

OPINIONS ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL PROMOTION OF TOURIST OFFER FROM SAINT GEORGE

Ph. D. Asistant **Erika KULCSÁR**

"Babeş-Bolyai" University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Abstract

A very important factor and with direct implications in the process of development of the existing tourism potential is the marketing activities related to the promotion of tourist offer both domestically and internationally. Knowledge from direct source of the opinions of managers and directors of the most important tourist locations providing tourism services - hotels and hostels - imposed the achievement of a qualitative marketing research. The qualitative research was conducted in Sfântu Gheorghe. This paper contains the vertical and horizontal analysis of the eight subjects interviewed. The qualitative marketing research aims at knowing the opinions of managers of hotels and hostels in Sfântu Gheorghe on their promotional activity over time in the future.

Key words: *Qualitative research, Hypothesis, Vertical analysis, Horizontal analysis.*

JEL classification: *L83, M31*

1. INTRODUCTION

The complexity of the issues that professionals seek to solve through marketing research involves the use of numerous methods and techniques of investigation. The specialized literature indicates that there are two categories of marketing research: quantitative and qualitative (Cătoiu, Bălan et al, 2002, p.191). Both categories of marketing research allow us to collect primary data (Kovács, 2004, p.174).

In a historical perspective, the quantitative research was developed before the qualitative research and still presents an important interest for all decisions makers from market and marketing area. (Teodorescu, Stăncioiu et al, 2007, pp.1-7)

In general, the surveys aim to describe the purchase and consumption behavior, to know opinions and attitudes, to identify the reasons underlying the marketing actions, to find out the values shared by buyers or consumers. (Popescu, 2004, p.71)

The qualitative research allows a deeper understanding of the problems (Malhotra, 2005, p.201).

The marketing research also includes investigations designed to direct the whole marketing mix policy (product, price, distribution, promotion), analysis and forecasts on short, medium or long term, necessary to develop marketing programs and assess performance in this field (Balaure, Cătoiu et al, 2005, p.92).

Undoubtedly appropriate promotion also bases the success of companies providing tourism services. Companies in the field of tourism need to know how to attract as many potential consumers of tourism services. There is a wide range of advertising methods, each service provider opting for one method or another depending on the specific situation and possibilities (Scutariu, 2006, pp.52-55).

Promotional activities in tourism require significant investment because of the large geographic area of tourist market, the manifestation of fierce competition and of the intangible nature of the tourism product. From the latter perspective, one can say that the intangible nature of services leads to increased importance of tourism promotional strategy (Nedelea, 2003, pp. 125-126).

It must be stated also that communication actions in tourism are positioned both in the period preceding the sale of tourist product (the objective being to promote its acceptance by potential tourists) and the stage of consumption (when seeking to stimulate marketing of complementary tourist services during the trip or the place of stay) (Iordache, Rizea et al, 2010, pp.153-160).

In carrying out promotional activities of companies providing travel services must be interested in capturing consumers' attention, to create positive attitudes among them for the offered products and services and to offer valuable products and services for consumers (Micu, 2010, pp.67-82).

In order to achieve such high objectives, qualitative market research methods are necessary. The most important qualitative methods used in marketing research are: exploratory surveys, interviews, projective techniques, techniques to stimulate creativity (Brătucu and Brătucu, 2006, pp.47-58).

Starting from this brief consideration I believe that, in order to further understand the phenomena and processes that are characteristic to the tourism sector, especially those focused on studying market behaviour of companies providing tourist services, a qualitative marketing research is needed as it provides essential information necessary to support policies and marketing strategies without which the requirements related to the recovery of the existing tourism potential can not be achieved.

2. METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

In order to know in detail the views of hotel managers and hostel managers on the design and promotional of marketing promotional activities, semidirective in-depth interview method was used. The sample size was set to 8 subjects chosen from the list of all hotels and hostels in Sfântu Gheorghe.

The sample structure was as follows: 4 hotel managers and 4 hostel managers. It should be mentioned that this sample is significant and representative for the city of Sfântu Gheorghe, because it only has four hotels of all categories and 3 stars hostels, all of which are included in the sample.

The in-depth interviews with managers have been recorded on audio tape and were transcribed onto paper. This qualitative method required the performance of a content analysis as a specific method of analysis.

3. ASSUMPTIONS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The main objectives of qualitative research:

- Knowledge and opinions of managers regarding the importance of promotion and the forms for promoting the tourist offer;
- Identification of promotional activities that generated significant results;
- Identification of the causes that have resulted in ineffective promotional activities;
- Identification of improvement directions of promotional activities;
- Identification of new promotional activities possible in the future;
- Identification of managers' opinion on the costs of promotional activities;
- Identification of the most expensive and the least expensive advertising campaigns.

4. VERTICAL CONTENT ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS IN SEMIDIRECTIVE DEPTH

Subject 1, represented by a hotel manager, believes that marketing promotional activities is a "packing", "an embellishment" of tourism products aimed at attracting potential tourists. After addressing the sub-theme of types of promotional activities carried out domestically and internationally it was found that the hotel manager started from the country of origin of tourists. Because of the fact that both Romanian tourists and foreign tourists, mostly from Hungary, are accommodated in hotels, the manager seeks to achieve different types of promotional activities such as participation in various events in the County of Covasna, to the Tourism Fair in Budapest,

etc. The types of promotional activities also include: billboards both at the entrance in the city and in the city center, tourist maps, brochures and illuminated signs. These promotional activities are designed by the hotel manager, but their implementation was completed by specialized companies. The hotel manager claims that participation in tourism fair in Budapest has generated significant results, while noting that this success is mainly due to personal contact. Also, he considers that the leaflets that were "distributed" in the city center have been ineffective, due to the fact that neither the location nor the persons were properly chosen. The hotel manager is convinced that a more effective collaboration with the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration - Sfântu Gheorghe would contribute to the development of promotional activities, also mentioning the fact that students and teachers in the field of marketing might be involved in designing new promotional actions. Also he is convinced that the monitoring of competitors in the marketing promotional activity could contribute to the development of promotional marketing activities. The hotel manager is convinced that the only thing that can be "sold" is the cultural values. Starting from this consideration he argues that the promotion of cultural values is extremely important, and in the near future he wants that on Sunday, on "Korzo" young people to wear traditional costumes specific to this region. As regards the overall assessment of the costs of promotional actions by reference to a percentage of total revenue, the manager claims that they are in amount of about 10-15%. The most expensive promotional object is the tourism map which also includes promotional materials, while the least expensive is the printing of promotion leaflets. The hotel manager strongly believes that "if you want to be seen you have to do something new, something different and it costs ..."

Subject 2, a hotel manager believes that promotional activities are generating costs. Because of the fact that financially the accommodation unit "do not go too well" no funds not allocated or very little funds for different types of promotional activities. The leaflets, namely the business card have been mentioned as internal promotional activities by the manager and internationally there are no marketing promotional activities. The hotel manager designed the business card and the leaflet but the content and design of the leaflet have been made by a firm specializing in the field. The manager claims that among the promotional methods used, the business card had a "positive effect" that has generated significant results, also claims that the leaflets failed "to bring more tourists." The reason why this marketing promotional activity failed to have a positive effect is due to the fact that the leaflets were given to tourists who were staying at some time in the hotel. The manager says that diversification of the promotional activities could lead to improvement of these marketing activities. In his view, designing

promotional activities should involve a person who has appropriate education and also who has experience as "theory is theory and practice is something else ...". In the future he would like to promote the accommodation unit through a local radio spot, namely the development of a website, but they are all costs generating and in the current financial situation nothing is certain. A very small percentage (0.10%) was mentioned by the manager as a global assessment of the costs of promotional activities from the total revenues. The creation of the leaflet was a more costly promotional endeavour and the business card was mentioned by the manager as less expensive promotional activity.

Subject 3, a hotel manager considers that the marketing promotional activities have the "task" of increasing the number of tourists. The manager also mentioned the following marketing promotional activities: leaflets, participation in tourism fairs (Bucharest, Budapest), advertising through local newspapers, tourism catalogue and not least the business card. Both the content and design of leaflets were created by managers while their printing was performed by a company specializing in this field. The manager believes that the prices are the most effective "promotional activities" that generate significant results. Also, the manager strongly believes that word of mouth advertising is incomparable with any other promotional activity and is not generating additional costs. He thinks that leaflets failed to generate the expected results, mentioning, between brackets, that he does not give great importance to flyers. Another cause can be generated also by the fact that the leaflets were not interesting enough to capture the attention of persons whom they were distributed; neither the flyer design "was extraordinary" said the manager. A possible direction for improvement of promotional activities can be given by attending seminars, development courses. The manager did not rule out the possibility to consult with a person who has appropriate studies in this regard "as he/she is able to give advice worth listening to." Some examples of new possible actions include development of a promotional advertising billboard at the entrance or in the city centre, but he has not yet taken a decision in this regard. Global assessment of the costs of promotional actions expressed by reference to total revenue is 7%. Its inclusion in the Tourism Catalogue of Covasna County was the most expensive promotional action while the business card was the least expensive, arguing that the latter is much more effective than a leaflet.

Subject 4, a hostel manager argues that the importance of promotional activities is to understand that each targeted market segment requires a different approach in terms of promotional activity. Among the types of promotional activities carried out domestically and internationally he mentioned: the Internet, advertising, catalogue of hostels - Covasna County, advertising on cards, triangular small size

billboard on taxis, participation in tourism fairs and not least the direct marketing. The manager also mentioned that the leaflets no longer are an effective means to attract tourists, most people no longer grant them any attention because they are assaulted with them daily. For this reason, I consider that depersonalized advertising no longer has any positive contribution on any activity. Marketing promotional activities are designed by manager, he establishes both the content and design but these marketing promotional activities are completed by specialized companies in Sfântu Gheorghe. The manager believes that direct marketing has generated consistent results, stating that, firstly, the goal is to convince businesses that the city of Sfântu Gheorghe that the accommodation unit offers quality travel services, satisfying the needs of people who come into town for business reasons. He also argues that the promotion via the Internet has had positive effects, while stipulating that, indeed the hostel's website has its role but is firmly convinced that the websites listing all accommodation units are a more effective "contribution" in attracting potential customers. Among the promotional activities that generated the expected results there are the small triangular advertising panels placed on taxis, this success is due to the fact that the information and design, which is something new, attract people's attention. The purpose for which he opted for this form of promotion is based on the following argument: the promotion of the accommodation unit among locals and among people who are visiting the city. Spots broadcasted through the local radio have not produced significant results. The reason that led to this marketing promotional activity coming to be termed as inefficient lies in the fact that the spot broadcasting frequency was quite low. Another action that has not produced any promotional benefit is participation in tourism fairs, although these participations were performed each year. Addressing the sub-theme of directions to improve promotional activities, the manager claims that an effective collaboration between the managers of tourist accommodation units and the County Tourism Bureau would make a positive contribution in this regard. He also mentions that currently the work performed by the tour info desk is not efficient; it does not have a program on weekends. Also, better cooperation with travel agencies both nationally and internationally would contribute to the development of promotional activities. The manager is the first person to be involved in designing new promotional activities, according to the interviewee, while stipulating that he does not exclude any possibility of cooperating with a person who has the appropriate specialization and who "also worked on the field". Among the new potential promotional actions are: development of a large billboard, placed in an appropriate place in the city of Sfântu Gheorghe and advertising on buses. The manager mentioned that 5% as overall assessment of the costs of promotional

actions in relation to total revenues. Printed Media (Catalogue of tourist hostels in Covasna) is considered the most expensive advertising action. Considering the fact that advertising on vehicles is "valid" 4-5 years, this makes the interviewee consider it as the least expensive promotional activity - while noting that word of mouth advertising is the cheapest form of promotion. In the future he wants to diversify services and includes the "Honey Moon" program, which is designed to young persons who wish to get married in a more special way, without stress, in a novel place, with customized programs.

Subject 5, a hotel manager, says that the importance of marketing promotional activities is undeniable. No company can survive on the market without these marketing promotional activities and with tourism service providers this statement is even truer. The types of promotional activities applied by the manager are diverse, especially domestically, but also internationally. Among the promotional activities the manager mentioned are the enlighten signs and the Internet. The most important, the manager claims referring to the Internet, is the implementation of all websites listing tourist accommodation units of a banner with a link to the accommodation unit's website, by arguing that 80-90% of tourists mentioned as source of information for choosing accommodation the Internet. The manager participated in tourism fairs both in Budapest and Bucharest and the hotel is also present in the Tourism Catalogue of Covasna County. The marketing promotion activities include billboards, located in the most visible places, directional advertising banners, radio (local radio and from Braşov), advertising on TV channels in Braşov. The leaflets and the business card do not miss from the range of promotional activities. At the end of the approach of this sub-themes the manager said that is very important "to diversify as much as possible the marketing promotional activities." All marketing promotional activities are designed by the manager, both in terms of the content and design, but their printing is done by companies specializing in this field. Among the promotional activities that have generated significant results, on the first place was mentioned the Internet, grounding this assertion through the fact that most tourists have used it as a source of information when choosing the accommodation unit. Also, working with travel agencies in Hungary had a positive effect on the unit's balance sheet. The participations in the Bucharest Tourism Fair generated better results, says the manager, than the participation in the tourism trade fair in Hungary. The manager believes that local media advertising is among the less beneficial promotional activities. With respect to the sub-theme directions to improve promotional activities, the manager said that the change of the staff's mentality would contribute to the development of promotional activities, noting between brackets the relationship between staff and word of mouth advertising. Also,

primary data collection from tourists, and hiring of a qualified person to would lead to better results of promotion. The Manager is always accommodating in other hotels to learn new things, being aware of the fact that he, as manager, must create something new, something special. In designing new promotional activities, the interviewee claims that, first, this activity must involve the manager, resorting of course, where appropriate, also to the services of specialized companies that are the best on the local market. Consumer informing by e-mail about the diversification of tourism services such as organizing events during the winter holidays, etc., was mentioned as an example of new promotional activities possible. The manager assessed the promotional costs as 5-7% of total revenue. TV and radio advertising spots (Braşov) were the most expensive promotional activities (7,000 Euro) and local media advertising is estimated to be the least expensive.

Subject 6, a hostel manager argued throughout the interview that promotional activities are important at the beginning when "you enter the market" then if you did well this step, everything goes "smoothly". He argued strongly that the most important thing is how tourists are welcomed, how you deal with them, "you can do a thousand commercials, if you fail to treat well the guests they will not knock on your door the second time" says the manager. Among the types of promotional activities he listed the following: business card, entry in the Tourism Catalogue of Covasna County, participation in tourism fair in Bucharest. The interviewee works very well with the Tourist Information Office and is very excited about this collaboration, intending to work also in the future with this organization. With respect to the sub-theme directions to improve the promotional activities he only mentioned the following "when my guests arrive I welcome them with plum palinca" the best advertising claims the manager. The interviewee attaches great importance to gastronomic offer on the table and the dinner is often cooked outdoors in a large pot, tacking at an "eye opener". The Administrator is convinced that the "guest" must feel and understand local culture, "this is the most important thing and so I feel that I have not lived in vain, I transmitted something, however little would that be." He does not know who should be involved in designing new promotional activities, but has full confidence in the Tourist Information Office. He also noted that he had "guests" who said that they heard about this accommodation unit from friends, from colleagues or relatives. Others were sent by the Tourist Information Office. With respect to the sub-theme, as examples of new possible promotional activities, he did not mention anything, but if he receives any "news from the Touristic Information Office" he does not exclude the possibility of new promotional activities. He could not make an overall assessment of the promotional activities costs in relation to total receipts stating "I did not monitor

this." The inclusion in the tourism catalogue is mentioned as a more expensive promotional action. The "plum palinca" is the least expensive, and advertising through word of mouth, says the interviewee, while mentioning that almost all the ingredients necessary for the cuisine are found in their household.

Subject 7, hostel manager, strongly argued that the marketing promotional activities are "the key to success" in all fields. Without promotion nobody knows you, and if you are not known you can offer the best services and products if you are not currently and in the consumer's life". Among the types of promotional activities carried out domestically and internationally the manager mentioned: billboards, entry in the Tourism Catalogue of Covasna County, video tapes, Internet and local media. The manager also mentioned that it is in a more special situation because the core business it is dealing with is advertising. All promotional activities mentioned were designed by the manager and the completion of various activities involved also its employees. Among the promotional activities that lead to the expected results the manager mentioned the billboards and video tapes. Internet and local media advertising have been referred to as promotional actions that have been ineffective. Another promotional activity that failed to reach the expected results was the local media, the reason being explained as follows: "a bad choice in terms of newspaper's profile and the target segment." The administrator wants to have a team to deal with promotional activity for the accommodation unit. Within the sub-theme with possible new examples of promotional activities the manager mentioned: the development of the promotion through the Internet, leaflets, advertising in local media, working with travel agencies both locally and internationally. In the future he wants to buy advertising space for advertising networks. He considers billboards to be the most expensive promotional activities and advertising through local media is the least expensive. First of all he wants to make the accommodation unit known among locals, while also acknowledging that perhaps "the exaggerated a little bit" in the promotion of the accommodation unit since its costs are 50% of the revenue.

Subject 8, a hostel manager, does not deny the importance of marketing promotional activities, but considers that they have that their role when you "have entered the market." Because it is the first accommodation unit in the city of Sfântu Gheorghe, it benefited from a number of advantages, being promoted for free on the Transylvanian tourism website. Also, a small financial contribution has allowed the presence in the Transylvanian Guide. In addition to these promotional activities the hostel manager also mentioned the following: The Tourism

Catalogue of Covasna County, Accommodations in Secuime, participation in the tourism fair in Hungary (Budapest), collaboration with travel agencies in Hungary (Szeged), leaflets, advertising in local newspapers, local TV advertising, business cards. One interesting thing noticed with business cards is that they also contain a brief description of the accommodation. In designing these promotional activities, as mentioned, he was assisted by representatives of the website and by the representatives of the guide. Subsequently, the design of other promotional activities was made by him and in the case of leaflets he contracted the professional services of a company. Addressing the sub-theme of promotional activities that have generated significant results the manager claimed that among these there is the Transylvanian tourism website and the Transylvanian Guide respectively. The manager is convinced that the price level is an extremely effective promotional action and the advertising by word of mouth.

Participation in Tourism Fair in Budapest has been ineffective, the interviewee stating that this was not the only promotional action made that "failed to bring tourists", among them there was the advertising in the local newspapers and in the local television and leaflets. With respect the leaflets, the administrator said that this is no longer an effective promotional action because "people are tired of them and they throw them as soon as they receive. The causes that led to inefficient promotional activities were: a less "successful" correlation between the target market and the chosen promotional channel. The manager also argues that it should be given greater importance to promotion via the Internet. In designing new promotional actions the unit manager should be involved directly and then to turn to service providers who specialize in this respect. Addressing the sub-theme of examples of possible new promotional activities in the future, the interviewee wants the accommodation unit to have a website. The percentage representing the share of total revenue to be assigned to promotional activities is about 1%, says the manager. The presence in the Tourism Catalogue of Covasna County was referred to as a more expensive promotional endeavour while among examples of less expensive promotional actions he included local press advertising, that advertising through word of mouth. At the end of the interview the hostel manager said that "I learned a lot in Austria in terms of accommodation unit administration, working in the field. I speak four languages, which helps me tremendously, at us "guests are treated like family members, the cases when we are in relation of friendship are quite often, I listen to their problems, I am happy with them."

5. HORIZONTAL CONTENT ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS IN SEMIDIRECTIVE DEPTH

The results of horizontal content analysis of the interviews made among accommodation unit managers, namely hotel and three stars hostels managers in the city of Sfântu Gheorghe, by synthetic approach of each addressed theme, sub-themes respectively are:

Topic: About marketing promotional activities

Addressing the first sub-theme, the importance of marketing promotional activities, the interviewees considered that their role is extremely important, representing "the key to success", mentioning that these activities are at the same time cost generating. Without marketing promotional activities no economic entity can operate, which is very important especially when a company is launched on the market "but this is not all, to be successful much more is needed." The role of marketing promotional activities is to properly attract the targeted market segment, informing the current consumers about everything that is new, attraction of potential tourists, in a word, as one interviewee said "the increase of tourists' number." Among the types of promotional activities carried out internally and internationally by managers the following were mentioned: participation in various events both in the city of Sfântu Gheorghe and the County of Covasna, placement of Billboard advertising panels at both entries in the city and in the centre of the city, smaller panels for informational purposes - directional promotional banners, small panels placed on taxis. The interviewed managers also claim that among the types of promotional activities an important place is held by the participation in tourism fairs in \

Bucharest and participation in tourism fairs held in other countries (Budapest). The Tourism Catalogue, Accommodations in Secuime, business cards, national and international flyers, tourist map, advertising through local newspapers, spots on the local radio and on those from Braşov, commercials at the local television and at those from Braşov have been mentioned by interviewees among the types of promotional activities applied. They also argue that among marketing promotional activities the direct marketing, Internet, car markings and, not least the video tapes must have a special place. When addressing the subtheme who designed and who was involved in carrying out promotional activities, those interviewed said that they are designed by the managers of those accommodation units, except for one interviewee who said that he does not get involved in marketing promotional activities and that he accepts suggestions made by the Tourist Information Office. In the realization and completion of these activities employees and advertising companies are involved.

Theme: About the results of the initiated and performed promotional actions

Two of the interviewees claimed that for them the prices charged are the most effective marketing promotional activities and also the word of mouth was mentioned. Another interviewee believes that the most effective promotional activity is "the promotional of local specialties" generating the desired result. Addressing the second sub-theme the majority of interviewed managers said that the leaflet is among the promotional activities that did not produce significant results. They also mentioned as less successful marketing promotional activities: the local media, advertising in local radio.

The causes that generated inefficient promotional activities are related to the allocation of a smaller "budget", the promotional spot via local radio covered a small period, and the leaflet was not so interesting and failed to attract the attention of potential consumers.

Topic: New possible promotional directions

As directions to improve promotional activities, interviewees mentioned the following: a more effective collaboration between accommodation units in the city and higher education in the city, diversification of the range in terms of marketing promotional activities, participation in training courses and seminars, a more effective collaboration between the managers and directors of accommodation units and the County Tourist Office, a more efficient operation of the Tour info office. They consider that market research, primary data collection from consumers of tourism services would contribute to the development of promotional activities.

Most of the subjects considered that the manager / administrator of tourism service units should be involved in designing new promotional actions, also mentioning that these marketing promotional activities can be completed by using the services of companies specializing in this field. Examples of new possible promotional activities include: creating a website, Billboard advertising, creation of a slogan, advertising on cars, development of Internet promotion (purchase of advertising spaces), working with both local and international travel agencies.

Theme: Costs of promotional activities

Addressing the sub-theme related to the global assessment of costs of promotional activities in relation to total revenue it was found that it varies between 0.10% and 50%. A very big difference was found which can be explained by the fact that most companies providing tourist services are present on the market for years and they assign for promotion relatively small amounts while a new hostel, wanting to be known has invested heavily in marketing promotional activities. Among more expensive promotional activities, interviewees mentioned the following: creation of a tourist map also including

promotional activities, a spot broadcast through TV, radio in another county, namely in Braşov. Billboards and printed media were also included among the very expensive promotional actions and not least the appearance in the Tourism Catalogue for one calendar year. Interviewed managers considered that flyers, business cards, advertisements in local newspapers, advertising on cars are among examples of less costly promotional actions.

The table below (Table 1) reflects, in percentages, the share of each topic in the total of managers / directors.' interventions.

Table 1 - The relative importance of the approaches of the managers of companies providing services in the field of tourism

Topic approached	Share in total interventions (%)
Topic 1: About marketing promotional activities	41.11
Topic 2: About the results of the promotional actions initiated and accomplished	22.78
Topic 3: New possible promotional actions	20.55
Topic 4: Costs of promotional activities	15.56
TOTAL	100.00

6. CONCLUSIONS

Within the interventions it was outlined in detail the great importance of marketing promotional activities, thus outlining their role in the tourist service activities. Starting from the interviewees' opinions I concluded that: promotional activities, although costs generating are particularly important both in the entry on the market phase and afterwards. However, a differentiated approach is necessary depending on the targeted market segment to attract a larger number of consumers of tourism services. Managers in the sample said that they are concerned with addressing possible future promotional activities in order to attract a larger number of consumers of tourism services. However this does not lead to the identification of the best ways to promote tourism services in order to overcome certain amateurism that exist in this area. From the analysis of hotel and hostel managers' opinions a certain clear distinction between these two categories results in the sense of a big new focus and a deeper approach to tourism services promotion policy and strategies offered by hostels managers. Hostels managers have reviewed their promotional policies in a broader vision to the extent that their opinions show that attracting tourists ultimately depends on the quality of services offered, staff friendliness, the environment attractiveness.

It is considered that for a better exploitation of the tourism potential which is characteristic to Covasna County, the hotel and 3 stars hostel managers should attach greater importance to marketing policies and strategies concerning the promotion policy.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Balaure V., Cătoiu I., et al (2005) *Marketing turistic (Tourism marketing)*, Uranus Publishing House, Bucharest.
2. Brăţucă G., Brăţucă T.O. (2006) *Metode calitative utilizate în cercetarea pieţei (Qualitative methods used in market research)*, Management & Marketing, vol.1, no.1, pp.47-58.
3. Cătoiu I., Bălan C., et al (2002) *Cercetări de marketing (Marketing Research)*, Uranus Publishing House, Bucharest.
4. Kovács P. (2004) *Marketing turistic. Teorie şi aplicaţii (Tourism Marketing. Theory and Applications)*, Kodlányi János Főiskola Publishing House, Székesfehérvár.
5. Iordache M.C., Rizea I. et al (2010) *Information documents – primordial instruments in tourist communication*, Management & Marketing, vol. VIII, no.1, pp.153-160.
6. Lefter C. (2004) *Cercetarea de marketing. Teorie şi aplicaţii (Marketing Research. Theory and Applications)*, Infomarket Publishing House, Braşov.
7. Malhotra N.K. (2005) *Marketing Research: An Applied Orientation*, Akadémiai Publishing House, Budapest.
8. Micu C.C. (2010) *Advertising and product trial: The effect of message's regulatory focus and product type on consumer evaluations*, Management & Marketing, vol.5, no.4, pp.67-82.
9. Nedelea A. (2003) *Politici de marketing în turism (Marketing Policies in Tourism)*, Economic Publishing House, Bucharest.
10. Scutariu A.L. (2006) *Consideraţii privind impactul Internetului asupra dezvoltării şi promovării turismului (Considerations on Internet impact on tourism development and promotion)*, Journal of Tourism, studies and research in tourism, 1(1), pp.52-55.
11. Teodorescu N., Stăncioiu A.F. et al (2007) *Qualitative versus quantitative marketing research*, Management & Marketing, vol.2, no.3, pp.1-7.