

Ovidiu Ioan MOISESCU***Oana Adriana GICĂ******ISTRAŽIVANJE KVALITETE USLUGA I NJEZIN UTJECAJ NA POTENCIJANU
VJERNOST KUPCA U TRADICIONALNIM TURISTIČKIM AGENCIJAMA****AN INVESTIGATION OF SERVICE QUALITY AND ITS IMPACT ON
CUSTOMER ATTITUDINAL LOYALTY IN TRADITIONAL TRAVEL AGENCIES**

SAŽETAK: Vjernost kupca i faktori koji je određuju u posljednjih nekoliko desetljeća ključne su teme u literaturi o marketingu i menadžmentu u turizmu i destinacijama i temeljito se istražuju. Međutim, utjecaj kvalitete usluge na vjernost kupca u području distribucije turističkih proizvoda u literaturi se rijetko ističe. Ovo istraživanje ima za cilj opisati utjecaj kvalitete usluga tradicionalnih turističkih agencija na potencijalnu vjernost kupaca u Rumunjskoj i dio je većeg istraživanja koje analizira utjecaj percipiranih komponenata društvene odgovornosti na kupaca. Provedena je *online* anketa na uzorku od 286 rumunjskih građana koji su od tradicionalnih turističkih agencija kupili putničke usluge i turističke aranžmane. Za ocjenjivanje kvalitete usluge indikatori iz modela SERVQUAL prilagođeni su za specifične potrebe ovog istraživanja, a ponovna kupnja usluga i namjera preporuke agencije upotrebene su kao mjere potencijalne vjernosti. Rezultati su pokazali da, premda svaka dimenzija kvalitete usluge ima značajan i pozitivan utjecaj na potencijalnu vjernost, opipljivost na nju ima najmanji, a pouzdanost najveći utjecaj.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI: kvaliteta usluge, SERVQUAL, potencijalna vjernost, turistička agencija

SUMMARY: Customer loyalty and its determining factors have been key issues in the tourism and destination marketing and management literature, being extensively studied over the past decades. However, the impact of service quality on customer loyalty in the tourism distribution sector has been scarcely emphasized in the literature. The current research is aimed at depicting the impact of traditional travel agencies' service quality on their customers' attitudinal loyalty, according to evidence from Romania, and is part of a larger study directed at analyzing the impact of perceived social responsibility components on customer loyalty. An online survey was conducted among a sample of 286 Romanian citizens who had purchased travel services or packages from traditional travel agencies. For the purpose of assessing service quality the SERVQUAL items were adapted to our specific case, while repurchase and recommendation intention were used as measures of attitudinal loyalty. Results showed that although each service quality dimension has a significant and positive impact on attitudinal loyalty, tangibles can be emphasized as having the lowest impact, while reliability can be depicted as having the most relevant effect.

KEYWORDS: service quality, SERVQUAL, attitudinal loyalty, travel agency

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1. UVOD

Uslužni sektor, a osobito putovanja i turizam, postaju sve važniji u globalnoj ekonomiji. Prema Svjetskom vijeću za putovanja i turizam - WTTC (2013a), putovanja i turizam u 2012. rasli su brže od drugih uslužnih sektora poput proizvodnje, maloprodaje, financijskih usluga i komunikacija, čineći 9% svjetskog BDP-a. U Rumunjskoj putovanja i turizam u 2012. godini činili su 5,1% BDP-a, a 5,7% ukupno zaposlenih radilo je u turizmu, uključujući i one na poslovima indirektno vezanima uz njega (WTTC, 2013b). Nadalje, izvoz ostvaren 2012. godine kroz turizam iznosio je 3,1% ukupnog izvoza, dok su ulaganja u tom sektoru predstavljala 7,6% ukupnih ulaganja u rumunjskom gospodarstvu. Razvoj turizma u posljednjim desetljećima, kao i predviđanja njegovog budućeg razvoja, povećali su njegovu privlačnost i konkurentnost.

Pružanje visokokvalitetne usluge općenito predstavlja ključnu odrednicu konkurentnosti i uspjeha u uslužnom sektoru (Lewis, 1989), a osobito u podsektoru turizma i putovanja (Fick i Ritchie, 1991). Prema Berry *et al.* (1988), kvaliteta usluge postala je važnim diferencijatorom, najmoćnijim konkurentskim oružjem kojeg većina uslužnih organizacija nastoji imati. Prethodna istraživanja pokazuju da visoka razina kvalitete usluga može rezultirati povećanim zadovoljstvom klijenata (Johns *et al.*, 2004), a kvaliteta usluge i zadovoljstvo klijenata značajno utječu na vjernost klijenata (Cristobal *et al.*, 2007; Cronin *et al.*, 2000; Imrie *et al.*, 2000). Nadalje, zahvaljujući efektu krivulje iskustva veća je vjerojatnost da će lojalni, a ne povremeni klijenti, kupiti dodatne usluge, pozitivno govoriti drugima o primljenoj usluzi, platiti više cijenu i biti bolje usluženi (Reichheld i Sasser, 1990).

Vjernost klijenata i njezini determinirajući faktori glavna su tema u literaturi o marketingu i menadžmentu turizma i destinacija

1. INTRODUCTION

The service sector and especially the travel and tourism industry (TTI) are becoming more and more important in the global economy. According to WTTC (2013a), the TTI grew faster in 2012 than other service sectors such as manufacturing, retail, financial services, and communication, contributing with around 9% to the world GDP. In Romania, the TTI contributed in 2012 with 5.1% to the GDP, and with 5.7% to the total employment, including jobs indirectly supported (WTTC, 2013b). Moreover, visitor exports generated 3.1% of the total exports in 2012, while investments in this sector represented 7.6% of the total investment in Romania's economy. TTI developments in the last decades, as well as the predictions regarding its future development, have increased its attractiveness, as well as its competitive level.

Providing a high level of service quality represents a critical determinant of competitiveness and success in the service sector, in general (Lewis, 1989), and in the tourism and travel sub-sector, in particular (Fick and Ritchie, 1991). According to Berry *et al.* (1988) service quality has become the great differentiator, the most powerful competitive weapon most service organizations strive to possess. Previous research suggests that high service quality can result in improved customer satisfaction (Johns *et al.*, 2004), while service quality and customer satisfaction are significant determinants of customer loyalty (Cristobal *et al.*, 2007; Cronin *et al.*, 2000; Imrie *et al.*, 2000). Furthermore, loyal customers are more likely than short-term customers to buy additional services, spread favorable word-of-mouth communication, pay a higher price, and be served more efficiently due to the experience curve effect (Reichheld and Sasser, 1990).

Customer loyalty and its determining factors have been key issues in the tourism and destination marketing and management

i detaljno se proučavaju posljednjih nekoliko desetljeća. Međutim, utjecaj kvalitete usluge na vjernost kupaca u sektoru distribucije turističkih usluga u literaturi se rijetko naglašava. Iako postoje mnoge studije o kvaliteti usluga, zadovoljstvu i vjernosti u nekoliko industrija vezanih uz turizam i putovanja, poput avioprijevoza i hotelske industrije, istraživanja ovog problema kod turističkih agencija relativno su rijetka (Katircioglu *et al.*, 2012), a nekoliko autora naglašava da se kvaliteta usluga turističkih agencija rijetko javlja kao tema istraživanja (Fache, 2000; Ryan i Cliff, 1997). Štoviše, prema našim saznanjima, istraživanja u tom području na podacima iz Rumunjske izuzetno su rijetka.

Ovo istraživanje ima za cilj opisati utjecaj kvalitete usluga tradicionalnih turističkih agencija na potencijalnu vjernost njihovih klijenata na podacima iz Rumunjske. Ono čini dio većeg istraživanja kojemu je namjera analizirati utjecaj percipiranih komponenti društvene odgovornosti na klijenata. U kontekstu šireg istraživanja, krenulo se od pretpostavki da poboljšanje kvalitete usluga predstavlja temeljnu komponentu društvene odgovornosti turističkih tvrtki te da je vjernost klijenata ključna za održivost tih tvrtki.

Kvaliteta usluge i korporacijska društvena odgovornost, kao temeljni koncepti u poslovanju, čvrsto su međusobno povezane te mnogi istraživači kvalitetu proizvoda/usluge smatraju sastavnim dijelom korporacijske društvene odgovornosti. Tako su Maignan *et al.* (1999) korporacijsku društvenu odgovornost odredili i izmjerili kao multidimenzionalni konstrukt koji uključuje i kvalitetu proizvoda/usluge kao najvažniji element ekonomskih prava građana, dok su Mandl i Dorr (2007) poboljšanje kvalitete proizvoda/usluge ubrojili među specifične tržišno orijentirane aktivnosti u sklopu korporacijske društvene odgovornosti. Singh i Bosque (2008) također definiraju korporacijsku društvenu odgovornost kao složeni multidimenzionalni konstrukt koji uključuje održavanje dobre kvalitete proizvoda/usluge kao

literature, being extensively studied over the past decades. However, the impact of service quality on customer loyalty in the tourism distribution sector has been scarcely emphasized in the literature. Even though there are many studies on service quality, satisfaction and loyalty in several tourism and travel related industries such as airlines and hotel industries, research on travel agencies regarding these issues is rather limited (Katircioglu *et al.*, 2012), several authors emphasizing that travel agencies' service quality is a rather rare research theme (Fache, 2000; Ryan and Cliff, 1997). Moreover, to the best of our knowledge, research in this field with evidence from Romania is extremely scarce.

The current research is aimed at depicting the impact of traditional travel agencies' service quality on their customers' attitudinal loyalty, according to evidence from Romania, and is part of a larger study directed at analyzing the impact of perceived social responsibility components on customer loyalty. In the wider research context, we adopted the premises that improving service quality is a fundamental component of the social responsibility of tourism businesses, and that customer loyalty is essential for the sustainability of these businesses.

Service quality and corporate social responsibility (CSR), as fundamental business concepts, are strongly connected, many researchers regarding and conceptualizing product/service quality as a constituent of CSR. Thus, Maignan *et al.* (1999) conceptualized and measured CSR as a multi-dimensional construct, including the quality of products/services as an essential element of economic citizenship, while Mandl and Dorr (2007) placed improving the quality of products/services among specific market-oriented CSR activities. Singh and Bosque (2008) also defined CSR as a complex multi-dimensional construct, including the maintenance of good products/services quality as an important element of commercial responsibility of companies, while Brunk (2010)

važnog elementa komercijalne odgovornosti tvrtke. Brunk (2010) na sličan način definira korporacijsku društvenu odgovornost pa temeljne elemente odgovornosti tvrtke prema klijentima, kao najvažnijim dionicima, čine kvaliteta proizvoda/usluge i služba za korisnike. Poboljšanje kvalitete usluge i pružanje visoko kvalitetne usluge, u okviru društvene odgovornosti turističkih tvrtki, mogu generirati dugotrajni odnos s važnim dionicima (Blešić *et al.*, 2011) među kojima su najvažniji kupci, a vjernost klijenata je ključna za održivost turističkih tvrtki jer se njome osiguravaju stabilni i predvidljivi prihodi.

U ovom se radu tradicionalna turistička agenciju definira kao ona koja većinom radi *offline*, smještena je na fizičkoj lokaciji, osoblje komunicira izravno s klijentima, ima tiskane ugovore i informativne/promotivne materijale itd. Posljednjih godina *online* turističke agencije imaju visoku stopu globalnog rasta, a tržišta *online* turističkih agencija u Sjedinjenim Državama, zapadnoj Europi, Japanu, Australiji, Novom Zelandu i Singapuru već su dosegla zrelost. Međutim, u većini turističkih agencija u Rumunjskoj još uvijek prevladava *offline* poslovanje zbog toga što turističke aranžmane mogu kreirati i/ili prodavati samo tvrtke koje zadovoljavaju veoma stroge nacionalne propise i imaju obavezu licencu koju izdaju državne vlasti, a *online* plaćanja još uvijek imaju nisku stopu penetracije u usporedbi sa zapadnom Europom ili drugim srednjeeuropskim i istočnoeuropskim zemljama. Usto, *online* prodaja putničkih usluga i turističkih aranžmana predstavlja relativno novi poslovni koncept, kako za rumunjske kupce tako i za turističke agencije, a rumunjske vlasti tek od 2011. licenciraju agencije koje rade isključivo *online*.

2. PREGLED LITERATURE

Kvaliteta je globalni koncept koji se može primijeniti na najraznovrsnije entitete, uključujući one specifične za putovanja i turizam (poput turističkih destinacija, pružatelja

similarly conceptualized CSR, including product/service quality and customer service as fundamental elements of companies' responsibilities towards consumers, as primary stakeholders. Improving service quality and providing high quality services, as part of the social responsibility of tourism businesses, can generate long term relationships with important stakeholders (Blešić *et al.*, 2011), among whom customers are the most important, customer loyalty being essential for the sustainability of tourism business, assuring consistent and predictable revenues.

In the current research a traditional travel agency is conceptualized as one having a predominant offline activity, based on physical locations, staff directly interacting with customers, printed contracts, informational/promotional materials etc. Even though online travel agencies have witnessed high rates of global growth over the past years, while online travel markets in the United States, Western Europe, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and Singapore have already matured (Vinod, 2011), most travel agencies in Romania still have a predominant offline activity due to the fact that in Romania travel packages can only be created and/or sold by companies which are subject to very strict national regulations and mandatory licensing by public authorities, while online payments still have a low penetration rate as compared to Western European or other Central and Eastern European countries. Moreover, online selling of travel services and package tours is a rather new business concept for both Romanian consumers and travel agencies, while agencies with exclusive online activity are licensed by the Romanian state only from 2011.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Quality is a global concept that can be applied to a large variety of entities, including those specific to the TTI (such as tourist destinations, accommodation providers,

usluga smještaja, aviokompanija, turističkih agencija itd.), a kvaliteti usluge u turističkom sektoru u posljednjih se deset godina posvećuje sve veća pažnja (Shahin i Janatyan, 2011). Kako je već navedeno, kvaliteta usluge predstavlja ključan faktor konkurentnosti i uspjeha (Lewis, 1989), osobito u sektoru turizma (Fick i Ritchie, 1991). O konceptu kvalitete usluga još uvijek se vode rasprave u literaturi. Vjerojatno jedan od najšire prihvaćenih pristupa konceptu kvalitete usluge je onaj Parasuramana *et al.* (1988) koji smatraju da je kvaliteta usluge klijentova prosudba sveukupne izvrsnosti i superiornosti nekog entiteta, stav povezan sa zadovoljstvom, ali ne i istovjetan s njime, koji proizlazi iz usporedbe očekivanja i percepcije djelotvornosti. Drugi široko prihvaćeni pristup smatra da je kvaliteta usluge mjera u kojoj usluga zadovoljava potrebe ili očekivanja klijenta (Lewis i Mitchell, 1990; Dotchin i Oakland, 1994; Wisniewski i Donnelly, 1996).

Druga tema rasprava u literaturi je i problem mjerenja kvalitete usluge. Kvaliteta usluge tradicionalno se može mjeriti ocjenjivanjem razlike između klijentovih očekivanja u pogledu usluge i njegove percepcije dobivene usluge; ako su očekivanja veća od percepcije dobivene usluge, kvaliteta usluge nije zadovoljavajuća i u klijenta se javlja nezadovoljstvo (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985; Lewis i Mitchell, 1990). SERVQUAL (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985, 1988) se smatrao i još uvijek se smatra najpopularnijim modelom ocjenjivanja kvalitete usluge. U svojem prvotnom obliku model se sastojao od deset dimenzija kvalitete (opipljivi elementi, pouzdanost, supteljivost, kompetentnost, ljubaznost, povjerenje, kredibilitet, sigurnost, pristupačnost i razumijevanje). Kasnije je broj dimenzija smanjen na njih pet: opipljivi elementi (fizički objekti, oprema i izgled osoblja), pouzdanost (sposobnost da se obećana usluga pruži pouzdano i točno), supteljivost (spremnost da se klijentima pomogne i da im se promptno pruži usluga), povjerenje (znanje i pristojnost zaposlenika te njihova sposobnost da zadobiju povjerenje) te suosjećajnost

airline companies, travel agencies etc.), service quality in the tourism sector gaining increased attention over the last decade (Shahin and Janatyan, 2011). As stated before, service quality represents a critical factor of competitiveness and success (Lewis, 1989), especially in the tourism sector (Fick and Ritchie, 1991). The concept of service quality is still a matter of debate in the literature. Probably one of the most widely adopted approaches regarding the concept of service quality comes from Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) who state that service quality is the consumer's judgment about an entity's overall excellence or superiority, an attitude, related but not equivalent to satisfaction, resulting from a comparison of expectations with perceptions of performance. Another widely adopted approach regards service quality as the extent to which a service meets customers' needs or expectations (Lewis and Mitchell, 1990; Dotchin and Oakland, 1994; Wisniewski and Donnelly, 1996).

The issue of measuring service quality is another matter of debate in the literature. Service quality can be traditionally measured by evaluating the gaps between customers' expectations regarding the service and, respectively, their perceived performance of the service; thus, if expectations are greater than perceived performance, service quality is less than satisfactory and hence customer dissatisfaction occurs (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985; Lewis and Mitchell, 1990). SERVQUAL (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985, 1988) has been and still is considered the most popular model for service quality evaluation. In its initial form, the model included ten quality attributes (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, competency, courtesy, assurance, credibility, security, access, and understanding), these dimensions being later reduced to five: tangibles (physical facilities, equipment and appearance of personnel), reliability (ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately), responsiveness (willingness to help customers and provide prompt service), assurance (knowledge and courtesy of

(brižna i individualizirana pažnja koju tvrtka pruža svojim klijentima). Kako je model SERVQUAL bio izložen kritici, razvijeni su i drugi modeli za ocjenjivanje kvalitete usluge, osobito 1990.-ih. Neki od njih privukli su puno pažnje, kako u teorijskom tako i u praktičnom kontekstu (Rust i Oliver, 1994; Cronin i Taylor, 1994; Brady i Cronin, 2001). Tako su Rust i Oliver (1994) razvili model sastavljen od tri komponente, zasnovan na klijentovoj percepciji interakcije klijenta i zaposlenika, okolišu pružanja usluge te ishodu usluge. Cronin i Taylor (1994) razvili su SERVPERF model (po komponentama sličan modelu SERVQUAL) smatrajući da nije potrebno mjeriti klijentova očekivanja, dok su Brady i Cronin (2001) predložili model zasnovan na klijentovoj evaluaciji okoliša usluge, ambijentalnih uvjeta, izgleda objekata i društvenih turističkih faktora.

Većina istraživanja koja su ocjenjivala kvalitetu usluge kod turističkih agencija upotrijebila je model SERVQUAL i konceptualizaciju kvalitete usluga pomoću jaza između očekivanja i percepcije (Johns *et al.*, 2004; Lam i Zhang, 1999; Ryan i Cliff, 1997) te se SERVQUAL pokazao prikladnim i pouzdanim modelom mjerenja za tu namjenu (Bigné *et al.*, 2003). Međutim, na mjernom instrumentu obično je trebalo napraviti nekoliko izmjena kako bi ga se prilagodilo specifičnom slučaju turističkih agencija. Tako su Lam i Zhang (1999) koristili modificirani model SERVQUAL za istraživanje turističkih agenata u Hong Kongu i u obzir su uzeli pet faktora: pouzdanost, susretljivost i povjerenje, suosjećanje, resurse i korporacijski imidž te opipljivost. U drugom istraživanju, koje se bavilo turističkim agencijama na Novom Zelandu, Ryan i Cliff (1997) izmijenili su model SERVQUAL na način da su elemente kvalitete usluge grupirali u tri empirijske dimenzije: povjerenje, pouzdanost i opipljivost. Caro i Garcia (2008) su u svrhu ocjenjivanja kvalitete usluga kod turističkih agencija u Španjolskoj elemente kvalitete grupirali u tri znatno različite komponente: osobna interakcija (ponašanje, stručnost,

employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence), and empathy (caring and individualized attention that the firm provides to its customers). Due to several criticism issues regarding SERVQUAL, other models for service quality assessment were developed, especially during the 90s, some of them gaining considerable attention, both in theoretical and practical contexts (Rust and Oliver, 1994; Cronin and Taylor, 1994; Brady and Cronin, 2001). Thus, Rust and Oliver (1994) developed a three-component model based on customers' perceptions regarding customer-employee interaction, service environment, and service outcome, Cronin and Taylor (1994) developed the SERVPERF model (similar to SERVQUAL in terms of components), the authors arguing that it is not necessary to measure customer expectations, while Brady and Cronin (2001) suggested a model based on customers' evaluations of the service environment, ambient conditions, facility design, and social factors.

Most of the studies that have assessed service quality in the case of travel agencies have used the SERVQUAL model and its specific gap score evaluations (Johns *et al.*, 2004; Lam and Zhang, 1999; Ryan and Cliff, 1997), SERVQUAL being proven as an appropriate and reliable measurement model in this case (Bigné *et al.*, 2003). However, several adaptations usually had to be made to the measuring instrument in order to make it more appropriate for the specific case of travel agencies. Thus, Lam and Zhang (1999) used a modified SERVQUAL model for the case of travel agents in Hong Kong, considering five factors: reliability, responsiveness and assurance, empathy, resources and corporate image, and, respectively, tangibility. In another research focused on travel agencies in New Zealand, Ryan and Cliff (1997) altered the SERVQUAL model by grouping service quality items into three empirical dimensions: reassurance, reliability, and tangibles. Caro and Garcia (2008), in order to assess service quality in the case of travel agencies from Spain, grouped qual-

rješavanje problema), fizički okoliš (oprema, ambijentalni uvjeti) i ishod (vrijeme čekanja i ponašanje). Luk (1997) je, nakon što je istražio koji načini grupiranja elemenata najbolje odražavaju razinu kvalitete usluga turističkih vodiča u Hong Kongu, zaključio da je najprikladnija klasična struktura sastavljena od pet dimenzija (opipljivost, susretljivost, povjerenje, pouzdanost i suosjećanje).

Uz kvalitetu usluge i njezino mjerenje, druga tema kojom se ovaj rad bavi je potencijalna vjernost i njezin odnos prema kvaliteti usluge. Aaker (1991) smatra da vjernost klijenta odražava kolika je vjerojatnost da se klijent prebaci na drugu marku/tvrtku, osobito kad ta marka/tvrtka promijeni cijenu, osobine proizvoda, komunikaciju ili programe distribucije. Oliver (1999) smatra da je vjernost klijenta snažno opredjeljenje za konstantnu ponovnu kupovinu preferiranog proizvoda/usluge u budućnosti koje izaziva ponovljene kupnje iste marke ili asortimana iste marke, usprkos situacijskim čimbenicima ili marketinškim naporima koji za cilj imaju prelazak na drugu marku. Laroche *et al.* (2001) identificiraju tri dimenzije vjernosti: kognitivnu vjernost (spremnost na odabir neke alternative koja se percipira kao bolja od drugih), afektivnu vjernost (pozitivan dojam o marki koja proizlazi iz zadovoljstva kupljenim) i konativnu vjernost (namjera da se ponovno kupi). Stručnjaci općenito ističu dvije glavne dimenzije koncepta vjernosti: bihevioralnu i potencijalnu (Moisescu i Vü, 2011). Potencijalna vjernost uključuje kognitivnu, afektivnu i dimenziju bihevioralne namjere (poput ponovne kupovine ili namjere da se kupovina preporuči drugima), ili stvarno date preporuke. Neki autori smatraju da je bihevioralna namjera prijelaz između potencijalne i bihevioralne vjernosti, a javlja se ili kao predispozicija za prvu kupovinu ili kao odlučnost da se ista marka kupi ponovno (Mittal i Kamakura, 2001).

Općenito se smatra da bi veća kvaliteta usluge trebala povećati zadovoljstvo kupaca (Shahin i Janatyan, 2011). Veoma zadovoljan kupac pokazat će veću tendenciju da ponovi

ity items into three significantly different components: personal interaction (conduct, expertise, problem solving), physical environment (equipment, ambient conditions), and, respectively, outcome (waiting time and valence). Luk (1997), after investigating the best items-grouping to reflect the level of quality in the case of tour guide services in Hong Kong, came to the conclusion that the classic five-dimension structure (tangibles, responsiveness, assurance, reliability and, respectively, empathy) is the most appropriate.

Alongside service quality and its measurement, another key issue of the current paper is attitudinal loyalty and, respectively, its relationship with service quality. Aaker (1991) considers that customer loyalty reflects how likely a customer will be to switch to another brand/company, especially when that brand/company makes a change in price, product features, communication, or distribution programs. Oliver (1999) states that customer loyalty is a deeply held commitment to rebuy a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences, or marketing efforts intended to cause switching behavior. Laroche *et al.* (2001) identify three dimensions of loyalty: cognitive loyalty (the willingness to choose an alternative because it is perceived as better than others), affective loyalty (a positive impression of the brand derived from satisfaction with the purchase), and conative loyalty (the intention of repurchase). Specialists generally outline two main dimensions of the concept of loyalty: behavioral and attitudinal (Moisescu and Vü, 2011). Attitudinal loyalty includes cognitive, affective, and behavioral intent dimensions (such as repurchase or recommendation intentions), while behavioral loyalty reflects the actual repeat buying behavior (Dick and Basu, 1994), or actual made recommendations. Behavioral intent is considered by some authors as being intermediary between attitudinal and behavioral loyalty, appearing either as a predisposition to buy

kupnju ili da razvije dugoročno opredjeljenje za određenog pružatelja usluge, a posljedica zadovoljstva bit će i to da će klijenti preporučiti kupovinu i drugima te tako pridonijeti budućim prihodima (Zairi, 2000; Anderson *et al.*, 2004).

Što je s turizmom i putovanjima kao zasebnim aktivnostima? U posljednjih nekoliko desetljeća većina relevantnih istraživanja kvalitete usluga u sektoru turizma i putovanja provodila se u avioprijevozničkoj i osobito u smještajnoj industriji (npr. Cadotte i Turgeon, 1988; Hartline *et al.*, 2003; Fernandez-Barcala *et al.*, 2009; Ramanathan i Ramanathan, 2011; Mohajerani i Miremadi, 2012; Marković *et al.*, 2013). Neki od ovih autora ukazali su na značajnu vezu između kvalitete usluge i vjernosti klijenta. Na primjer, u svojem istraživanju zadovoljstva kupaca u hotelskoj industriji, Mohajerani i Miremadi (2012) zaključuju da se zadovoljstvo kupaca može predvidjeti iz imidža, klijentovih očekivanja, percipirane vrijednosti i percipirane kvalitete usluge, dok vjernost klijenta i pritužbe predstavljaju posljedice zadovoljstva kupaca.

Međutim, razmjerno su malobrojna istraživanja koja se tim pitanjima bave kod turističkih agencija (Katircioglu *et al.*, 2012). Nekoliko autora naglašava da je kvaliteta usluge turističkih agencija prilično rijetka tema istraživanja (Fache, 2000; Ryan i Cliff, 1997). Prema našim saznanjima, istraživanja u ovome području na temelju podataka iz Rumunjske veoma su rijetka. Nedavno su provedena empirijska istraživanja u sektoru turističke distribucije u zemljama poput Španjolske (Campo i Yagüe, 2007), Poljske (Kobylanski, 2012), Cipra (Katircioglu *et al.*, 2012) te Hong Konga (Kuo *et al.*, 2013) i sva su utvrdila da faktori kvalitete usluge pozitivno utječu na zadovoljstvo klijenta te, štoviše, i na potencijalna i/ili bihevioralnu vjernost. Stoga postojeći, ali rijetki empirijski dokazi, koji zahtijevaju daljnja istraživanja, pokazuju da poboljšanje kvalitete usluge dugoročno vodi ka razvijanju vjernosti, ne

for the first time or a commitment to repurchase (Mittal and Kamakura, 2001).

The general consensus is that higher service quality should increase consumer satisfaction (Shahin and Janatyan, 2011). Highly satisfied customers will express greater tendency to repeat purchases or to develop long-term commitment with their service supplier, while, as a consequence of satisfaction, customers make recommendations to others thus contributing to future revenues (Zairi, 2000; Anderson *et al.*, 2004).

What about tourism and travel, as particular activities? Over the last decades, most of the relevant studies on service quality in the tourism and travel sector have been conducted in the airlines industry and, especially, in the accommodation industry (e.g.: Cadotte and Turgeon, 1988; Hartline *et al.*, 2003; Fernandez-Barcala *et al.*, 2009; Ramanathan and Ramanathan, 2011; Mohajerani and Miremadi, 2012; Marković *et al.*, 2013), some outlining significant relationships between service quality and customer loyalty. For example, in their recent research on customer satisfaction in the hotel industry, Mohajerani and Miremadi (2012) concluded that customer satisfaction can be predicted by image, customer expectation, perceived value, and perceived service quality, while customer loyalty and complaining behavior are the different results of customer satisfaction.

However, research regarding these issues in the case of travel agencies is rather limited (Katircioglu *et al.*, 2012), several authors emphasizing that travel agencies' service quality is a rather rare research theme (Fache, 2000; Ryan and Cliff, 1997). To the best of our knowledge, research in this field with evidence from Romania is extremely scarce. Some recent empirical studies have been conducted in the tourism distribution sector in countries such as Spain (Campo and Yagüe, 2007), Poland (Kobylanski, 2012), Cyprus (Katircioglu *et al.*, 2012), Hong Kong (Kuo *et al.*, 2013), all of them suggesting a positive impact of service quality factors on

samo općenito u turizmu, već i kod turističkih agencija.

3. METODOLOGIJA

Ovo istraživanje ima za cilj odrediti utjecaj kvalitete usluge tradicionalnih turističkih agencija na potencijalnu vjernost njezinih klijenata, a na osnovu podataka iz Rumunjske. Ono čini dio šireg istraživanja koje analizira utjecaj percipiranih komponenti društvene odgovornosti na vjernost kupca. U kontekstu šireg istraživanja, kreće se od pretpostavki da poboljšanje kvalitete usluge predstavlja temeljnu komponentu društvene odgovornosti turističkih tvrtki i da je vjernost kupca ključna za održivost tih tvrtki. Tradicionalna turistička agencija definirana je kao ona koja većinom radi *offline*, smještena je na fizičkoj lokaciji, osoblje komunicira izravno s klijentima, ima tiskane ugovore i informativne/promotivne materijale itd.

Na uzorku od 286 odraslih građana Rumunjske koji su nedavno kupili putničku uslugu ili aranžman od tradicionalnih turističkih agencija provedena je anketa u obliku upitnika. Podaci su sakupljeni *online* tokom dva mjeseca, pri čemu su dobrovoljno pomagala 42 studenta diplomskih studija. Oni su među svojim osobnim kontaktima putem elektronske pošte i poruka širili i distribuirali link za upitnik ili su ga oglasili na raznim internetskim društvenim i profesionalnim mrežama. Tablica 1 prikazuje strukturu istraženog uzorka s obzirom na spol, obrazovanje, mjesečni osobni neto prihod i dob ispitanika. Zbog takve metode prikupljanja podataka nismo se uspjeli obratiti ispitanicima starijima od 44 godine, što predstavlja jedno od ograničenja ovog istraživanja.

customer satisfaction and, furthermore, on attitudinal and/or behavioral loyalty. Thus, the existent (but scarce, and yet to be extended) empirical evidence outlines the fact that improving service quality can translate in the long run into loyalty, not only in the tourism sector, in general, but also in the case of travel agencies, in particular.

3. METHODOLOGY

The current research is aimed at depicting the impact of traditional travel agencies' service quality on their customers' attitudinal loyalty, according to evidence from Romania, and is part of a larger study directed at analyzing the impact of perceived social responsibility components on customer loyalty. In the wider research context, we adopted the premises that improving service quality is a fundamental component of the social responsibility of tourism businesses, and that customer loyalty is essential for the sustainability of these businesses. We conceptualized a traditional travel agency as one having a predominant offline activity, based on physical locations, staff directly interacting with customers, printed contracts, informational/ promotional materials etc.

A questionnaire based survey was conducted among a sample of 286 adult Romanian citizens, who had recently purchased travel services or packages from traditional travel agencies. The data was collected online for a period of two months, with the voluntary help of 42 master students, each of them disseminating and distributing the online link to the questionnaire by email and instant messages addressed to their own contacts, or by posting it within various online social and professional networks. Table 1 outlines the structure of the investigated sample considering respondents' gender, highest graduated education level, monthly individual net income, and age. Due to the data collection method we did not manage to address respondents older than 44 years, this being one of our research limitations.

Tablica 1: Demografska obilježja uzorka

Spol	Muško	104	36,36%
	Žensko	182	63,64%
Najviši stupanj obrazovanja	Srednja škola ili niže	34	11,89%
	Preddiplomski studij	157	54,90%
	Diplomski studij	84	29,37%
	Doktorat ili više	11	3,85%
Mjesečni osobni neto prihod	Manje od 1000 leja	65	22,73%
	1000–2000 leja	125	43,71%
	2001–3000 leja	42	14,69%
	3001–4000 leja	31	10,84%
	Više od 4000 leja	23	8,04%
Dob	19-24 godine	118	41,26%
	25-29 godina	87	30,42%
	30-44 godine	81	28,32%

Table 1: Sample demographics

Gender	Male	104	36,36%
	Female	182	63,64%
Highest graduated education level	High-school or lower	34	11,89%
	Bachelor studies	157	54,90%
	Master studies	84	29,37%
	PhD or higher	11	3,85%
Monthly individual net income	Under 1000 lei	65	22,73%
	1000–2000 lei	125	43,71%
	2001–3000 lei	42	14,69%
	3001–4000 lei	31	10,84%
	Above 4000 lei	23	8,04%
Age	19-24 years	118	41,26%
	25-29 years	87	30,42%
	30-44 years	81	28,32%

Kao glavne mjere uzete su kvaliteta usluge i potencijalna vjernost kupaca. Za ocjenjivanje kvalitete usluge, indikatori klasičnog modela SERVQUAL prilagođeni su specifičnom tipu usluga koje pružaju turističke agencije. Upotrebljen je 21 element koji odražava pet dimenzija kvalitete usluga: (1) opipljivost – fizički objekti, oprema, izgled osoblja; (2) pouzdanost – sposobnost da se pouzdano i točno pruže one usluge koje su obećane i oglašavane; (3) susretljivost – voljnost da se klijentima pomogne te da im se pruži promptna usluga; (4) povjerenje – kompetentnost i ljubaznost osoblja te njihova sposobnost da zadobiju povjerenje klijenata; (5) suosjećajnost – briga o kupcima i razumijevanje kupaca, personalizacija, dostupnost. Prvo, ocijenjena su očekivanja za svaki element kvalitete usluge pomoću proširene Likertove skale od 1 = “Nimalo se ne slažem” do 7 = “U potpunosti se slažem” (npr. “Kako bi mi se svidjela i kako bih je smatrao/la izvrsnom, turistička agencija trebala bi imati modernu opremu i objekte”). Korištenje Likertove skale raspona od 5 do 7 pokazalo se “prihvatljivim i pirkladnim za analizu rezultata na razini skale korištenjem tehnika parametarske analize ili njezinih proširenja (tj. multiple regresije i sl.) (Carifio i Perla, 2007). Nadalje, percepcije za svaki indikator ocijenjene su korištenjem slične

The main measures that were taken into consideration referred to service quality and, customer attitudinal loyalty. In order to assess service quality the classic SERVQUAL model's items were adapted to the particular nature of services provided by travel agencies, 21 items being used in order to reflect the five dimensions of service quality: (1) tangibles – physical facilities, equipment, staff appearance; (2) reliability – ability to perform promised and advertised service dependably, accurately; (3) responsiveness – willingness to help and assist customers, to provide prompt service; (4) assurance – staff competence, politeness, and ability to inspire trust; (5) empathy – customer care and understanding, customization, access. Firstly, expectations were assessed for each service quality item using an extended Likert scale ranging from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 7 = “strongly agree” (e.g.: “In order for me to like it and consider it excellent, a travel agency should have modern equipment and facilities”). Using a 5 to 7 point Likert response format made it “acceptable and correct to analyze the results at the scale level using parametric analyses techniques or its extensions (i.e., multiple regression and so on)” (Carifio and Perla, 2007). Secondly, perceptions were evaluated for each item using a

skale od 1 do 7, pri čemu se od ispitanika tražilo da ocijene turističku agenciju od koje su posljednji put kupili putničku uslugu ili aranžman (npr. "Turistička agencija imala je modernu opremu i objekte"). Na kraju se od ispitanika tražilo da ocijene istu tu agenciju kako bi se odredila potencijalna vjernost pri čemu su korištene dvije dimenzije: namjera ponovne kupnje, na skali od 1 = "nikako ne" do 5 = "svakako da", te namjera da se agencija preporuči drugima, pri čemu je korištena slična skala. Kako bismo operacionalizirali mjerenje kvalitete usluge, izračunali smo razlike za svaki element i potom srednje razlike za svaku od pet grupa elemenata koje se odnose na pet dimenzija kvalitete usluge:

$$G_{(ij)} = P_{(ij)} - E_{(ij)}$$

$$G_{(i)} = \frac{1}{k_i} \cdot \sum_{j=1}^{k_i} G_{(ij)}, i=1..5$$

pri čemu su:

- $E_{(ij)}$ = očekivanja u odnosu na element "j" dimenzije "i"
- $P_{(ij)}$ = percepcija elementa "j" dimenzije "i"
- $G_{(ij)}$ = razlika elementa "j" dimenzije "i"
- $G_{(i)}$ = srednja razlika dimenzije "i"
- $j = 1..k_i$; k_i = broj elemenata za dimenziju "i"

Pod pretpostavkom da je Cronbach alpha odgovarajuća mjera za ocjenjivanje pouzdanosti/unutarnje konsistentnosti rezultata izvedenih iz skale te ako se uzme u obzir činjenica da su se za mjerenje očekivanja i percepcije koristile skale od 1 do 7, izračunali smo navedenu mjeru za svaki od pet setova varijabli kod očekivanja, percepcije učinka i razlika (Tablica 2).

similar scale ranging from 1 to 7, asking respondents to relate to the travel agency from which they had made their most recent travel service or package purchase (e.g.: "The agency had modern equipment and facilities"). Finally, asking respondents to refer to the same travel agency, attitudinal loyalty was depicted using two dimensions: repurchase intention, on a scale from 1 = "certainly not" to 5 = "certainly yes", and, recommendation intention, on a similar scale. In order to operationalize the measurement of service quality, we computed gap-scores for each item, and then mean gap-scores for each of the five groups of items reflecting the five dimensions of service quality:

$$G_{(ij)} = P_{(ij)} - E_{(ij)}$$

$$G_{(i)} = \frac{1}{k_i} \cdot \sum_{j=1}^{k_i} G_{(ij)}, i=1..5$$

where:

- $E_{(ij)}$ = expectation regarding item "j" of dimension "i"
- $P_{(ij)}$ = perception regarding item "j" of dimension "i"
- $G_{(ij)}$ = gap score regarding item "j" of dimension "i"
- $G_{(i)}$ = mean gap score regarding dimension "i"
- $j = 1..k_i$; k_i = number of items for dimension "i"

Assuming that Cronbach's alpha is an appropriate metric to assess the internal consistency associated with scores derived from scales, and considering the fact that scales ranging from 1 to 7 were used in order to measure expectations and perceptions, we computed the above mentioned metric for each of the five sets of variables in the case of expectations, performance perceptions and, gap scores (Table 2).

Tablica 2: Analiza pouzdanosti/unutarnje konzistencije pet setova varijabli koje se odnose na SERVQUAL komponente

Dimenzija kvalitete usluge	Cronbach alpha		
	Očekivanja	Percepcija učinka	Razlika
Opipljivost (7 elemenata)	.891	.931	.872
Pouzdanost (3 elementa)	.895	.935	.906
Susretljivost (4 elementa)	.839	.931	.879
Povjerenje (3 elementa)	.875	.915	.846
Suosjećanje (4 elementa)	.827	.907	.860

Kako rezultati pokazuju, Cronbach alpha koeficijent bio je u svim slučajevima viši od 0.8 što upućuje na visoku internu pouzdanost, osobito s obzirom na činjenicu da skale nisu bile nanovo kreirane, već prilagođene i/ili podešene za ovo specifično istraživanje tradicionalnih turističkih agencija. Rezultati potvrđuju tvrdnju da je SERVQUAL komponentna struktura sastavljena od komponenta s pet skupina elemenata prikladna za naše mjerenje kvalitete usluge.

S obzirom na glavni cilj ovog istraživanja, formulirane su sljedeće istraživačke hipoteze:

- *H1: Svaka od pet dimenzija kvalitete usluge ima značajan i pozitivan utjecaj na namjeru ponovne kupovine usluge.*
- *H2: Svaka od pet dimenzija kvalitete usluge ima značajan i pozitivan utjecaj na namjeru preporučivanja kupovine drugima.*

Kako bismo istražili kombinirani/sveukupni utjecaj seta pet dimenzija kvalitete usluge (kao prediktora) na potencijalnu vjernost (ponovnu kupovinu i namjeru preporuke, kao zavisnih varijabli), predložili smo dva linearna modela (Prikaz 1), po jedan za svaku zavisnu varijablu kojima je cilj objasniti varijaciju potencijalne vjernosti.

Table 2: Internal consistency analysis for the five sets of variables reflecting SERVQUAL constituencies

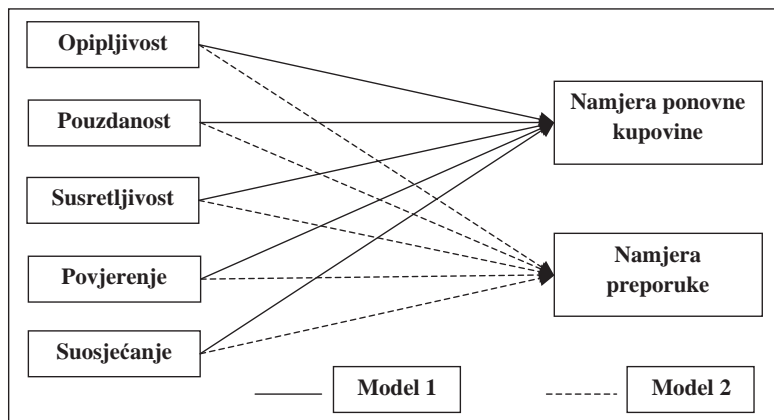
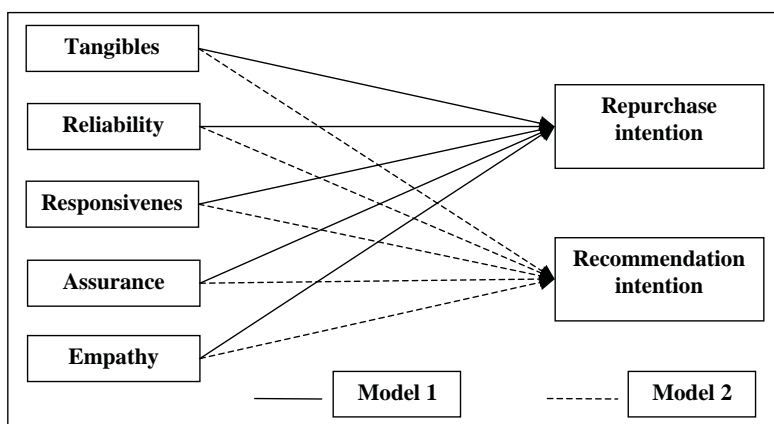
Service quality dimension	Cronbach's alpha		
	Expectations	Performance perceptions	Gap scores
Tangibles (7 items)	.891	.931	.872
Reliability (3 items)	.895	.935	.906
Responsiveness (4 items)	.839	.931	.879
Assurance (3 items)	.875	.915	.846
Empathy (4 items)	.827	.907	.860

As results show, in each case Cronbach's alpha had a value of more than 0.8, suggesting excellent internal consistency, especially considering the fact that the scales were not newly developed, but adapted and/or adjusted for our specific study regarding traditional travel agencies. The results support the assertion that the SERVQUAL component structure, with five sets of items, is suitable for our service quality measurement.

Considering the main objective of this study the following research hypotheses were formulated:

- *H₁: Each of the five dimensions reflecting service quality has a significant and positive impact on repurchase intention.*
- *H₂: Each of the five dimensions reflecting service quality has a significant and positive impact on recommendation intention.*

In order to investigate the combined/altogether impact of the set of five dimensions reflecting service quality (as predictors) on attitudinal loyalty (repurchase and recommendation intention, as dependent variables), we proposed two linear models (Figure 1), one for each dependent variable, intended to explain the variation of attitudinal loyalty.

Prikaz 1: Predloženi modeli**Figure 1: Proposed models**

4. REZULTATI

Prvo je analizirana bivarijatna korelacija kako bi se istražio odnos između svake od pet dimenzija kvalitete usluge s jedne strane te potencijalne vjernosti s druge strane. Kako pokazuju rezultati u tablici 3, potvrđene su hipoteze $H1$ i $H2$, a sve korelacije su značajne na p razini ispod 0,01. U usporedbi s namjerom ponovne kupovine, namjera preporuke pokazala se onom na koju više utječe većina dimenzija kvalitete usluge, s time da su koeficijenti korelacije

4. RESULTS

Firstly, bivariate correlation analyses were conducted in order to investigate the relationship between each of the five dimensions of service quality, on one hand, and attitudinal loyalty, on the other hand. As the results in Table 3 show, both H_1 and H_2 are confirmed, with all correlations being significant at a p level below 0.01. In comparison to repurchase intention, recommendation intention can be outlined as being more impacted by most service quality dimensions,

viši kod opipljivosti, pouzdanosti, susretljivosti i suosjećanja.

Tablica 3: Bivarijatna korelacija između srednjih razlika dimenzija kvalitete usluge i vjernosti

Dimenzija kvalitete usluge	Namjera ponovne kupovine	Namjera preporuke
Opipljivost	.302**	.312**
Pouzdanost	.492**	.561**
Susretljivost	.443**	.487**
Povjerenje	.483**	.461**
Suosjećanje	.481**	.514**

(Pearsonova korelacija; ** = Značajna korelacija kod $p < 0,01$)

Odnos između svake od pet dimenzija kvalitete usluge i potencijalne vjernosti potom je istražen pomoću deset jednostavnih linearnih regresija, po jedne za svaki par koreliranih varijabli (srednje razlike dimenzije kvalitete usluge, kao prediktora, te namjere ponovne kupovine i namjere preporuke, kao zavisnih varijabli). Kako pokazuje Tablica 4, pouzdanost ima najveći utjecaj na potencijalnu vjernosti, kako kod namjere ponovne kupovine ($r^2 = .242$), tako i kod namjere preporuke ($r^2 = .315$), dok se opipljivost pokazala kao dimenzija kvalitete usluge koja ima najmanji utjecaj ($r^2 < .1$ za oba aspekta potencijalne vjernosti).

correlation coefficients being higher in the case of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, and empathy.

Table 3: Bivariate correlations between service quality dimensions mean gap scores and loyalty scores

Service quality dimension	Repurchase intention	Recommendation intention
Tangibles	.302**	.312**
Reliability	.492**	.561**
Responsiveness	.443**	.487**
Assurance	.483**	.461**
Empathy	.481**	.514**

(Pearson correlation; ** = Correlation significant at $p < 0,01$)

The relationship between each of the five dimensions of service quality and attitudinal loyalty was further investigated using ten simple linear regressions, one for each pair of correlated variables (service quality dimensions mean gap scores, as predictors, and, respectively, repurchase and recommendation intention, as dependent variables). As Table 4 shows, reliability has the highest impact on attitudinal loyalty, both in the case of repurchase ($r^2 = .242$) and recommendation intention ($r^2 = .315$), while tangibles can be emphasized as the least influential service quality dimension ($r^2 < .1$ for both attitudinal loyalty facets).

Tablica 4: Jednostavne linearne regresije za modeliranje odnosa između srednje razlike kvalitete usluge i vjernosti

		Zavisna varijabla			
		Namjera ponovne kupovine		Namjera preporuke	
		Std. coeff. Beta	p	Std. coeff. Beta	p
Prediktor	Opipljivost	.302	.000	.312	.000
		r²=.091		r²=.097	
		F-test (1, 284) = 28,56; p<.001		F-test (1, 284) = 24,51; p<.001	
	Pouzdanost	.492	.000	.561	.000
		r²=.242		r²=.315	
		F-test (1, 284) = 90,52; p<.001		F-test (1, 284) = 130,56; p<.001	
	Susretljivost	.443	.000	.487	.000
		r²=.196		r²=.237	
		F-test (1, 284) = 69,15; p<.001		F-test (1, 284) = 88,38; p<.001	
	Povjerenje	.483	.000	.461	.000
		r²=.233		r²=.213	
		F-test (1, 284) = 86,37; p<.001		F-test (1, 284) = 76,68; p<.001	
	Suosjećanje	.481	.000	.514	.000
		r²=.231		r²=.264	
		F-test (1, 284) = 85,53; p<.001		F-test (1, 284) = 66,59; p<.001	

Table 4: Simple linear regressions for modelling the relationship between service quality dimensions mean gap scores and loyalty scores

		Dependent variable			
		Repurchase intention		Recommendation intention	
		Std. coeff. Beta	p	Std. coeff. Beta	p
Predictor	Tangibles	.302	.000	.312	.000
		r²=.091		r²=.097	
		F-test (1, 284) = 28.56; p<.001		F-test (1, 284) = 24.51; p<.001	
	Reliability	.492	.000	.561	.000
		r²=.242		r²=.315	
		F-test (1, 284) = 90.52; p<.001		F-test (1, 284) = 130.56; p<.001	
	Responsiveness	.443	.000	.487	.000
		r²=.196		r²=.237	
		F-test (1, 284) = 69.15; p<.001		F-test (1, 284) = 88.38; p<.001	
	Assurance	.483	.000	.461	.000
		r²=.233		r²=.213	
		F-test (1, 284) = 86.37; p<.001		F-test (1, 284) = 76.68; p<.001	
	Empathy	.481	.000	.514	.000
		r²=.231		r²=.264	
		F-test (1, 284) = 85.53; p<.001		F-test (1, 284) = 66.59; p<.001	

Kako bi se istražio kombinirani/sveukupni utjecaj seta pet dimenzija kvalitete usluge na potencijalnu vjernost, provedene su višestruke regresijske analize prema modelima predloženima u prikazu 1. Kako pokazuje tablica 5, modeli višestruke linearne regresije sa svih pet prediktora dali su $R^2 = .291$ i $R^2 = .342$. Stoga se može utvrditi da je oko jedne trećine varijance potencijalne vjernosti kupca određeno sinergetskim efektom pet dimenzija kvalitete usluge.

In order to investigate the combined/altogether impact of the set of five dimensions reflecting service quality on attitudinal loyalty, multiple regression analyses were conducted, following the models proposed in Fig. 1. As it can be seen in Table 5, the multiple regression models with all five predictors produced $R^2 = .291$ and, respectively, $R^2 = .342$. Therefore, it can be stated that about one third of the variance of customer attitudinal loyalty is determined by the synergetic effect of the five service quality dimensions.

Tablica 5: Višestruke linearne regresije za predložene modele

		Zavisna varijabla			
		Model 1. Namjera ponovne kupovine		Model 2. Namjera preporuke	
		Std. coeff. Beta	p	Std. coeff. Beta	p
Prediktori	Opipljivost	-.004	.953	-.012	.843
	Pouzdanost	.263	.002	.369	.000
	Susretljivost	-.020	.830	.044	.613
	Povjerenje	.214	.018	.038	.657
	Suosjećanje	.142	.953	.193	.028
		$R^2=.291$		$R^2=.342$	
		F-test (5, 280) = 23,03; p<.001		F-test (5, 280) = 29,08; p<.001	

Table 5: Multiple linear regressions for the proposed models

		Dependent variable			
		Model 1. Repurchase intention		Model 2. Recommend intention	
		Std. coeff. Beta	p	Std. coeff. Beta	p
Predictors	Tangibles	-.004	.953	-.012	.843
	Reliability	.263	.002	.369	.000
	Responsiveness	-.020	.830	.044	.613
	Assurance	.214	.018	.038	.657
	Empathy	.142	.953	.193	.028
		$R^2=.291$		$R^2=.342$	
		F-test (5, 280) = 23,03; p<.001		F-test (5, 280) = 29,08; p<.001	

Kao što se može vidjeti, neki od standardiziranih koeficijenata, kako u prvom, tako i u drugom modelu, imaju veoma niske i negativne vrijednosti, što upućuje na to da neke od dimenzija kvalitete usluge (npr. opipljivost) ne pridonose značajno nijednom od modela

As it can be seen, some of the standardized coefficients, both in the first and the second model, have very low and negative values, suggesting that some of the service quality dimensions (e.g. tangibles) do not significantly contribute to any of the multiple

višestrukih linearnih regresija (jer imaju značajan utjecaj na namjeru ponovne kupnje i namjeru preporuke). Negativne vrijednosti također otvaraju pitanje valjanosti grupiranja 21 elementa u pet klasičnih dimenzija kvalitete usluge. Kako bismo testirali strukturu elemenata, prihvatili smo sugestije Johnsona i Gustafssona (2000) koji su preporučili na teoriji (a ne na prikupljenim podacima) zasnovanu alternativu tradicionalnoj analizi glavnih komponenata (PCA), koja se sastoji u tome da se uzastopno napravi onoliko analiza glavnih komponenata koliko ima latentnih varijabli (u našem slučaju, pet dimenzija kvalitete usluge), a zaključak ovisi o tome je li svaka analiza glavnih komponenata jedan faktor sa svojstvenom vrijednosti većom od 1. Stoga smo proveli pet analiza glavnih komponenata (jednu za svaki set elemenata dimenzija kvalitete usluge) kako bismo testirali može li 21 element biti grupiran u pet SERVQUAL dimenzija, gdje je svaka analiza glavnih komponenata dala samo jedan faktor sa svojstvenom vrijednosti većom od 1, čime se objašnjava više od 70% varijance (osim za dimenziju opipljivosti, kod koje je objašnjeno samo 57% varijance). Ovu alternativu tradicionalnoj analizi glavnih komponenata, zasnovanu na teoriji, prihvatili su i drugi istraživači u području analize kvalitete usluge (npr. Radomir i Nistor, 2012).

5. RASPRAVA: TEORIJSKE IMPLIKACIJE

U literaturi se dosad nije pridavala odgovarajuća pažnja problemima kvalitete usluge, vjernosti kupaca i njihovog međusobnog odnosa kod turističkih agencija, a osobito onima vezanima uz podatke iz Rumunjske (jedne od najvećih zemalja središnje i istočne Europe). Ovaj rad nastoji dati svoj prilog popunjavanju te praznine u akademskoj literaturi time što ne samo da u novom kontekstu učvršćuje ili potvrđuje prethodno postavljene hipoteze o pozitivnom utjecaju kvalitete usluge na vjernost kupca kod turističkih

regression models (having an insignificant impact on the repurchase or recommendation intention). The negative values also raise questions regarding the validity of grouping the 21 items into the five classic dimensions of service quality. In order to test the items' structure we followed the suggestions made by Johnson and Gustafsson (2000), who recommend a theory-based (rather than data-driven) alternative to the traditional principal component analysis (PCA), consisting in running successively as many PCA as the number of latent variables (the five service quality dimensions, in our case), the conclusion depending on whether each PCA returns a single factor with an Eigenvalue greater than 1. Therefore, we performed five PCAs (one for each set of items that reflected a certain service quality dimension) in order to test whether the 21 items can be grouped in the five SERVQUAL dimensions, each of the PCAs revealing a single factor with Eigenvalue higher than 1, and explaining more than 70% of the variance (except for the tangibles dimension, in which case only 57% of the variance was explained). This theory-based alternative to the traditional PCA was also adopted by other researchers in the field of service quality analysis (e.g. Radomir and Nistor, 2012).

5. DISCUSSION: THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Considering the fact that the issues of service quality, customer loyalty, and their relationship in the case of travel agencies have not been given yet the appropriate attention in the literature, both internationally, and especially with evidence from Romania (one of the largest countries in Central and Eastern Europe), the current paper tries and manages to contribute to filling this academic gap not only by reinforcing or confirming, in a new context, previously stated hypotheses regarding the positive impact of service quality on customer loyalty in the case of travel agen-

agencija, nego i opisuje aspekte potencijalne vjernosti kupca na koje ona ima najviše i najmanje utjecaja te dimenzije kvalitete usluge s najvećim i najmanjim utjecajem na potencijalnu vjernost kupca.

Dobiveni koeficijenti korelacije između svake dimenzije kvalitete usluge i potencijalne vjernosti kupca, kao i rezultati jednostavnih linearnih regresija, ukazuju na relativnu smanjenje razgraničenja najviše i najmanje relevantnih i utjecajnih dimenzija kvalitete usluge. Tako se može ustanoviti da opipljivost ima najmanji utjecaj na potencijalnu vjernost, dok su suosjećanje te osobito pouzdanost dimenzije kvalitete usluge koje imaju najveći i najrelevantniji učinak. Dobiveni koeficijenti korelacije također pokazuju da kvaliteta usluge više utječe na namjeru preporuke nego na namjeru ponovne kupovine, što je potvrđeno i kad su razmotrene dobivene R^2 vrijednosti za dva modela višestruke linearne regresije. Rezultati analiza višestruke linearne regresije, koji ukazuju na to da opipljivost i susretljivost ne pridonose značajno nijednom modelu, dok pouzdanost predstavlja važan čimbenik u oba modela, potvrđuju tvrdnju da pouzdanost ima najveći, a opipljivost najmanji pozitivan utjecaj na potencijalnu vjernost.

6. RASPRAVA: PRAKTIČNE IMPLIKACIJE

Moguće je istaknuti nekoliko praktičnih implikacija ovog istraživanja za bolje upravljanje i marketiranje u tradicionalnim turističkim agencijama, osobito onima koje se obraćaju rumunjskim kupcima i koje ciljaju na njih. Međutim, uz neka ograničenja koja proizlaze iz osobitosti ponašanja kupaca na lokalnoj/nacionalnoj razini, one se mogu rabiti i u svakoj tradicionalnoj turističkoj agenciji, neovisno od nacionalnosti njihovih ciljnih tržišta. U zemljama ili regijama u kojima se putne usluge i aranžmani kupuju *online* ili se predviđa da će to uskoro postati navikom kod većine stanovnika, očito je

cijs, but also by outlining the most and the least impacted facets of customer attitudinal loyalty, and, the service quality dimensions with the highest and lowest impact on customer attitudinal loyalty.

The resulted correlation coefficients between each service quality dimension and customer attitudinal loyalty, as well as the results of the simple linear regressions, suggest a relative delimitation of the most and least relevant and influential service quality dimensions. Thus, tangibles can be emphasized as having the lowest impact on attitudinal loyalty, while empathy and, especially, reliability can be depicted as those service quality dimensions with the highest and most relevant effect. The resulted correlation coefficients also show that, in comparison to repurchase intention, recommendation intention is more impacted by service quality, this statement being reinforced after considering the obtained R^2 values for the two multiple regression models. The results of the multiple regression analyses which indicate that tangibles and responsiveness do not significantly contribute to any of the models, while reliability is a significant contributor in both models, reinforce the statement that reliability has the largest positive impact on attitudinal loyalty, while tangibles have the lowest impact.

6. DISCUSSION: PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Several practical implications can be outlined for a better management and marketing of traditional travel agencies, especially for those addressing and targeting Romanian consumers. Nevertheless, with certain limitations given by inherent particularities in consumer behavior at local/national level, these implications can be extrapolated to any traditional travel agency, regardless of the nationality of their target market. Obviously, in certain countries or regions where online purchases of travel services and packages is

da se praktične implikacije ovog istraživanja mogu smatrati ograničenima i samo kratkoročno korisnima za masovno tržište. Međutim, za one tržišne segmente u kojima kupci više vole interakciju licem u lice sa svojim turističkim agentima i pružateljima turističkih aranžmana ili u kojima kupci ne mogu ili ne žele prihvatiti nove tehnologije vezane za online kupovinu, te implikacije mogu biti i dugoročno korisne.

Rezultati ovog istraživanja potvrđuju činjenicu da postoji značajan pozitivan utjecaj kvalitete usluge na potencijalnu vjernost. Stoga će sve tradicionalne turističke agencije, koje uspijevaju povećati razinu kvalitete svojih usluga, dugoročno imati koristi od veće vjernosti kupaca, pod uvjetom da uzmu u obzir i upravljaju i drugim faktorima koji utječu na vjernost. Lojalni kupci pokazat će veću tendenciju ka ponovljenoj kupnji, razvijanju dugotrajne odanosti svojem pružatelju usluga (u ovom slučaju, turističkoj agenciji) te će je preporučiti drugima i tako pridonijeti budućim prihodima. Kad žele potaknuti vjernost kupaca, tradicionalne turističke agencije trebale bi biti osobito usredotočene na specifične aspekte kvalitete usluge poput pružanja točno onakve usluge kakvu su obećali, pridržavanja rokova, pružanja usluge na pravi način i bez potrebe za ispravcima/popravcima, brzog reagiranja ako je potrebno riješiti neki problem ili ako su suočeni s nezadovoljstvom, pokazivanja iskrenog zanimanja za potrebe i želje kupaca te općenito pružanja samo visokokvalitetnih usluga.

Tradicionalne turističke agencije ne bi trebale pasti u zamku trošenja većeg dijela svojih proračuna na poboljšanje poslovnih prostora, njihovog izgleda itd. (opipljivost), već bi se radije trebale usredotočiti na susretljivost, povjerenje, suosjećanje i osobito na pouzdanost te većinu svojih napora usmjeriti na poboljšanje profesionalnosti osoblja, na točnost i stav prema kupcima s kojima su u interakciji, kao i na to da pružena usluga odgovara obećanju datom u promociji. Konkretno, s obzirom na to da je varijanca potencijalne vjernosti samo djelomično objašnjena

or is predicted to become a habit for most of the population, the practical implications of the current research are to be considered limited and useful only in the short run for the mass market, but in the long run for those market segments comprising consumers who prefer face to face interaction with their travel services or packages suppliers, or are not able or willing to adopt new technologies related to online shopping.

The results of the current research confirm and reinforce the fact that there is a positive significant impact of service quality on attitudinal loyalty. Thus, any traditional travel agency which manages to increase its service quality level will benefit, in the long run, from higher levels of customer loyalty, provided that other factors influencing loyalty are also carefully considered and managed. Loyal customers will express greater tendency to repeat purchases, to develop long-term commitment with their service supplier (the travel agency, in this case), and to make recommendations to others, contributing to future revenues. When trying to generate customer loyalty, traditional travel agencies should be particularly focused on specific service quality aspects such as: providing services exactly as promised, in strict compliance with timeframes, in a rightly manner for the first time, with no corrections/fixes needed, quickly reacting to address any problem or dissatisfaction, showing genuine interest in customers' needs and wants, and generally providing only high quality services.

Traditional travel agencies should not get into the pitfall of allocating the most of their budgets on enhancing physical premises, looks etc. (tangibles), but rather focusing on responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and especially, reliability, allocating a significant amount of their efforts for enhancing their staff professionalism, accuracy, and attitude towards the customers they interact with, as well as for making sure the services provided stand up to the promises made through com-

kvalitetom usluge, tradicionalne turističke agencije trebalo bi savjetovati da se u zadobivanju kupaca ne oslanjaju isključivo na dimenzije kvalitete usluge poput opipljivosti, pouzdanosti, susretljivosti, povjerenja i suosjećajnosti, već i da prestanu pokušavati uvoditi inovacije i iznalaziti nove načine za povećanje razine vjernosti kupaca.

7. ZAKLJUČCI, OGRANIČENJA ISTRŽIVANJA I SMJERNICE ZA BUDUĆA ISTRŽIVANJA

Na osnovu podataka prikupljenih u Rumunjskoj, ovaj rad pokazuje da u slučaju tradicionalnih turističkih agencija kvaliteta usluge, koja predstavlja konstrukt čiji su aspekti opipljivost, pouzdanost, susretljivost, povjerenje i suosjećanje, ima značajan pozitivan utjecaj na potencijalnu vjernost kupaca. Rezultati ukazuju na to da svih pet dimenzija konstrukta kvalitete usluge ima značajan i pozitivan utjecaj kako na namjeru ponovne kupovine tako i na namjeru preporuke. Iako su tu vezu već dokazala prethodna istraživanja provedena na lokalnoj/nacionalnoj razini, specifična istraživanja na primjerima turističkih agencija su rijetka (osobito na istočnoevropskom tržištu). Ovaj rad pridonosi popunjavanju te praznine u akademskoj literaturi, ne samo time što je prethodno postavljene hipoteze potvrdio u novim kontekstima, već i time što je opisao one aspekte potencijalne vjernosti na koje kvaliteta usluge ima najveći utjecaj i dimenzije kvalitete usluge koje najviše i najmanje utječu na potencijalnu vjernost.

Ovim istraživanjem utvrđuje se odnos između kvalitete usluge i potencijalne vjernosti na primjeru tradicionalnih turističkih agencija i pokazuje se da kvaliteta usluge ima veći utjecaj na namjeru preporuke nego na namjeru ponovne kupovine. Usto, predloženi i testirani modeli pokazuju da se oko jedna trećina varijance potencijalne vjernosti može objasniti pomoću sinergetskog efekta razmatranih dimenzija kvalitete usluga.

mercial communications. Finally, due to the fact that the variance of attitudinal loyalty is only partially explained by service quality, traditional travel agencies could be advised not to exclusively rely on service quality dimensions such as tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy in order to gain customers' loyalty, but also to permanently try to innovate and find new ways of increasing the degree of their customers' loyalty.

7. CONCLUSIONS, RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Based on evidence from Romania, the paper shows that in the case of traditional travel agencies, service quality, regarded as a construct comprising aspects related to tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, has a significant positive impact on customer attitudinal loyalty. The results suggest that all the five dimensions included in the service quality construct have a significant and positive impact on both repurchase intention and recommendation intention. Even though this relationship was already proven by previous studies conducted locally/nationally, given the scarcity (especially for the Eastern European market) of such specific studies conducted for the case of travel agencies, the current paper contributes to filling an academic gap not only by reinforcing previously stated hypotheses in new contexts, but also by outlining the most and least impacted facets of attitudinal loyalty, and, respectively, the service quality dimensions with the highest and lowest impact on attitudinal loyalty.

By depicting the relationship between service quality and attitudinal loyalty in the case of traditional travel agencies, the research shows that, in comparison to repurchase intention, recommendation intention is more impacted by service quality. Also, the proposed and tested models suggest that

Istraživanje naglašava činjenicu da pouzdanost ima najveći pozitivan utjecaj na potencijalnu vjernost, dok opipljivost ima najmanji utjecaj, a povjerenje i suosjećanje značajni su kao faktori pozitivnog utjecaja na namjeru ponovne kupovine i na namjeru preporuke.

Moguće je navesti i nekoliko ograničenja istraživanja. Prvo, ispitani uzorak sastavljen je samo od rumunjskih kupaca, a metoda uzorkovanja bila je empirijska i neprobabilistička. Iako su predmet istraživanja bile tradicionalne agencije, podaci su prikupljeni *online* pa su kupci koji nemaju pristupa internetu isključeni iz uzorka. Stoga je reprezentativnost uzorka ograničena, a priroda istraživanja je više istraživačka. U budućnosti bi ovo istraživanje trebalo biti ponovljeno pri čemu bi se trebao obuhvatiti međunarodno diverzificiran uzorak, odabran pomoću reprezentativnijeg postupka uzorkovanja, a podaci bi se trebali prikupljati *offline*. Nadalje, da su sve korelacije i modeli bili analizirani i s obzirom na demografske podatke kao određujuće varijable, u ovom istraživanju mogle su se ustanoviti i karakteristične posebnosti. Međutim, iako su u istraživanju prikupljeni demografski podaci, njihovim utjecajem ovaj rad se nije bavio. U budućim obuhvatnijim istraživanjima trebalo bi ponovno ocijeniti relevantnost predloženih modela s obzirom na specifične demografske kategorije kao moderatorske varijable.

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about one third of the variance of attitudinal loyalty can be explained by the synergetic effect of the considered dimensions of service quality. The research emphasizes the fact that reliability has the highest positive impact on attitudinal loyalty, while tangibles have the lowest impact, assurance and empathy being significant as positive impact factors on repurchase intention, and, respectively, on recommendation intention.

Inherently, several limitations of the research can be outlined. Firstly, the investigated sample only comprised Romanian customers, while the sampling method was empirical and non-probabilistic. Even though the subject of the research regarded traditional agencies, the data gathering process took place online, customers with no access to Internet being excluded from the sample. Thus, the sample representativeness is limited, while the nature of the research is rather exploratory. As a future research direction, the study should be revisited, comprising an internationally diversified sample, using a more representative sampling procedure, and implementing an offline data collection process. Secondly, specific particularities might have been depicted if all correlations and models had been analyzed considering demographic data as moderating variables. However, even though demographic data were collected, their impact was not emphasized. In a future and more comprising study, the relevance of the proposed models should be reassessed considering specific demographic categories as moderating variables.

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