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FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

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MARKETING

PhD THESIS

-Summary-

STUDY ON THE INFLUENCE FACTORS OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION ON BEAUTY SERVICES

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Keywords

beauty services, the behavior of the consumer of beauty services, beauty services salon or office, satisfaction in beauty services, adapted research model, factors influencing the satisfaction of consumers of beauty services, Servqual.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis starts from the premise that the level of customer satisfaction determines the success or failure of a specialized salon or office. Knowing the main factors that influence the level of satisfaction can shape future strategies and actions of th service providers, in order to develop and improve the business. This paper presents a research model resulting from the analysis of the available specific literature, which was applied to residents of Cluj-Napoca. The sample selection was made taking into account the economic potential of the population, the growing business environment and the density of the local population.

The aim of this thesis was to identify the factors influencing the satisfaction of consumers of beauty services. In order to carry out a complex and relevant analysis, it was necessary to structure the thesis in four chapters which are arranged in a logical order, going from general to particular.

The first chapter, which is entitled "The beauty services in Romania", determines the place of beauty services in the Romanian economy by identifying them in the general category of services, and determining their contribution in the Gross Domestic Product; it presents the evolution of the beauty services through the point of view of the specialized salons / offices and professionals, and the summary of events for this industry; it identifies the preferences of Romanian and Cluj consumers, respectively, regarding the beauty services, with the focus towards the client's behavior in the online environment.

The second chapter presents the satisfaction of consumers of services by conceptually defining consumer satisfaction from the perspective of several authors, reffering to the limits and results of satisfaction across three directions: loyalty, promotion and complaint. The importance of consumer satisfaction is revealed and the factors of satisfaction-dissatisfaction are properly identified.

Chapter three is devoted to the study of the beauty services consumer behavior and it begins with the conceptual presentation of the term of „consumer behavior" and it continues with the analysis of both external (cultural and social) and internal (perception, learning, personality, motivation and attitude) factors of the consumers behavior. Also, included in this chapter are: the specific factors influencing the consumer behavior of beauty services by analyzing existing studies, the correlations between these factors and the level of satisfaction, the main values sought by consumers of beauty services and models of identification of the influence factors of consumer satisfaction.

The last chapter includes the applied research using the described research methodology, which includes defining the research problem, establishing the main objective and secondary objectives pursued in the research, the sampling method, identifying the sample to be researched, stating the hypotheses and presenting the research tool. The presentation of the proposed model, the validation of the scales and the fidelity analysis are performed in this chapter. Being a chapter which refers exclusively to primary research, the analysis, statistical presentation and argumentative interpretation of the data which was obtained by synthesizing the results will play a central role and will be taken into account. Predicting future actions taken by customers, influenced by the characteristic factors of the field and the level of satisfaction felt are part of this chapter. Also included are the results of testing the research hypotheses and presenting the final model resulting from the analyzes.

CHAPTER 1. The Beauty Services domain in Romania

The field of beauty is more and more attractive and captivating for both women and men, the physical aspect being more and more important for individuals (Veiga, 2006).

1.1. The place and contribution of beauty services in the Romanian economy

In the Romanian economy, the economic branches are classified and identified by CAEN Codes, included in the Classification of Activities in the National Economy. Economic activities are grouped into main branches presented by a letter, each letter corresponds to areas sorted by data homogeneity.

The beauty services can be found at the letter "S" which groups "Other Service Activities" identified by the CAEN codes "92-96" (www.rocaen.ro, accessed on 10.06.2020):

- *„94- Various associative activities;*
- *95- Repair of computers, personal and household goods;*
- *96- Other service activities."*

The following CAEN codes are included in the category "Other service activities" (www.rocaen.ro, accessed on 10.06.2020; www.recensamantromania.ro, accessed on 10.06.2020):

- *„9601- Washing and cleaning (dry) textiles and fur products;*
- *9602- Hairdressing and other beauty treatment;*

- *9603- Funeral activities and the similar activities;*
- *9604- Body maintenance activities;*
- *9609- Other service activities n.c.a."*

Even if the figures do not show a clear and broken down the contribution of beauty services to the national economy, their contribution is not insignificant, bringing added value to the economy along with other services. However, the field of beauty services occupies an important place in the lives of individuals and contributes significantly to increasing the quality of life (Precupețu, 2019).

1.2.   The evolution of the beauty services in Romania

In Romania, in recent years, the interest in beauty services has begun to grow, the beauty services being in high demand both among women (hairdresser, makeup, cosmetics, massage, manicure-pedicure) and among men (haircut, stylized beard, manicure, cosmetics). Consumers' interest in beauty services is directly reflected in the number of salons and the number of professionals in the field, with significant increases from one year to the next.

1.3.   The preferences of Romanian consumers regarding beauty services

The increasing demand for beauty services is the result of customers showing increased attention to themselves, their physical appearance and their psychological state. Depending on the projected self-image, consumers prioritize personal desires and needs. This trend is also observed in consumer behavior in the online environment, especially from the perspective of how to access information.

Consumers' preferences for beauty services are also reflected in studies conducted so far and "Romanians are becoming more attentive to how they look and feel in their own body, and this is largely due to the diversification and accessibility of offers on this market" (Cânda,2016).

1.4.   The preferences of Cluj consumers regarding beauty services

The preferences of consumers in Cluj in terms of beauty services are given by searches made through the Google search engine, accessing various accounts, pages and materials of salons and professionals.

Beauty services can be defined by the services themselves (massage, cosmetics, hairdresser, pedicure, manicure, makeup, hairdressing) or by generic terms (beauty, beauty salon, make-up, hairstyle, etc.).

The diversification of consumer preferences, the identification of the changing needs of customers and the rapid adaptation of the private environment to their demands have as an impact the gradual growth of the field of beauty services.

CHAPTER 2. Customer satisfaction with services

2.1. Conceptual definition of consumer satisfaction

The first definition of consumer satisfaction recorded in the literature appears in 1969 and refers to "the cognitive state of the buyer to be adequately or inappropriately rewarded for the sacrifices he has made" (Howard & Sheth, 1969, p.145).

The approach to the contemporary period presents definitions of satisfaction associated with the company's financial results, market competitiveness, cognitive, psychological, emotional and physical aspects pursued by consumers, the level of satisfaction felt being responsible for the success or failure of a business or satisfaction or dissatisfaction of consumers on their experience (Wong et al, 2008; Radomir, 2013).

A distinction is made between customer satisfaction with tangible products and customer satisfaction with service experience. The distinction is due to the characteristic of intangibility, perishability, inseparability of services, as well as different influencing factors (Fecikova, 2004; Dimitriades, 2006).

Definitions of the concept of satisfaction are based on the same central idea: comparing what was received with what was expected to be received. A positive result or a confirmation of expectations generates a certain level of satisfaction, and the lack or delay of a response leads to a decrease in the level of satisfaction.

2.2. Limits and results of consumer satisfaction

The lower limit of consumer satisfaction is the indifference to the purchased product or service and reflects the cessation of the purchase of that product or service, or the complaint

of dissatisfaction in an attempt to receive a refund, while the upper limit is given by the satisfaction felt with the purchased product or the purchased service (Johnson et al, 2000).

Consumer satisfaction limits are divided into the minimum or lower limit and the upper or upper limit of the level of satisfaction, concepts represented in studies often called dissatisfaction or satisfaction. Exceeding the upper limit of the level of satisfaction brings to the consumer the delight and surprise after the made choice.

Szymanski & Henard (2001) identifies three consequences of consumer satisfaction: verbal advertising, complaint and repeated purchase, and presents how they interact.

In the case of a verbal complaint, the repetition of the purchase will be made from the same supplier and under the same conditions, while in the case of the complaint the repetition of the purchase requires some changes related to the supplier, delivery and consumption.

The result of the satisfaction of the consumption of a good or service is given by the feeling of pleasure or disappointment in relation to the customer expectations (Tinoco et al, 2013; Monteiro de Barros, 2012).

Regardless of the result of positive or negative experience of use, it determines different attitudes and behaviors on the part of customers. Its purchase or consumption produces differences between expectations (antecedents) and perceptions.

- A positive result of the level of satisfaction (expectations <perceptions) determines a re-purchase behavior, loyalty and positive advertising;
- A negative result of the level of satisfaction (expectations> perceptions) generates a behavior of renunciation of the acquisition, or presents a negative advertisement;

2.2.1. Customer loyalty. The relationship between satisfaction and loyalty.

Johnson et al. (2000) defines loyalty as a dependent variable whose value lies in retaining consumers and subsequently ensuring profitability, while Hu et al. (2010) și Hsu & Chen (2014) argue that loyalty is a deep and constant commitment to repurchase a product or service. Both definitions are based on repetitive purchases of the same brand, with a significant impact on increasing the company's performance.

Loyalty defined by the favorable attitude of customers towards a product or service is reflected in its recommendation and support of the supplier. Developing favorable attitudes towards a product or service is called preferential loyalty (Pritchard & Howard, 1997; Wong et al, 2008).

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At the organizational level, customer loyalty aims to maximize the profit generated by repeated and frequent purchase of products, tolerance and financial availability to a particular company or brand, recommendation of products and services of acquaintances, sharing their experience and others (Gremler & Brown, 1999; Peyton et al, 2003).

2.2.2. Verbal advertising

Verbal advertising is a communication intent (Oh,1999) or a result of consumer satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Bogozzi et al.,1999; Armstrong & Kotler, 2009) perceived as a direct consequence of the perceptions, values and intentions of repurchase.

A client tells the negative experience to another 9 people, the dissatisfaction being spread more easily and in a shorter time. The positive experience is exposed to only 3 people and most of the time the expression of the experience is not done voluntarily. The impact of a dissatisfied customer is greater than the impact of a satisfied customer (9: 3), so there is the issue of the elapsed time from receiving the complaint to resolving it. It is desirable that the complaint be resolved as soon as possible and even encourage the customer to engage in a new purchase (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006;Souca, 2012).

There is a directly proportional correlation between consumer satisfaction and positive verbal advertising, and there is a proportional inverse correlation between consumer satisfaction and negative verbal advertising (Fornell et al, 1996;Souca, 2012).

2.2.3. Claimant behavior

Claimant behavior occurs when the client's needs and desires are not fully or partially met (Oliver, 1980). It is the result of the consumer going through an unpleasant experience of purchasing or consuming a service (Hunt, 1991). The complaint is a result usually completed by verbalizing frustration or anger, giving the trader relatively short reaction and response time, but a decisive impact on future purchases (Gi-Du & Jeffrey, 2004).

Oliver (1980) and Hunt (1991) present two situations in which the claimant behavior may occur:

- Expectations are higher than the perception about the purchase made or the consumption of services.

- Expectations are equal to perceptions, but at the slightest impulse or intervention from the trader on an insignificant aspect, the level of perception decreases.

2.3. The importance of consumer satisfaction

The success or failure of a company is the result of a certain level of consumer satisfaction. A considerable percentage of customers are annually lost from the company's statistics without identifying the reasons for giving up purchases, but with a significant impact on declining profits.

Negative perceptions, attitudes and feelings have a greater impact on the human mind and are characteristic of dissatisfied people, while satisfied people nurture positive feelings, emotions and attitudes towards the made achievement (Shun, 2001).

2.4. Determinants of satisfaction-dissatisfaction

Oliver (1980) and Cadotte & Turgeon (1988) identifies four categories of factors that influence consumer satisfaction or dissatisfaction:

- ***Satisfaction factors*** are shaped by the presence of aspects that generate a high level of satisfaction, satisfaction and offered pleasure after consumption or purchase.
- ***The factors of dissatisfaction*** are generated by the inability to function of some aspects that cause a certain level of dissatisfaction, frustration, feelings that turn the buyer into the complainant.
- ***Critical factors*** are elements that influence complaints but also compliments to a product or service, directly determined by consumer perception.
- ***Neutral factors*** are aspects with a zero degree of influence that do not generate complaints, criticisms or suggestions.

CHAPTER 3. Consumer Behavior of beauty services

3.1. The behavior of consumers of beauty services

Consumer behavior refers to the behavior manifested by consumers in the purchase, use, consumption, evaluation and abandonment of products and services considered necessary at a given time to meet their own needs and desires.

The simplest approach to the factors that influence consumer behavior is made by Dubois & Jolibert (1998), by presenting two categories:

1. *individual factors* that include the individual's personality, cognitive style, individual's lifestyle and perceived risk;

2. *environmental factors* refer to the socio-demographic factors of the individual, which are determined by the family life curve, social classes, the influence of reference groups, the impact of the family on the purchase decision and the personal economic situation.

The most complex, comprehensive and detailed classification of the factors influencing the purchasing decision is proposed by Kotler & Keller (2012) and present four groups of factors:

1. *cultural factors* determined by the culture, microculture and social class to which the individual belongs;

2. *social factors* refer to reference groups, family, roles and statuses of the individual;

3. *personal factors* include age and stage of life cycle, occupation, lifestyle, economic circumstances, personality and self-opinion;

4. *psychological factors* characterized by motivation, perception, learning, beliefs and attitudes of the individual.

3.2. Factors influencing the choice of beauty services

Studies based on consumer behavior in choosing to purchase a service show that the individual is directly influenced by external and internal factors.

3.2.1. External factors influencing consumer behavior

In the category of external factors we include cultural factors and social factors that influence the customer's purchasing decision.

3.2.1.1. Cultural factors

Hofstede defines culture as a collective programming of the mind that distinguishes members of one category from members of another category. (Hall, 1976, p.16).

Culture is characterized by three perspectives:

- culture is learned, individuals are not born with it;

- all the elements that define a culture are inter-related, if one aspect changes, all the others are affected;

- culture defines the boundaries between different groups being shared by members within a group (Petty at al, 1997).

Otherwise, "culture is the level at which some of the most lasting influences are imprinted, individuals / consumers assimilating the fundamental elements of the culture in which they live, through the acquisition of traditions, customs and values" (Cătoiu & Teodorescu, 2004, p.31).

The cultural factors that determine culture are *attitude, motivation, lifestyle*, *the set of values formed during life* including perceptions, preferences, behaviors and stratification of social classes. (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

The culture of a people is directly reflected in the economic and financial activity of the company through sales and market share. Thus, sales of one product to the detriment of another product reflect the consumption habits of the inhabitants of a region.

3.2.1.2.   Social factors

Social factors refer to the influence of reference groups (family, friends, neighbors, co-workers), social roles and status on the acquisition decision.

Reference groups

Cătoiu & Teodorescu (2004, p.32) states that reference groups are entities through which the individual identifies in terms of similarities of aspirations, social behavior and consumer behavior, the level of influence on consumer behavior being lower and unstable.

Membership groups

The biggest impact on the consumer's purchasing decision is represented by the family: "The family is the most important influencer of consumer behavior in the way it shapes the behavior of its members" (Plăiaş, 1997, p.165).

3.2.2.   Internal factors influencing consumer behavior

Plăiaş (1997) and Cătoiu & Teodorescu (2004) mention perception, information, learning, personality, motivation understood as emotion, and attitude, as the main internal factors with a strong impact on the customer's purchasing decision.

3.2.2.1. Perception - influencing factor in consumer behavior

Perception is part of the information process in which stimuli affect the senses. It represents the beginning stage of information processing and interpretation of stimuli that are given attention in relation to the existing mental configuration, characterized by attitudes, experiences and motivation (Baker, 2003; Bhattacharya, 2006).

Perception becomes the key to service quality, the moment of truth by comparing expectations with perceived service, positioning the service in the consumer's mind and retaining it (Bhattacharya, 2006, p.216).

In other words, perceptions can vary greatly from person to person, even if the same realities are exposed. Thus, a talkative salesperson may be seen by one person as aggressive and insensitive, while another person may think of him as intelligent and helpful. Each person has their own perception and will give different answers (Kotler & Keller, 2006, p.185).

There are three aspects that influence the perception of a product or service:

- *The way in which the company communicates with the client;*
- *Customer experience after using the product or consuming the service;*
- *Experience of the customer's post-purchase process* (Bhattacharya, 2006, p.216).

3.2.2.2. Learning - influencing factor in consumer behavior

Action is learning, and learning involves changes in a person's behavior that flow from experience; thus, learning is produced through the interaction of impulses, stimuli, cues, responses, and encouragement (Kotler & Keller, 2006).

Thus, learning is a continuous process throughout life, willingly or unwillingly by the consumer, through the following types of activities:

- "Through stimulation from the environment
- By the example of another consumer
- By repeated attempts
- By using logical reasoning " (Cătoiu & Teodorescu, 2004, p.69).

3.2.2.3. Personality - influencing factor in consumer behavior

Werth & Foerster (2007) and Pervcin & Cervone (2010) define personality as the psychological characteristic that differentiates one individual from another through lasting and distinctive patterns of personal emotions, feelings, thoughts, and behaviors.

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Mwihaki (2019) found that the personality factor, represented in its price awareness study, has a significant impact on consumers' attitudes towards counterfeit products, and Smith (2020) gives the personality a central place (the core) that generates the purchase decision.

3.2.2.4. Motivation / Emotion - influencing factor in consumer behavior

Motivation is the only variable that intervenes between stimuli and consumer behavior (Plăiaș, 1997; Cătoiu & Teodorescu, 2004).

Sfetcu (2020, p.233) defines motivation or emotion as the main factor that determines the consumer's action starting from the search for information and ending with the actual purchase.

Specialists have identified several types of motivations:

- *primary* (related to basic, physiological needs) and *secondary* (related to psychological and social needs) (Cătoiu & Teodorescu, 2004, p.73);
- *positive* (generates reward and satisfaction) *and negative* (generates pain, frustration and displeasure) (Sfetcu, 2020, p.233).

Sigmund Freud, Abraham Maslow, Frederick Herzberg have tried to find the best approach to understanding the customer's motivation to make a certain decision to purchase a product or service.

3.2.2.5. Attitude - influencing factor in consumer behavior

Guy Serraf argues that attitude is "a regulatory system between the energy reserve of motivations and the demands of the outside world. Attitude functions as a syncretism of intellectual, symbolic and motor images. Attitude is not innate, it is obtained through the long process of learning and experiences and remains open to external influences " (Dumitru, 1998 citat de Antoci & Leșan, 2019).

Attitudes are formed over time, are stable and consistent, can be deduced and make the connection between perceptions and behavior. The study of consumer attitudes is done from three perspectives (Tapia, 1991;Cătoiu & Teodorescu, 2004;Grigoruță, 2005):

- *affective perspective* represented by the favorable or unfavorable attitude, positive or negative towards a certain product or service*;*
- *cognitive perspective* related to the degree of notoriety of the product or service;

- *conative perspective* characterized by the way the customer acts or behaves towards a certain product or service.

3.3. Specific factors influencing the behavior of the consumer of beauty services

Hammerschmitt & Azevedo (2012) characterizes the beauty services by the time of delivery of the requested service, empathy towards the consumer and the flexibility of the professional. A longer period of service delivery generates an additional level of satisfaction due to the interaction and communication with the service provider.

Among the most mentioned factors in the few studies in the field of beauty services are mentioned professional knowledge, the price charged for services (Ghisi et al, 2006), availability of parking spaces, appearance of equipment used in providing services (Santos et al, 2007), available hours for scheduling and standardization of services (scheduling, scheduling reminder by message or phone call) (Hammerschmitt & Azevedo, 2012). Factors such as the hygiene of the service area, the quality of services, the variety of services are specified in most studies (Ghisi et al, 2006; Santos et al, 2007; Hammerschmitt & Azevedo, 2012).

In a recent study, it is shown that all five factors of the SERVQUAL scale (reliability, responsibility, safety, empathy, tangibility) are important for customers when buying a beauty service, but for Romanian customers only the aspects of trust, feeling of safety, kindness and knowledge of employees are statistically significant and are of major importance in the decision to purchase the service (Pop & Plăiaș, 2020).

In most of the research, customer interaction, price, time, promotions offered, trust in the provider, salon ambience and previous experience are common factors that influence the behavior of the consumer of beauty services.

3.4. General correlations between influencing factors and the level of satisfaction of consumers of beauty services

Martins et al. (2014) mentions that a low level of customer satisfaction is given by the rescheduling of the service as a result of its non-appearance at the initial scheduling. Reprogramming the beauty service leads to the difficulty of finding a new time slot to the

client's agreement as well as to a different time of service delivery due to the diversity and complexity of the requested treatment.

Delphine (2012) claims that the majority of clients (98%) are satisfied and very satisfied with the beauty clinic they used in the past (past experience), the quality of the service provider, the professionalism of the provider, the hygiene of the space, the skills of professionals and the price.

The factors that negatively influence consumer satisfaction and turn the customer into a complainant are: deficiencies in the quality of services, the injustice felt in the charged prices, deficiencies in security measures and possible price disputes (Consumer Council taken from www.today.mims.com, accessed date of 10.03.2020).

3.5. The benefits of consuming beauty services

In the study conducted by Delphine (2012), women and men use the services of a clinic or a beauty salon for two reasons: physical and mental well-being (3 out of 4 of the clients chose this option) and because beauty services are part of their lifestyle, representing a way to improve the quality of life. The reasons why customers turned to beauty services are: relaxation (22%), part of personal hygiene (33%), the desire to look better on special occasions (9%), receiving a promotional offer or gift (3%) and obligation through programming made by other persons (6%).

Performance following the consumption of the product or purchased service, the charged price and the practicality or usefulness are the basis for the motivation to choose a personal care product and service (Barreiras, 2019).

3.6. Metode de măsurare a satisfacției consumatorilor de servicii de înfrumusețare

Measuring customer satisfaction and identifying the factors that led to the feeling of a certain level of satisfaction has been and still is a topic of great interest to specialists in the field.

- **SERVQUAL**

The most used model in studying the satisfaction of consumers of beauty services is the SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml și Berry (1988). The model aims to

establish two significant relationships: the first significant link is between expectations and service performance, and the second significant link is between service performance and model dimensions. SERVQUAL determines the perceived quality or customer satisfaction as the difference between the customer's expectations and the value received by consuming that service.

- **SERVPERF**

Another model for measuring consumer satisfaction in the field of beauty services is SERVPERF, developed by Cronin & Taylor (1992).

SERVPERF measures the level of consumer satisfaction starting from the performance of the product, and the level of quality is given by the attitude of the customers towards the requested service. The model uses the same dimensions as the SERVQUAL model, represented by 22 items that make up the 5 dimensions (reliability, responsibility, safety, empathy, tangibility), but the wording on service performance is changed in the performance perceived by the customer, and the answers are provided as a scale Likert in seven points, where 1 is total disagreement and 7 is total agreement.

- **FAIRSERV**

FAIRSERV is considered an alternative or additional scale for measuring the reactions of service consumers.

Nakashima, Putro, Mulyono & Takeshi (2010) use in their study a combination of the SERVQUAL scale and the FAIRSERV scale, thus combining the tangible dimensions of the SERVQUAL scale with the intangible dimensions of the FAIRSERV scale to complement or reduce the element that influence the quality of beauty services.

CAPITOLUL 4. Study on the relationship between the factors determining the quality of beauty services and the satisfaction felt by consumers in Cluj-Napoca

4.1. Quantitative research methodology

The present study starts from the definition of the research problem: *What are the determining factors that influence the satisfaction of consumers of beauty services?*

The main objective of this study is to *develop a conceptual model that highlights how specific factors influence the satisfaction of consumers of beauty services*.

The secondary objectives of this research are:

O_1. Identify the main characteristic factors of beauty services.

O_2. Outlining the profile of the consumer of beauty services.

O_3. Determining the behavior of the consumer of beauty services.

O_4. Identify how the main determinants of the quality of beauty services influence the degree of satisfaction felt by consumers.

O_5. Determining the relationship between consumer satisfaction and consumer loyalty.

O_6. Establishing the relationship between consumer loyalty and recommending beauty services.

O_7. Identifying the influence of beauty services on the repurchase of services.

O_8. Identify how the main factors of beauty services influence the degree of recommendation of beauty services.

O_9. Determining the relationship between the socio-demographic characteristics (age, monthly income, level of school graduated, marital status, background and gender) of consumers and the specific factors of beauty services.

O_{10}. Development of a research model to measure the satisfaction of consumers of beauty services.

4.2. Sampling method, population choice and sample structure

Data collection method and sampling method

The method of data collection was that of the survey, empirical, of non-probabilistic type, based on a questionnaire. The research tool used was the questionnaire, made using the Google Forms application. The answers were gathered by the method of sampling in "snowball", through the social platform (Facebook) and through the electronic box (email).

Choice of population and structure of the investigated sample

The population targeted by the research is the domiciled population in the city of Cluj-Napoca, regardless of gender, aged between 18 and 60 years, who used at least one beauty service in June, July and August 2019.

4.3.   Ipotezele de cercetare

As a starting point in carrying out statistical processing are the following research hypotheses:

H1. Each determining factor of beauty services (frequency, price, time, social benefits, personalization of services, benefits of treatments, brand of services, physical evidence) significantly and positively influences the degree of consumer satisfaction.

H2. Each determining factor of beauty services (frequency, price, time, social benefits, personalization of services, benefits of treatments, brand of services, physical evidence) significantly and positively influences the degree of redemption manifested by the consumer.

H3. Each determining factor of the beauty services (frequency, price, time, social benefits, personalization of services, benefits of treatments, brand of services, physical evidence) significantly and positively influences the degree of recommendation of the beauty services they received.

H4. Most respondents who say they are satisfied with the beauty services they have used and they will purchase the same services in the future.

H5. Most respondents who say they are satisfied with the beauty services they have used will recommend the services they have benefited from family, acquaintances, friends.

H6. Most respondents will purchase in the future the beauty services they used to recommend the services they also benefited from family, acquaintances, friends.

H7. The main aspect for which most of the respondents choose a beauty service refers to the physical benefits felt (relaxation, aesthetic value, positive contribution to health).

H8. Most respondents use a beauty service at least once a month.

H9. Most respondents choose a beauty service following the recommendations received and less following an advertisement / offer / promotion carried out on social media.

H10. Most people who have chosen to benefit from a beauty service have resorted to a specialized salon to the detriment of providing the service at their personal or provider's home.

H11. Most clients use beauty services based on the sources of recommendation they receive.

H12. In most cases, the location of the services differs depending on the type of service requested.

H13. In most cases, the location of the services differs depending on the sources of recommendation.

H14. The frequency with which beauty services are used differs depending on the type of service requested, the location of the services provided and the sources of recommendation requested.

H15. Most respondents choose the type of requested beauty service based on income, marital status, sex, age, last graduated school, background, maximum amount and minimum amount paid, minimum time and maximum time spent providing the service.

H16. Cei mai mulți dintre respondenți aleg locația de prestare a serviciului în funcție de venit, statut marital, ultima școală absolvită, mediul de proveniență, vârsta, suma maximă și suma minină achitată, timpul minim și timpul maxim petrecut pentru prestarea serviciului.

H17. In most cases, the sources of recommendation of a beauty service differ depending on the income, marital status, background, age of the respondents.

4.4. The proposed model

In building the research model we started from the SERVQUAL model, but we used an adaptation of it from the need to provide a complete, complex and detailed picture of the specific factors that have a significant impact on the level of satisfaction of the consumer of beauty services.

In the present research we have kept the five dimensions identified by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988), but for each dimension we added items specific to the field of beauty.

4.5. Synthesis of the obtained results

The research model includes the five dimensions of the adapted SERVQUAL model: responsibility (social benefits), empathy (personalization of services), reliability (benefits of treatments), safety (brand of services), tangibility (physical evidence) + retention (satisfaction, redemption, recommendation).

Next we validated the scales using the Cronbach Alpha index:

- The size of the liability (social benefits) composed of 11 items is validated with the value of 0.915 (the Cronbach Alpha index), thus, the scale accurately measures the degree of satisfaction felt by consumers of beauty services.

- The dimension of empathy (personalization of services) composed of 10 items is validated with the value of 0.919 (the Cronbach Alpha index), thus, the scale accurately measures the degree of satisfaction felt by consumers of beauty services.

- The reliability dimension (treatment benefits) composed of 11 items is validated with the value of 0.899 (the Cronbach Alpha index), the fidelity of the scale tells us that the applied model is correct and accurately measures the degree of satisfaction felt by consumers of beauty services.

- The safety dimension (service brand) consisting of 10 items is validated with the value of 0.920 of the Cronbach Alpha index and states that the degree of satisfaction felt by consumers of beauty services is accurately measured.

- The size of the tangibility (physical evidence) composed of 13 items is validated with the value of the Cronbach Alpha index of 0.936, provides the fidelity of the scale that determines exactly the degree of satisfaction felt by consumers of beauty services.

- The size of the retention (physical evidence) consisting of 3 items is validated with the value of the Cronbach Alpha index of 0.832 and accurately identifies the degree of satisfaction felt by consumers of beauty services.

Following the Principal Components Analysis (PCA) to determine the number of components for each of the questions included in the previous stage (scale validity analysis).

Using the two analyzes (Cronbach Alpha and PCA) we determined the way of grouping the items of the used instruments in global variables, construct variables that will be used to establish and investigate the research hypotheses.

In order to obtain the construct variables, the operation of summing the scores of the items of each extracted component with the help of the Principal Components Analysis was applied. The score collection operation was applied on the entire database related to the answers provided by the investigated persons from the sample.

The resulting construct variables that will be used further in the analyzes are:

- The dimension of responsibility (social benefits) obtains a value of KMO test = 0.900, and the total variance proposes the division of the dimension into two constructs: social benefits and personal image.

- The empathy size (service customization) indicates a value of KMO test = 0.897, and the total variance a single construct, further called service customization.

- The dimension of reliability (benefits of treatments) has a value of KMO test = 0.884, and the total variance indicates a single construct further called the benefits of treatments.

- The safety dimension (service brand) shows a value of KMO test = 0.897, and the total variance indicates two constructs called the notoriety of the provider and the notoriety of the product.

- The tangibility dimension (physical evidence) indicates a value of KMO test = 0.926, and the total variance divides the dimension into two constructs hereinafter referred to as physical evidence and promotion.

- The size of the retention indicates a value of KMO test = 0.727, and the total variance offers a single construct called retention.

Most of the respondents are women from the urban areas (74.6%), mostly between 18 and 36 years old, unmarried, with a monthly income over 2001 RON. The most frequent minimum price paid for a beauty service is the amount of 50 RON, and for the most expensive beauty service used most of the time, a client paid 200 RON. The prices of the beauty services differ depending on the requested treatment, the brand of the used products, the notoriety of the professional and the notoriety of the salon.

- The most used sources of recommendation identified in this research are the opinions of friends / acquaintances and the social environment Facebook or online.

- The most important factors that determine the decision to purchase beauty services are: cleanliness and sanitation of the space; the physical appearance, kindness and professionalism of the service provider; information provided during treatment; work schedule and supplier flexibility, performance of used equipment; consulting, analysis and personalized information, personalization of purchased treatments, attention and care given to meet the personal needs of customers and the accuracy / relevance of the received information.

- Promotion is the factor that influences the least or not at all the level of customer satisfaction.

- Hairdressing, cosmetics and massage services are among the most requested by respondents.

- The average frequency with which clients use beauty services (hairdresser, cosmetics and manicure-pedicure) is at most monthly.

- The main reasons why Cluj clients turn to beauty services: physical and mental well-being given by the level of relaxation, improved health, improved social life, desire to look better, increased self-confidence and improved quality of life.

- The price is an element of major importance and in the case of this research it is mentioned in terms of the minimum average amount paid for beauty services (70.49 RON) and the maximum average amount paid (312.65 RON).

- The allocated time to beauty services is an aspect increasingly appreciated by customers. In the present research, time is expressed by the minimum minutes (56.31 minutes) and the maximum minutes spent for beauty services (145.49 minutes).

- Statistically significant associations were identified between the factors proposed by the model (physical, psychological, social benefits, promotion, physical aspects, personal image, personalization of treatments, notoriety of the provider, notoriety of the product) and the level of consumer satisfaction.

- The level of consumer satisfaction significantly influences the degree of repurchase and the degree of recommendation of services.

- The degree of repurchase significantly and positively influences the degree of recommendation.

- Based on the regression analysis, we determined the evolution of the level of customer satisfaction influenced by the maximum time spent, the physical benefits, the psychological benefits, the service brand and the physical aspects.

- The factors that influence the level of satisfaction, redemption and recommendation are different for each group, characterized by social, demographic and economic variables.

- For customers under the age of 30 the most important aspects that influence the degree of satisfaction, redemption and recommendation are the physical benefits, the notoriety of the provider and the physical aspects, while customers over the age of 30 focus more on personal image and notoriety product.

- Customers who register a monthly income below 3000 RON pay more attention to the personalization of the requested beauty services, the maximum time spent to benefit from the requested service and physical benefits, while the clients who receive over 3000 RON monthly emphasize more the notoriety of the provider, the physical aspects characteristic of the location where the services are provided, and Personal image influenced by the purchased treatments.

- In the case of married clients the factors influencing the degree of satisfaction, redemption and recommendation are the minimum paid amount, personalization of services and the minimum time spent to benefit from the requested services, while in the case of unmarried clients the most important factors are the maximum time spent, physical benefits, service provider awareness, physical aspects and promotion of beauty services.

The final model proposes, from a correlational point of view, that the five dimensions of the model (responsibility, empathy, reliability, safety and tangibility) directly influence the degree of satisfaction, which, the same, influences the level of redemption and the level of recommendation.

4.4. The status of research hypotheses

After the application of statistical tests, the stated research hypotheses could be confirmed or rejected, depending on the results obtained.

In conclusion, hypotheses H1, H4, H5, H6, H8, H9, H10, H11, H12, H13, H14, H15 and H17 are fully confirmed, and hypotheses H2, H3 and H16 are only partially confirmed. In the case of hypotheses H2 and H3, price is the factor that does not influence the degree of consumer redemption and the level of recommendation of beauty services, while in the case of hypothesis H15 the minimum time does not influence the location of the service.

Hypothesis H7 is rejected, the main factor in choosing a beauty service being the physical aspects given by the used equipment, the physical appearance and professionalism of the service provider, the provided information to the client on the followed procedure, the provider's flexibility and work schedule.

IMPLICATIONS

Contributions to the literature

In addition to the fact that this paper is considered a pioneer in this field, it comes to present a complex picture of beauty services and determining the level of consumer satisfaction.

The research adds value by outlining a theoretical model of customer satisfaction results that emphasizes both the differences between expectations and perceptions and the impact of a positive result, represented by a level of satisfaction, on the cost of service.

The practical part proposes a research model that has as its core consumer satisfaction influenced by specific factors of beauty services, presenting as secondary relations the influence of satisfaction on future consumer behavior and the influence of factors on future customer actions.

After the application of the research methodology, the research results present a complex, appropriate, valid and specific research model to study the factors influencing the satisfaction of consumers of beauty services and to determine the level of satisfaction felt after consuming beauty services.

Managerial implications

- First of all, this study offers salon managers and professionals a validated, complex and specific tool in the field in which they work, through which the most important factors that lead to increasing customer satisfaction can be identified.

- Second, research determines the level of satisfaction and the relationship between it and the actions of repurchase and recommendation of customers, important indicators that guide future actions that can be implemented at the business level.

- Lastly, the model for researching the consumers satisfaction of beauty services offers managers and professionals the opportunity to know the level of perceived satisfaction by consumers following the beneficiary and the analysis of beauty services.

RESEARCH LIMITS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Limits of the research

We can consider the following elements as limits of the research:

- **The Research tool.** The lack of a specific research tool for the field of beauty services has led to the use, in most research, of the SERVQUAL tool, which is recomended for the field of services, in general.
- **Data collection method.** Using a non-probabilistic sampling method may lead to poorer results than using a probabilistic sampling method.
- **Research sample.** The application of the research tool was made on a sample of people aged between 18 and 60 years.
- **Application of the research tool.** Application of the questionnaire in a single city, to persons who live in Cluj-Napoca.
- **The effects of satisfaction.** The proposed model involves only the positive effects of the satisfaction level, without taking into account the negative effects and their implications.
- **One perspective.** Satisfaction analysis is done only from the client's point of view, without taking into account the professional's point of view and the impact of consumers on their activity.

Future directions of research

- Extending the research by applying the questionnaire at the country level and including in the study the county capitals.
- Comparative analysis of the obtained results according to the eight regions of the country.
- Applying a qualitative research (interview / focus group) among consumers to identify the most common social, psychological and behavioral factors manifested by customers and improve the felt level of satisfaction.
- Deepening the model from a sociological and psychological point of view.

- Identify the negative effects of a low level of satisfaction and their impact, in the future, on consumer behavior.

- Applying qualitative and quantitative studies to professionals in the field of beauty industry to identify their attitude and behavior towards the client.

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