method (Şerban, 2004:78) to calculate the research sample size:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N * e^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = the volume of the total community (the general population which has been studied – 3, 4, and 5 star hotels from Braşov and Cluj counties)

e = the allowable error limit of representativeness (the confidence range regarded is 95%, so the error limit is thought to be = ± 5%)

$$n = \frac{149}{1 + 149 * 0,05^2} = 109hotels$$

To this value, we will apply a covering rate in order to cover the possible situations of non-answering, and therefore we will increase the sample size to 112 hotels by applying a non-answering rate of 3%.

Since the two counties are unequally represented in the general population studied (Braşov County owns 69% of the total of 149 hotels, and Cluj County only 31%), to increase the representativeness of the sample used in the study, we applied a proportional stratified sampling scheme, the proportionality rate for both counties being of 75%, according to the table below:

The general population		The proportionality rate	The calculated value	The value in the final sample
Braşov	103		75%	77 hotels
Cluj	46	75%	35 hotels	35
Total 149 hotels			Total 112 hotels	

After the distribution of the questionnaires, of the final adjustment of the samples, there were validated 35 questionnaires for Cluj County and 60 questionnaires for Braşov County.

The quantitative research tool

In order to achieve the stated objectives and to test the hypotheses mentioned above, we used **the survey** as research method, and the used tool was the questionnaire, which was applied to the hotel managers.

As we have already mentioned, we carried out a pilot study. In the research tool we changed the items on which those 15 interrogated persons encountered difficulties to answer or they did not want to answer, and we consider those pieces of information to be confidential.

Regarding the content of the developed questionnaire, it sought to identify:

- The present level of diversification of services provided on the five main categories of services: accommodation, food, business, personal, entertainment, recreation and sport.
- The managerial practices concerning the human resources, information and communication technology, orientation towards quality, market and competition, activities which support diversification through innovation of the services
- The orientation towards the radical or incremental innovation of the managerial efforts for the diversification of the services provided in hotels
- The economic efficiency of the hotel in terms of: the occupancy rate, the volume of the sales and costs, the weight of the each type of sale of the total sales
- The extent to which the managerial practices and efforts oriented towards the services diversification through innovation are connected with the efficiency rate of the hotels

- The socio-demographic data concerning the people who have been interrogated
- The identification data of the hotels

As regards the structure of the questionnaire, one can identify four parts:

- The first part contains closed questions regarding services offered in the hotels, aiming to identify the present level of diversification of provided services within the hotel units. Also, we introduced a question regarding the sale weight of each category of services from the total sales. We should mention that in the piloting stage of the questionnaire, this question which points the economic efficiency of the hotels was in the third part of the questionnaire, part which approaches exclusively this aspect, but the people who were interrogated said that they could answer easier if this question is placed after the first one which describes at length all these types of services
- The second part of the questionnaire includes questions of opinion in which respondents were asked to describe the significance of the managerial practices regarding the human resources, information and communication technology, orientation towards quality, market and competition – sources of services diversification through innovation. The questions are closed, using a Likert scale from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important). There were also introduced some closed multiple choice questions, which aim to find issues which are closely related to the previous one: aspects which cause the diversification of services and the kind of innovations which the hotel managers are focused on.
- The third part of the questionnaire is meant to assess some aspects of performance hotels, having the intention to measure the occupancy rate, the satisfaction of the customers and employees, staff fluctuation and the volume of sales and costs.
- The last part of the questionnaire contains factual questions for capturing a series of identification data of the respondent and of the hotel which he leads

The methods of application of the questionnaire were: management with the help of the survey operators and the self-management using the Web (www.docs.google.com). The choice of the one from the two forms was forced by incidental factors such as:

manager's presence in the hotel, his availability to complete the questionnaire online, manager's presence in the country etc.

The questionnaire was applied during January-March 2012.

Therefore, through the questionnaire we investigated the directions of the managerial efforts to the services diversification through innovation in the following five areas: human resources employed in the hotel, implementation of new information and communication technologies, orientation towards quality, market and competition, and also their impact on the efficiency of the hotels.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS INTERPRETATION

The analysis of the data provided by questionnaires was performed using the following **software**: SPSS 13 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for Windows, Statistic 7 and DEA Frontier.

The methods of analysis for testing are:

- Descriptive analysis of data in order to better understand the characteristics of the hotels from the sample, using for this purpose: average, standard deviation, the intervals of confidence, absolute, relative and cumulative frequencies;
- The factorial analysis, namely the procedure called "main components" to identify the complete variables that could be omitted from the analysis, in order to reduce the information which have to be analyzed and hence, the evaluation time of the efficiency of the hotels by DEA model, but without influencing the accuracy of the final result, the factors being rotated by Varimax method. For each factor has been calculated both item-to-total correlation and Cronbach alpha, which measures the internal consistency. The values of the Cronbach alpha higher than 0.7 show that the factor has high reliability and those which are lower than 0.3 shows that the factor has a low reliability;
- The canonic analysis was used to establish the connection between the investigated variables;

- Cluster analysis was necessary to divide hotels into different groups based on the criterion related to the innovation policy adopted by each hotel, policy which supports the diversification of the provided services. There were used the innovation factors, and in the process of defining the clusters it was used the hierarchical method and k-means;
- T-test or Mann-Whitney was applied to identify the main effects and interaction between the hotels from Cluj and Braşov for more interval dependent variables;
- MANOVA was used to determine both the main effects and the interaction effects between innovation clusters of the hotels. The role of MANOVA was to determine which factors contribute to the explanation of the hotel groups dependencies created according to the adopted innovation policy.

The statistical study is divided into three main parts which include: descriptive statistics about the sample, comparative statistics regarding the context of services diversification in the analyzed hotels, applying Data Envelopment Analysis model. This last part is the most important, so we chose to present it below.

As we have mentioned, we want to apply the Data Envelopment Analysis model in order to assess how efficient is the way in which a finite number of decision units use a set of inputs so as to produce more outputs.

In our case, the decision units are the 95 hotels located in Cluj and Braşov counties (which we will group in four clusters, as we will see below), and in particular, the application of this method lies in the identification of the hotels with the best managerial practices oriented towards innovation which cause the diversification of the provided services and which have an impact on the economic efficiency, in order to provide a benchmark for other hotels which want to increase their efficiency.

DEA application model involves several steps which we will present below.

Step 1: Choosing the guidance of hotels efficiency analysis

From the three variants of DEA model that we presented in paragraph 4.3.2 (CRS - with focus on input, CRS - oriented towards output and VRS - dual), in this study we will identify the hotels positioned on the boundary of VRS efficiency, which is the dual version, because this approach allows the study of hotels both in terms of management practices aimed at diversification through innovation services (inputs) and in terms of results (outputs).

Step 2: Selection of input and output variables

The central topic of our paper is the diversification of services in hotels, so the inputs chosen take into account the managerial efforts oriented towards this direction.

As we mentioned in the section 4.2, we haven't identified in the specialized literature any conceptual background that brings together all sources of services diversification in hotels, and that is why we have developed us one, which can be enriched and completed because of the dynamic character of the tourism, the business sector investigated by us. Therefore, we believe that the focus on the customer is the element that determines the need and opportunity of the diversification of provided services in hotels, within the context in which the tourists' requirements are rising and competition is tough. The main way of achieving this goal is the innovation, whose sources, in our opinion, are: employees of the hotel, continuous development of technology, orientation towards quality, market dynamism and high competition in the tourism field.

Therefore, **the inputs** taken into account (coded with the letters FI) refer to the managerial practices oriented towards the four directions, each of them containing a certain number of variables:

- Input 1: managerial practices concerning human resources, consisting of 12 variables;
- Input 2: managerial practices concerning the information and communication technology consisting of 7 variables;
- Input 3: management practices concerning orientation towards quality, consisting of 9 variables;

- Input 4: management practices concerning the market and competition, consisting of 3 variables.

Regarding **the outputs** taken into account we mention:

Output 1: occupation;

Output 2: financial results: the income and the expenses;

Output 3: fluctuation of employees;

Output 4: the satisfaction of the employees;

Output 5: the satisfaction of the customers.

In this stage must be examined whether the number of input and output variables taken into account is correct. The specialized literature states that the number of variables must be smaller than the number of decision units considered in the study (Sanjeev, 2007:383, Avkiran 2001:58); as shown, this condition is fulfilled in our study (9 variables <95 UD). We mention that this condition must be respected, because if the number of variables taken into account is close to number of decision units which have been analyzed, it will be obtained a higher number of decision units considered to be efficient, fact which doesn't reflect reality.

Step 3: Collection of data concerning input and output variables

As predicted, all the necessary data (both qualitative and quantitative) were obtained through a questionnaire (Appendix 1: Questionnaire applied to hotels), which was applied to the managers of the hotels (the second part of the questionnaire).

Step 4: Processing the input and output variables

This step is very complex, consisting of three parts which point the processing of the inputs (A), of the outputs (B) and a statistical analysis of the link between them (C). We will also perform a cluster analysis of the hotels in order to achieve a relevant analysis.

A. Our study begins with a descriptive analysis of data inputs, as we show below.

Analyzing the results achieved, it is observed that respondents from Braşov gave high importance for the input “Practices concerning human resources”, and for inputs “Practices concerning information and communication technology”, “Practices concerning orientation towards quality” and “Practices concerning market and competition”, the answers average is close to 3.5.

Within the input of “Practices concerning human resource”, the highest importance is given to the variables F3 – “Employees answer promptly and creatively to the customers’ request” and F10 – “Interaction between employees and customers is a source of ideas for development of new services or improvement of existing ones”, thing which allows us to say that the analyzed hotels from Braşov have a much more developed view in what concerns the orientation towards the customers.

At the same time, within the input, we notice that the investment efforts concerning the four categories of services have almost equal importance, thing that is considered beneficial, but also necessary if we take into account the main type of tourism practiced here – the leisure tourism.

Summarizing, we can say that, according to these results, both in Cluj County and Braşov County, the managers of the surveyed hotels give a great importance to human resources in terms of selection, training, and their accountability and control, teamwork, involvement in generating innovations, this aspect being a favorable one. As the specialized literature suggests, human resources are considered vital resources in getting radical or incremental innovations, but if we look only to the items related to investments in improving the professional profile of employees, or rewarding employees who come up with innovative ideas, we see the lowest averages both for hotels from Cluj County and Braşov County, and this aspect rises many problems. Unfortunately, this situation is characteristic to the entire hotel sector in Romania, which is reflected in the end, in the satisfaction felt by tourists.

After this descriptive analysis of the inputs, the questions that arise are: “Are all variables that make up the four inputs representative? Do they equally contribute to the services diversification through innovation?” In this context, the working method on which we have focused below is the **factorial analysis**, because it allows, on the basis of the answers to the questions from the questionnaire regarding the inputs, the building of a pattern which seeks to highlight the important factors that determine the diversification through innovation of the services provided in hotels. Moreover, by linking the answers, we can build a pattern which explains the variation of the studied variables.

Specifically, for each set of variables corresponding to each input we achieved:

- Preliminary analysis to determine the adequacy of the data in order to achieve the factorial analysis. In this context we used the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test (KMO), which specifies to what extent the variability of the data is caused by factors included in the study (it is necessary that the value of the covariance indices from the main diagonal of the anti-image matrix to be higher than 0.5) and the spherical shape test Bartlett.
- The actual factorial analysis on the correlation matrix and, in order to extract the factors, we used the procedure called the main components, factors being rotated by Varimax method (Culic, 2004:230). We also respected the Kaiser criterion (from communalites, values must be higher than 0.4).

To summarize, we address the relative inputs of the hotels and the Cluj County in Braşov County. Thus, we used the Mann-Whitney test to test the hypothesis H4: There are significant differences between managerial efforts of the hotels in Cluj and Braşov. According to the results of this test the third hypothesis (H3) is partially validated as between the factors mentioned below there are differences, but factor market practices and competition are not significant differences between hotels in Cluj and Braşov:

- Human resource practices-factor1 (Mann-Whitney $U = 12,677$, $p = 0.000$) and human resources practices-factor2 (Mann-Whitney $U = 12975.5$ $p = 0.001$);
- Information and Communication Technology Practice (Mann-Whitney $U = 29,805$, $p = 0.000$);

- Practices on quality orientation (Mann-Whitney $U = 3029.5$, $p = 0.006$).

Input variables in the "human resource practices" were grouped into two factors but their structure is different from Cluj to Brasov hotels. In Cluj hotels, factor 1 called selection, value and reward individuals, groups the five variables, the largest contribution to the load factor has the variable HR F1-selection is done taking into account the skills, abilities and professional skills of candidates. The second factor, called employee creativity and the ability to personalize the services, groups 3 variables, the largest contribution to the load factor has the variable-F4 Employees are empowered to make decisions aimed personalization.

In Braşov hotels, factor 1 called selection, training and employee involvement, grouped six variables, the largest contribution to the load factor has the variable HR F1-selection is done taking into account the skills, abilities and professional skills of candidates . The second factor, called the ability to customize services groups two variables, the largest contribution to the load factor has the variable F3-operative and creative employees respond to customer requests.

Regarding input "Information technology and communication practices" in both the hotels in Cluj and Braşov, variables were grouped into a single factor (note that initially were 6 variables, but the analysis factor remained 5). The difference between hotels in the two counties is given by the variable that contributes the most to the loading factor: it's in Cluj-G2 is used computerized hotel management system that integrates all operations of the hotel and the hotel Brasov see G4-presence in online environment helps attract new customers and retain existing ones. Once again it is confirmed that managers of hotels in Brasov approach considers customer focus, which, as argued by the literature, is the main element in initiating actions to diversify services.

Regarding input "practices on quality orientation", both in hotels in Cluj, as well as those in Brasov, latent variables were grouped into a single factor. The difference between hotels in the two counties is the structure of each factor (Cluj-8 variables, Brasov-7 variables), and the contribution factor loading variables.

So far, we have achieved a processing, analysis and interpretation of inputs needed to apply Data Envelopment Analysis model and will focus on the outputs.

Hence, all the effects of management practices oriented towards the four directions of innovation efficiency is reflected in the hotel, the four indicators analyzed in this moment are: employment, staff turnover, employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction. Based on the mean and standard deviation can say that respondents gave Cluj County high customer satisfaction scores, registering an average that exceeds 4 for employee satisfaction and employment responses is below 3.5 average and have average turnover of staff scores below 3. Score of 4.26 obtained for customer satisfaction is favorable since they are the ones who benefit from the services offer, but the average of 3.17 for employee satisfaction is unfavorable, especially since, as stated above, human resources management practices oriented innovation to diversify the hotel services were considered most important. We tend to believe that it is inadequate wages, particularly wages received by employees that report from hotels and restaurants to the average wage in 2011 was 0.77%, much lower than other areas such as industry (1.07%) and financial intermediation (3.08%).

On the other hand, respondents in Brasov County, gave high scores for occupancy, customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction, with an average value of more than 3.70, for an average turnover of staff see scores below 2, which corresponds to 1-20% therefore analyzed in Brasov hotels not facing a high staff turnover which creates prerequisites for a better understanding of the objectives hotels innovation, customization of services opportunities, and to strengthen work teams.

Comparing these outputs only in terms of average values, we conclude that the analysis of Brasov hotels have a better situation than in Cluj county, especially the number of nights spent in all the hotels in Brasov was double the figure corresponding registered in Cluj county. Also as in the present paragraph 5.2.2, no significant differences between hotels Cluj and Brasov County assessed in terms of number of attributes places, number seats in restaurant meals, seats in the conference room number (averages are close) which is unfavorable situation leads us to emphasize: the hotels in Cluj County unused capacity exists to provide leading some high perishability costs.

It is not enough an individual assessment of inputs and outputs, so we consider necessary testing correlation between inputs and outputs, using canonical correlation in this regard,

we note that there is significant association between resource management practices human, information and communication technology, quality orientation, or market and competition, and efficiency of hotels (Can R = 0.396920, R2 = 0.157546 Can, $\chi^2 = 16.89896$, $p = 0.03$). Therefore, the sixth hypothesis (H6) is confirmed: there are links between managerial efforts aimed at diversifying through service innovation and results.

Next we want to determine whether there are differences between the different scores hotels innovation hypothesis prevails in this context is H7: There are differences between the different scores hotels innovation. In order to test this hypothesis, we applied cluster analysis using the variable scores innovation cluster. To determine the groups of hotels with the same innovation policy regarding accommodation services, food, business, personal and entertainment so we applied hierarchical method and K-means clustering method.

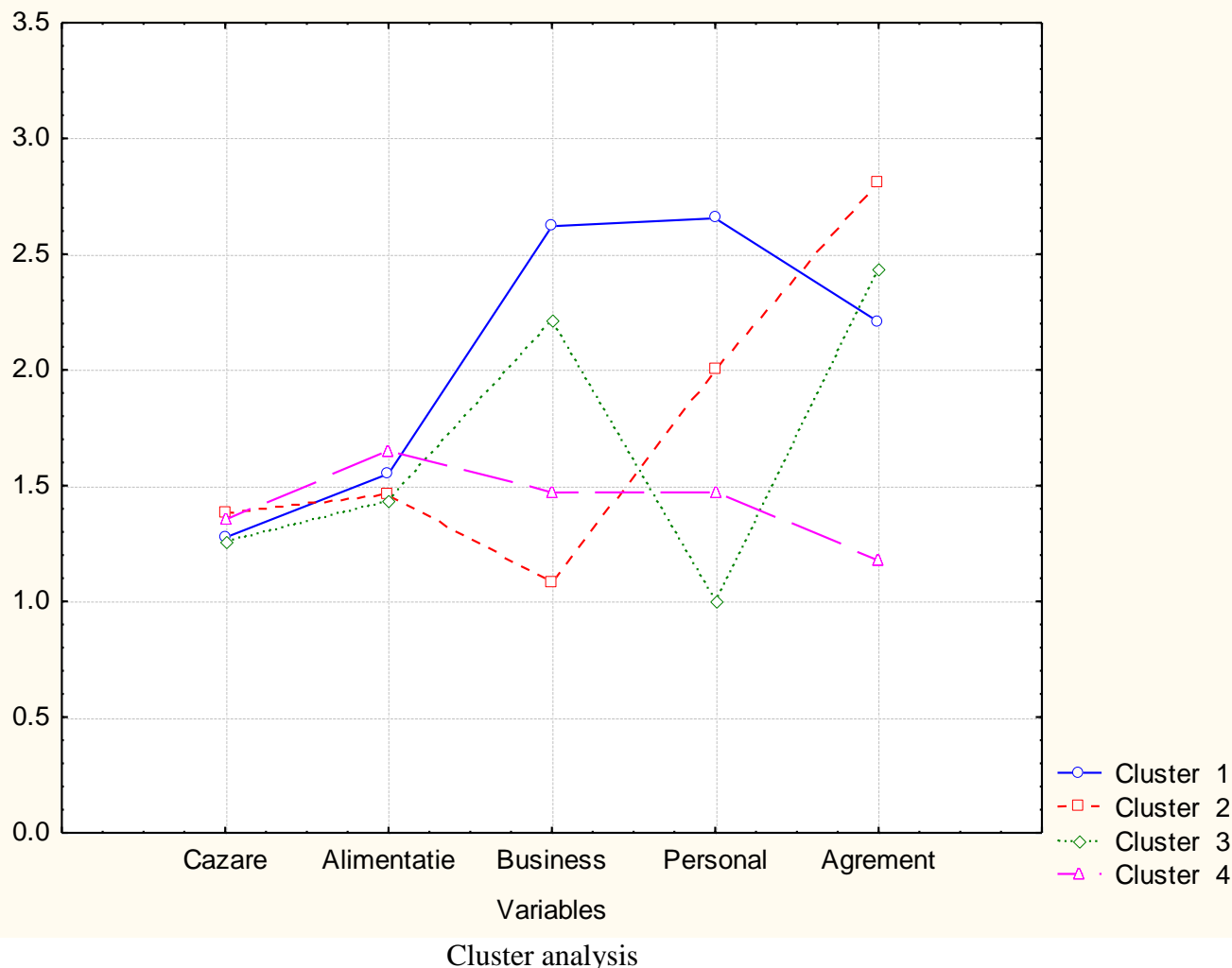
Innovation scores lead to 4 groups hotels, so k-means algorithm crowd divided into 4 classes of hotels studied, following the formation of well-defined homogeneous groups, namely inter-class inertia value significantly exceeds intra-class inertia values. F test significance threshold p variables means business services (denoted Business) ($F = 61.442$, $p = 0.000$), personal services noted (Personal) ($F = 37.868$, $p = 0.000$) and leisure services (denoted Recreation) ($F = 32.1271$, $p = 0.000$) as the main criteria for assignment of hotels in clusters.

Table 2. Result of cluster analysis

No.	Hotel	CLUSTER	No	Hotel	CLUSTER
1.	Hotel 1_CJ	Cluster1	49.	Hotel 20_BV	Cluster 2
2.	Hotel 3_CJ	Cluster1	50.	Hotel 23_BV	Cluster 2
3.	Hotel 5_CJ	Cluster1	51.	Hotel 24_BV	Cluster 2
4.	Hotel 7_CJ	Cluster1	52.	Hotel 25_BV	Cluster 2
5.	Hotel 13_CJ	Cluster1	53.	Hotel 33_BV	Cluster 2
6.	Hotel 15_CJ	Cluster1	54.	Hotel 38_BV	Cluster 2
7.	Hotel 18_CJ	Cluster1	55.	Hotel 51_BV	Cluster 2
8.	Hotel 23_CJ	Cluster1	56.	Hotel 8_CJ	Cluster 3
9.	Hotel 26_CJ	Cluster1	57.	Hotel 14_CJ	Cluster 3
10.	Hotel 28_CJ	Cluster1	58.	Hotel 21_CJ	Cluster 3
11.	Hotel 3_BV	Cluster1	59.	Hotel 35_CJ	Cluster 3
12.	Hotel 7_BV	Cluster1	60.	Hotel 2_BV	Cluster 3
13.	Hotel 9_BV	Cluster1	61.	Hotel 8_BV	Cluster 3

14.	Hotel 10_BV	Cluster1	62.	Hotel 14_BV	Cluster 3
15.	Hotel 13_BV	Cluster1	63.	Hotel 15_BV	Cluster 3
16.	Hotel 17_BV	Cluster1	64.	Hotel 21_BV	Cluster 3
17.	Hotel 19_BV	Cluster1	65.	Hotel 27_BV	Cluster 3
18.	Hotel 22_BV	Cluster1	66.	Hotel 31_BV	Cluster 3
19.	Hotel 26_BV	Cluster1	67.	Hotel 32_BV	Cluster 3
20.	Hotel 28_BV	Cluster1	68.	Hotel 34_BV	Cluster 3
21.	Hotel 35_BV	Cluster1	69.	Hotel 40_BV	Cluster 3
22.	Hotel 36_BV	Cluster1	70.	Hotel 41_BV	Cluster 3
23.	Hotel 39_BV	Cluster1	71.	Hotel 43_BV	Cluster 3
24.	Hotel 44_BV	Cluster1	72.	Hotel 46_BV	Cluster 3
25.	Hotel 47_BV	Cluster1	73.	Hotel 52_BV	Cluster 3
26.	Hotel 27_CJ	Cluster1	74.	Hotel 53_BV	Cluster 3
27.	Hotel 50_BV	Cluster1	75.	Hotel 55_BV	Cluster 3
28.	Hotel 54_BV	Cluster1	76.	Hotel 58_BV	Cluster 3
29.	Hotel 56_BV	Cluster1	77.	Hotel 59_BV	Cluster 3
30.	Hotel 2_CJ	Cluster 2	78.	Hotel 60_BV	Cluster 3
31.	Hotel 4_CJ	Cluster 2	79.	Hotel 6_CJ	Cluster 4
32.	Hotel 9_CJ	Cluster 2	80.	Hotel 11_CJ	Cluster 4
33.	Hotel 10_CJ	Cluster 2	81.	Hotel 19_CJ	Cluster 4
34.	Hotel 12_CJ	Cluster 2	82.	Hotel 20_CJ	Cluster 4
35.	Hotel 16_CJ	Cluster 2	83.	Hotel 30_CJ	Cluster 4
36.	Hotel 17_CJ	Cluster 2	84.	Hotel 1_BV	Cluster 4
37.	Hotel 22_CJ	Cluster 2	85.	Hotel 5_BV	Cluster 4
38.	Hotel 24_CJ	Cluster 2	86.	Hotel 6_BV	Cluster 4
39.	Hotel 25_CJ	Cluster 2	87.	Hotel 12_BV	Cluster 4
40.	Hotel 49_BV	Cluster 2	88.	Hotel 18_BV	Cluster 4
41.	Hotel 29_CJ	Cluster 2	89.	Hotel 29_BV	Cluster 4
42.	Hotel 31_CJ	Cluster 2	90.	Hotel 30_BV	Cluster 4
43.	Hotel 32_CJ	Cluster 2	91.	Hotel 37_BV	Cluster 4
44.	Hotel 33_CJ	Cluster 2	92.	Hotel 42_BV	Cluster 4
45.	Hotel 34_CJ	Cluster 2	93.	Hotel 45_BV	Cluster 4
46.	Hotel 4_BV	Cluster 2	94.	Hotel 48_BV	Cluster 4
47.	Hotel 11_BV	Cluster 2	95.	Hotel 57_BV	Cluster 4
48.	Hotel 16_BV	Cluster 2			

For a better understanding of the data presented in the table, we present the figure below:



Therefore, the cluster analysis presented above shows:

- Cluster 1 is comprised of 29 hotels that are concerned with the incremental innovation in accommodation and food services, and business services, personal and agreement is intended to radically innovate;
- Cluster 2 includes 26 hotels take action to obtain incremental innovations in terms of accommodation services, catering and personal services business show no concern for innovation, and radically innovate services agreement;
- Cluster 3 is composed of 23 hotels which innovate incrementally in accommodation and food services, radical business services and leisure and personal services are not manifested concern for innovation;
- Cluster 4 is composed of 17 hotels which innovate incrementally in all four categories of analyzed services.

As shown, all the hotels studied, regardless of the cluster to which they belong, are interested primarily incremental innovation accommodation and food services. This character carries both positive and negative. Of course innovation is beneficial actions of these two basic components of a tourism product, but we cannot continue this general management approach (focusing only on accommodation and food), but requires development and other types of services course correlated with the requirements of target segments tourists. Based on cluster analysis we can say that the seventh hypothesis (H7) is validated: there are differences between hotels with different innovation scores.

Step 5: Data processing and interpretation of results

At this stage, we identify hotels with the highest average efficiency of each cluster, which is considered the reference in improving management practices aimed at diversifying the service innovation of other hotels in the same cluster. Note that processing of inputs and outputs each cluster of hotels we used computer software Frontier DEA.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND PERSONAL CONTRIBUTIONS

As we stated before, we wanted to bring value at both theoretical and applicative level. Through the multitude of conceptual border and deeply analyzed and / or proposed taxonomies, and by applying for our research area of Data Envelopment Analysis model, we consider that we succeeded to bring something more within the fundamental research.

1. In theory, the main contributions of our approach consist in enriching the scientific literature in the field of services diversification management in hotels, by:

- *Defining and pointing out some basic concepts in the tourism*

For a deep understanding of the service diversification business background within the tourism units, we considered it necessary to analyze and point out the general background of tourism and the concepts used. We focused on general concepts like tourist, traveling forms, determinants of tourism, travel motivation. We also pointed out the main features of the measuring instruments of the economic (multiplier of tourism and tourism satellite account) and social impact of tourism.

We also identified the characteristics and components of the travel sector, that of hospitality. The conceptualization was achieved by illustrating of some specific elements of the two business sectors. The section assigned to these issues ends by reasoning our points of view regarding two aspects that have generated many debates in the literature of speciality: if the tourism has an industrial character or not and the coverage of the hospitality sector. Therefore, in our opinion:

- ✓ Tourism is a mix of industries and interdependent activities, the achievement of the "travel industry" concept being done empirically.
- ✓ In countries where tourism is not very developed and therefore, neither is the level of competition, the hospitality sector includes accommodation and food services.
- *Synthesis of the characteristics of current economic context after the assessment of various researches carried out in the tourism field.*

In the second part of the chapter two three we achieved a synthesis of current economic context in order to emphasize the role of activation as travel unit within it. We gave a great importance to the complexity of this sector, highlighting the managerial practices that should be taken into account by managers of travel units in order to cope with the high competition and with tourists' demands. We also came to the opinion that travel sector is in a continuous evolution, marked by changes that occur on a global scale.

- *Pointing out the complex notion of travel services, the focus point of the diversification business within the travel units.*

This can be noticed in the third chapter, where we identified, displayed, analyzed, and proposed some personal conceptual borders for the following aspects:

- ✓ The main characteristics of services in general and of travel services in particular and managerial implications resulting from them:
 - Interdependence of tourism services;
 - The period of demands for travel services;
 - Significant investments for starting-up the travel facilities;

- The important role of the mediators in the distribution of travel services;
 - Interchangeability of the travel services;
 - The continuous development of the travel services demand;
 - Complex and heterogeneous motivations of tourists.
- ✓ Including the travel services in the national economy and emphasizing that these belong to the "economy of feelings, of experiences", thus identifying the size of a memorable travel experience;
 - ✓ The specific features of the tourism businesses, especially the hotels

▪ *Presenting the economic efficiency of hotel units as a result of diversification of services provided and a theoretical reasoning on innovation as being a pillar of diversification of services*

We made a clarification of the notion of services diversification, of the ways of achievement of such activities and of its effects on hotels' economic efficiency. The diversification starts from the change of the supply of services through:

- ✓ The extension of the service line, ie adding some additional services to the basic ones;
- ✓ Introduction of new services on the market, for hotel or improved.

The main element that determines not only the opportunity to diversify the services provided by the hotel units, but especially the need for such actions, under the conditions of the growing competition and customers' demands, is the orientation towards the customer, the key element being the customization of the services which increases the value of the standard services provided by the hotels.

The basic pillar of these activities is the innovation, the managers must pay attention to this activity that leads to positive economic and social effects.

Next we focused on identifying the sources which are on the basis of the services diversification business within the hotels, thereby developing a complex conceptual border:

- ✓ Innovation

- ✓ Human resources
- ✓ Development of the information and communication technology
- ✓ Orientation towards quality
- ✓ Directions of the hotel chains management
- ✓ Market dynamics and competition

▪ *Clarify the characteristics of the main research methods and tools for service diversification efficiency in hotels*

We identified, set out and compared a number of models analyzed in the specialized literature, but we focused on Data Envelopment Analysis model. This implies the comparative analysis of efficiency of more hotel units, taking into account the multiple inputs and outputs, which are expressed in different units of measurement, in order to establish, on the one hand, which inputs are efficiently used and lead to positive results, and on the other hand, which are the hotels whose efforts to diversify the services led to the acquirement of high efficiency.

Therefore, the present study is an ample research undertaking, which doesn't seek to do a simple analysis of the literature of speciality, but, starting from the international level, outlines a theoretical conceptual border for the national level.

2. The **contributions regarding the empirical research** are reflected in the results obtained through the research:

- *Identification of the most important factor taken into account by managers when they want to initiate some actions in order to diversify the services provided within the hotels which they manage*

All managers have given utmost importance to the factor related to the orientation towards the customer; this allows the personalization of the standards required by tourists, so that they can have real travel experiences, and not to receive simple travel services.

- *Identification of the main similarities and differences between the hotels from Cluj County and those from Braşov County*

Thus, as regards the hotels in Cluj County, the first three market segments concerned are: businessmen, tourists passing through the area and tourists interested in the sights of the area. In Braşov County, the main three market segments concerned are: tourists interested in sightseeing, business people and tourists passing through the area. Also, we notice that there aren't significant differences between hotels from Cluj County and those from Braşov County as regards: the number of employees, the number of accommodation places, the number of seats in the restaurant, and the number of seats in the conference hall.

- *Identify the main similarities and differences between managerial approaches in the hotels from Cluj County and those located in Braşov County*

As regards the factors considered to be most important when one wants to initiate actions of services diversification, both managers from Cluj and Braşov mentioned „tourists' suggestions”, as the specialized literature states; on the second place, from the point of view of the managers from Cluj, is „the need to improve the services”, and in Braşov, „technology development”. The managers of hotels from Cluj give great importance to the development of accommodation and food, the two basic components of a travel product, but this approach is a traditional one, which doesn't bring benefits in long term. By the diversity and attractiveness of personal and leisure services, tourists can be encouraged to extend their stay or return to the same hotel, these being ways of achieving competitive advantages. The achieved results highlight that the managers of the hotels from Braşov are interested in developing all kinds of services.

- *Highlighting the similarities and differences of the managerial practices which determine the diversification through innovation of services provided in hotels*

Both the hotel managers from Cluj and those from Braşov give the highest importance on management practices concerning the human resource, but the outlook is different: the managers from Cluj focus on the selection of human resources having several skills, while in Braşov, the managers sustain the creativity of the employees.

- *Creating an assessing tool of management practices which determine services diversification in hotels*

Through the factorial analysis performed, we have identified the relevant factors which must take part of the measuring tool of the efficiency of the hotels from the perspective of services diversification. We consider this aspect to be worthy.

- *Application of Data Envelopment Analysis model in order to observe the efficiency of the hotels from the point of view of the managerial practices which determine the diversification through innovation of the services provided*

We haven't met similar studies in the specialized literature from Romania, and this paper can be a first step in continuing and deepening the topic.

STUDY LIMITS AND FURTHER RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES

As regards the limits of the carried out research, we bring forward the following aspects:

- The research of the services diversification management in hotels implied the approach of some subtopics within the human resources management in tourism, of hotel services quality management and information technology management. We couldn't detail these topics because of the space limit, but each of the mentioned subtopics can be further analyzed in depth, to cover both the literature level and the empirical level;
- Considering the difficulties of obtaining the answers to the questionnaire, the sample on which was conducted the empirical research is probabilistic, which entails the impossibility to extrapolate the results to all hotels from Romania;
- The diversification of the services provided in hotels was analyzed only from the manager's point of view, covering the four major directions: human resources, orientation towards quality, information and communication technology, market and competition.

Given the limits of the carried out research, there can be identified **the following research perspectives:**

- The extension of the research to a probabilistic sample will allow us generalize the results;
- To develop a research tool that allows to research the level of diversification of hotel services in terms of tourists' perceptions, satisfaction and expectations, so that they could make a parallel between the managerial approach with that of the customers;
- To carry out an extended statistical analysis which show the relationships that can be established between different research direction;
- To identify other sources which determine the diversification through innovation of the hotel services while observing new trends that may occur in the hotel sector in Romania;
- To apply the questionnaire after a while in order to observe the developments registered within hotels in terms of the efficiency of the diversification of provided services;
- To identify a link between the innovation of the hotel services and the innovation of the management (develop some job descriptions and new organizational structures, improve the internal communication, draw new responsibilities for employees and practice the career management).

We conclude by emphasizing the opinion of many scholars who state that the diversification of the services provided in the hotels is the only solution in order to successfully cope with competition, yielding several advantages: improvement of services quality, the increase of the efficiency of the hotels, several possibilities to meet tourists' requirements and expectations, getting a bigger market share, offering memorable experiences and not only simple travel services, and image improvement.

The PhD thesis approaches a rather new research topic, little explored by Romanian researchers, but we are confident that the results of our research may contribute to increase the degree of academic understanding and practical application.

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