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Article

Crowdsourcing: An Alternative for the Dynamic Development of Entrepreneurship in the Romanian Tourism

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**CROWDSOURCING: AN ALTERNATIVE FOR THE DYNAMIC
DEVELOPMENT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE ROMANIAN TOURISM**Dan Popescu^{1*} and Cristina State²^{1) 2)} Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania**Please cite this article as:**Popescu, D. and State, C., 2015. Crowdsourcing: An Alternative for the Dynamic Development of Entrepreneurship in the Romanian Tourism. *Amfiteatru Economic*, 17(38), pp. 162-179**Abstract**

Developing entrepreneurship is not only a challenge but also a natural consequence of the approach towards *success*. Entrepreneurship sustainability is conditioned by how the national business environment influences the education and mentality of the population to have the desire and courage to initiate and develop performance measures in a changing business environment more and more fluctuating and unpredictable. Our research, conducted over nearly two years aims, as main objective, to outline how implementing *crowdsourcing* as a way of solving, online, some problems regarding activities of major interests at organizational level (in our case, external communication), may contribute to the development of entrepreneurship in Romanian tourism. In this regard, we assumed that, despite the empirical mode of action (of priority being intuition and personal experience), only having reliable information on the perception, primarily, of their customers about the quality of the benefits they received, entrepreneurs in the tourism and hospitality industry will be able to adapt and/or develop their businesses in accordance with the main trends and characteristics of the environment in which they operate. The methodology used (analysis of variance - *ANOVA* correlated with *SPSS for Windows, version 15*) to test research hypotheses was the logical consequence of the questions used in questionnaires launched on two websites specially created. In this context, we investigated the biunivocal relationship between the phenomenon of entrepreneurship and business tourism and hospitality industry from the perspective of external organizational communication trends of profile units in the digital age, trends expressed by both managers and also by their customers. Finally, based on hypotheses testing, we found that, in a world of rapidly changing, boosting entrepreneurship became dependent on both the accuracy of the image the managers of tourism units have about their own activity and also on their customer perception on the quality of services they receive. So, on the one hand, *crowdsourcing* has become a viable resultant for the development of entrepreneurship in tourism and hospitality industry as, on the other hand, entrepreneurs need to motivate the participation of their own customers at *crowdsourcing*.

Keywords: crowdsourcing, entrepreneurship, change, sustainability, digital era**JEL Classification:** J26

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Introduction

With varying degrees of intensity, each of us is marked by a large and complex process of confrontation, identification, assessment and action (Paton, 2004, p. 39), which generates the need for permanent improvement of their performance and also creating new opportunities capable of producing change. In this context, the dynamism and richness of a country depends on the competitiveness of business and organizational performance which, in turn, rely on the entrepreneurial capacities proven through skills and innovative initiatives capable of generating national wealth. As a direct result of the development of desire *to succeed* and to identify *the new* capable of generating performance and progress, entrepreneurship has become a condition of sustainability and viability of the enterprise (Dinu, 2011, p. 6).

One of the most important resources for economic growth is the tourism. Worldwide, in 2013, the number of international tourists was nearly 1.1 billion (UNWTO, 2014), which represents about 15% of the world population. Considering that, in the same reference year, according to official statistics (NIS, 2014) Romania was visited by 1.7 million foreign tourists, this shows that our country has only about 0.16% of world tourism. According to the same official sources, the total number of Romanian tourists was 6.2 million (with approximately 364% higher than the number of those who have visited our country). Average annual increase in the number of tourists was in 2013, compared with 2012, 5% for foreign tourists and only 3.2% for Romanian (NIS, 2014). Obviously, these data reflect the existence of a huge growth potential of the Romanian tourism, especially in the field of entrepreneurship, in particular by identifying some diversified ways to attract new and new tourists and to make loyal the existing ones. In this context, we intend to identify to what extent *crowdsourcing*, as a way to obtain needed services and/or ideas by soliciting contributions from large groups of people and/or communities, using *online* resources and not traditional employees or suppliers (Merriam-Webster Online, 2014; Howe, 2006; Brabham, 2008), may be an alternative for the dynamic development of entrepreneurship in Romanian tourism.

1. Literature Review

In any modern and competitive economy, to entrepreneurship is given major attention. The term "entrepreneur" has evolved diverse but, generally, with the same sense. Thus, in the early eighteenth century, Say (apud. Vlăsceanu, 2010, p. 155) defined the *entrepreneur* as "... a person who transfers resources from an area with lower productivity in one with higher productivity and with higher profit, creating therefore value"; In the opinion of Cantillon, "... the entrepreneur is essentially an independent speculator of goods" (Peters, Freha and Buhalis, 2009, p. 395); Schumpeter considered him "... a person willing and able to turn a new idea or invention into a successful innovation" (1976, p.27); Finally, according to Drucker, *the entrepreneur* is "... a person who capitalize a new possibility with maximum profit" (2006, p.29). For its part, the term "*entrepreneurship*" has known different meanings. For example, for Cole, it was "... an activity dedicated to initiation, maintenance and development of a profit-oriented business", for Drucker "... an act of innovation, which involves endowing existing resources with wealth-producing capacity", Stevenson appreciate that it "... is the pursuit of opportunity, regardless of the existing resources", and Heron and Robinson "... the set of behaviors that initiates and manages the reallocation of economic resources and whose purpose is value creation through those means" (as cited. Rusu, 2014, p.7). Currently, the education to stimulate the initiative to undertake has become a component part of both public policies and

also of private organizational ones. However, the fear to assume responsibilities and risks, still exists too many people who think that to open your business, you need, first, a lot of money. On the other hand, there are opinions according to which although "... in universities there are some entrepreneurship courses ... they suffer from several points of view and often fail to achieve their purpose ... Suffer, primarily because they are not taught by entrepreneurs, but by the consultants or academics who have not developed or owned, never in their lives, a business" (Ghenea, 2011, p.25). Obviously, this is a way to question the competence and skills of trainers, which is unfavorable for the image of our education system. At the opposite, are those who exaggerate, promising and even guaranteeing the success of potential entrepreneurs: "... I assure you that if you are a "seeker", there is a business model that you can do it successfully, regardless of the circumstances in which you are or what experience you have experience in business! ... THE KEY is YOUR commitment on 3-5 years during which you turn your dream into a successful business! If everything is clear, let's start the journey towards SUCCESS and HAPPINESS ..." (Onetiu, 2014, p. 13). And yet, in the desire to seek the new, there are many young (and not only) which read this kind of literature, but do not have the courage to undertake. Beyond any opinions, one thing is quite obvious: "... the stagnation means regression, and whoever is not able to adapt as quickly, to the external environment changes and global competition, is likely to stand outside" (Egger, Gula and Walcher, 2015). Many specialists believe that "... Entrepreneurship is an engine of sustainable development", convinced that "... the innovative power of entrepreneurship will lead to the next industrial revolution and towards a sustainable future" (Pacheco, Dean and Payne, 2010, p.464). Consequently, there have been a number of new conceptual notions as, for example, sustainable entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship of the environment, eco-entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, etc. "Entrepreneurs see change as something normal and healthy. Usually, these changes are not made by themselves. But - something that defines entrepreneur and entrepreneurship - the entrepreneur always seeks the change, responds to it, and exploits it as an opportunity" (Drucker, 1985, p.28). Regarding the opportunity, in our opinion it has created and not "found". Although some authors consider that "... the chance to respond to a market need (or desire or interest), through a combination of creative resources to provide superior value" (Rusu, 2014, p.35), we consider that opportunities like demand on the market, must be created, in order to be exploited. It is therefore obvious that entrepreneurship is a *sine qua non* condition for success in life, a mandatory premise to succeed, in general, to depend on as few people as possible, acting brave, dynamic and effective (Popescu and State, 2014 p. 12).

Perhaps no other sector offers so many opportunities of entrepreneurship affirmation like tourism and hospitality industry. As a result of these, in the previous 25 years in Romania were created thousands of hotels and especially pensions, for whose promotion should deal not only specialized institutional organizations, but also the (from our research, performed between 30.06. 2012 - 06.30.2013) 3000 registered travel agencies nationwide. Tourism and hospitality industry as a whole and, more recently, according to some authors, and leisure (Rusu, 2014, p.76), is based primarily on entrepreneurship and on the activity of small and medium sized enterprises - SMEs - (Peters, Freha and Buhalis, 2009, p. 396). In general, entrepreneurship in tourism includes all commercial enterprises or activities located in urban or rural areas owned by small individual entrepreneurs, groups or business partners, private or public companies offering a wide range of services in the tourism industry (Lordkipanidze, 2002, p. 35, cited. Rusu, 2014, p. 76). This depends on the involvement of local people, through their role of employees or entrepreneurs, as well as,

especially, on the hospitality (courtesy, kindness etc.) of hosts towards tourists; So basically, on the socio-cultural, ideological, religious, ethical aspects, etc. (Blackstock, 2005, p. 39; Krce-Miocic, Vidic and Kovacevic, 2014, p. 144). As we mentioned, the tourism development is a source of national wealth, in a general sense, and to enhance the income of local communities, in particular. Consequently, the innovative contribution of all tourism units for the revenue growth in the area is very important (Ateljevic and Page, 2009, p. 149). Finally, all units operating in the tourism and hospitality industry are dependent in their results, on the development of creative products and innovative entrepreneurship. In this context, the cooperation and building networking and linkages with the environment are particularly important factors for success in business, as a result of adaptability to market situations under constant change. It is also important to stress that within an information technology enabled knowledge economy the management of services is profoundly changing, "in the sense of it being knowledge-driven, and relying on people's continuous development, network intense collaboration (sharing ideas and knowledge), and value co-creation so as to attain sustainable competitive advantage" (Plumb and Zamfir, 2009, p. 380). Simultaneously, we have to take into account the fact that individual entrepreneurs and also small and medium from the tourism area conducts many activities in competition with big profile multinational chains. Under these conditions, very few entrepreneurs will be able to grow significantly and therefore require multiple skills to be feared in competition with large companies, which employ specialists, especially given that the business prospects of the first are limited temporal. (Ateljevic and Page, 2009, p. 165-167). Revenue growth, resistance to a business environment that is constantly changing, requires from any type of entrepreneurs, especially the small and medium ones, knowledge of the real customer opinion (or what we consider that, wrongly, Romanian legislation calls *tourists*). In this respect, in our study we stopped at an innovative way to consult and take into account the opinion of entrepreneurs customers from tourism area: *crowdsourcing*.

After analyzing more than 40 definitions in the literature, the most comprehensive definition of *crowdsourcing* was provided by Estellés-Arolas and Ladrón-de-Guevara: "... *type of online activity, participatory, in which a person, an institution, a nonprofit organization or a company (commercial - a.n.) proposes to a heterogeneous group of people with different knowledge, by an open and flexible call, the voluntary undertaking of tasks of variable complexity and modularity... The benefit will be mutual: the user will get the satisfaction of a certain type of need (economic or social recognition, self-esteem, developing individual skills etc. while the crowdsourcer will get and use in his interest, all information provided by the user*" (Estellés-Arolas and Ladrón-de-Guevara, 2012, p. 8-9). *Crowdsourcing* is a complex compound of concepts *crowd* and *outsourcing* (Howe, 2006, p. 3) and comes from the words (English) *crowd* and *source*. *Crowdsourcing* differs from *outsourcing*, last one defining activities from external sources without them being ordered/requested by a group (managerial) inside the beneficiary organization. The outsourcing of services through *crowdsourcing* appeals to *online* platforms such as, for example, *AmazonMechanicalTurk*, *Crowdsprings* and *DesignCrowd*. The addressability of *crowdsourcing* includes, in competitive regime, individuals and/or groups of people and not employees or contractors, as in the case of outsourcing. Transferring *crowdsourcing* through internet was motivated by the reality that individuals tend to behave much more open on a specialized website, feeling more secure without the supervision from third parties, of their way of thinking and, especially, to act (Smith, Gharaei-Manesh and Alshikh 2013, p. 23). This, all the more as the atmosphere generated by *online* work provides extra attention and concentration of the tasks performers from a project, higher than the specific

situations of interpersonal communication such as "face to face". From a technical standpoint, through *crowdsourcing*, entrepreneurs can, on the one hand, to identify new developments in their field and also store them according to the interests they pursue. On the other hand, may entrust on specialized designed platforms "basic tasks" (*task-based crowd*) to exchange information with customers, related with, for example, their satisfaction with the services they received. This will be achieved, operative, anonymously (Smith, Gharaei-Manesh and Alshaikh 2013, p. 23). At the individual level, those who turn to *crowdsourcing* have two reasons (Howe, 2008, p. 19; Henk van, 2010, p. 8; Brabham, 2012, p. 27-28): *intrinsically* (social interaction, intellectual stimulation through competition etc.) and *extrinsically* (financial gain). From another perspective, *crowdsourcing* can be a source of stimulating entrepreneurship as an attractive form of promotion and manifestation of itself (De Ridder, 2008). For example, it can be not only a simple occupational alternative of entrepreneurs, but also a genuine form of dynamic connection of enterprises (in particular, the small and medium enterprises) to the realities imposed by changes in the nature of innovation in the digital age (Mwila 2013, p. 1293), in both cases with a positive impact on general economic and social progress. In this context, deeply favored and generating sustainability, viability and durability at both *macro* and *micro* levels, *crowdsourcing* represents an efficient way to stimulate social entrepreneurship, helping to create new jobs and facilitating social inclusion of persons in situations of risk (Egger, Gula and Walcher, 2015). Without presenting an exhaustive list, but relevant for how crowds can be called and used to perform tasks, a typology of *crowdsourcing* could include as forms: *the crowdvoting*; *the crowdfunding*; *the microwork*; *creative crowdsourcing*; etc. (Howe, 2008; Saxton and Kishore, 2013; Lombard, 2013; Brabham, 2012).

2. Objectives, hypotheses and research methodology

The main **objective** of our applicative research was **to outline the way in which *crowdsourcing* can contribute to the development of entrepreneurship in the Romanian tourism**. As we pointed out, in order to initiate and/or to develop their business, tourism entrepreneurs must on the one hand, to have a real perception of the degree of satisfaction of their clients for the services they receive and on the other hand, to encourage them to appeal at *crowdsourcing*. This implies the professionalization of external organizational communication, in terms of using the means offered by the digital age. In the context of our research, we considered *crowdsourcing* from the perspective of the interaction between tourism entrepreneurs and customers, as a new form of external organizational communication. In this sense, given that, so far, in Romania, there is no study in the investigated field, we focused our research approach on two axes, respectively, on the ways in which is:

- a) designed and built by entrepreneurs, the external organizational communication of tourism units (basically how they offer their services to customers);
- b) perceived by customers (tourists), the image of tourism units in the light of their feedback via *crowdsourcing*, concerning the degree of satisfaction with the services they received.

We started our approach with the following dilemma (which was also **the main hypothesis**): *why, given that, about the results of Romanian tourism, people speak generally, in praise terms, the approach of organizational communication in tourism units is empirically and is based primarily on intuition and experience*. In our opinion, this is potentially generating false perceptions of customers about the services of tourism units and therefore may affect, major, directly and unfavorable, organizational performance.

The three **secondary hypotheses** relevant to the role of organizational communication *in and for* obtaining sustainable economic performances by the tourism units were:

I.1 Entrepreneurs/managers of tourism units does not take a consistent approach for the organizational communication, based on the substantiation, development and implementation of strategies and/or appropriate tactics to attract tourists. Consequently, in many situations, promoting the tourism units is a direct result of advertising carried out by the *media*;

I.2 Organizational communication processes (both internal and external) are initiated, usually ad hoc, depending on current issues without being based on coherent plans of action and/or customer feedback. This is likely to jeopardize the sustainability of the specialized units activity, including towards reducing desire to develop tourism businesses;

I.3 The substantiation and the adoption of the decision to purchase goods or services is determined, primarily, by documentation taken by customers of tourism units and not by the efficiency of the way in which entrepreneurs in the field promote their own image.

We decided that after testing three hypotheses, to formulate a set of proposals able to ensure competitiveness and sustainability of the activity of units in the field and especially, as a result of *crowdsourcing*, to become a viable alternative to the dynamic development of entrepreneurship in general, to the tourism and hospitality industry, in particular.

Methodologically, both the professionalism analysis shown by tourism entrepreneurs in promoting their own image as well as the degree of customer satisfaction were made by *crowdsourcing*, as a potential method of qualitative inquiry, the instrument of information collection was a questionnaire placed on each of the specially constituted two platforms. Basically, what we propose is an *implementation crowdsourcing's debut* in tourism, especially if we consider that we haven't committed any *micro-tasks* to the participants nor we haven't rewarded financially respondents of the questionnaires created (procedure requires that, on average, a *micro-task* solved - a questionnaire, in our case - to be paid by 15-20 cents). From a financial standpoint, the effort of the *websites* creators would not be consistent when measured against the importance of the results (respectively, a more realistic picture on the quality on the one hand, of organizational communication and on the other hand, of services which benefited the customers of tourism units). For example, in addition to the cost of achieving *online* platform, in the case of its access by entrepreneurs in tourism (direction in which the *National Association of Travel Agencies (ANAT)* could make an important contribution), compensation of each *micro-task* (questionnaire, in this case) would require approximately 15000 units for the Romanian tourism units (hotels, hostels, pensions etc. and travel agencies - data source: author's calculations, based on all available sources of information), expenses of about 3000 USD. Regarding the implementation of *crowdsourcing* in tourism as a means of stimulating the entrepreneurship, on the one hand, we wanted to raise awareness of entrepreneurs in the industry to use this procedure in order to get to know the satisfaction degree of their customers and, on the other hand we aimed to demonstrate that, in the digital age, the possibilities for interaction between entrepreneurs and customers are more diversified, efficient and responsive to the environment changes.

Questions of the two questionnaires (one for managers/entrepreneurs in tourism, the other for customers of tourism units) were designed based on surveys models developed and applied in the field (Fuller, 2000 by Veert, 2007 apud. Deaconu et al., 2014, p.698) in collaboration with experts (academics) in psychology. Each questionnaire included 20 questions each, in our research being covered the subsumed of the intended purpose. Methodologically, in our research the knowledge of the respondents' opinion was made by

their free consent to access the *websites* specially created and not as a result of calling the recipients already known. Being announced, through various *social media* ways, on the opportunities to interact with entrepreneurs in tourism units and their clients, respondents accessed, *when* and *where* they wanted (time interval for which we consulted the accessing of the two *websites* was February, 15 to August, 30, 2014), *online* platforms available to them at <<http://goo.gl/sgzjU>> (for assessing the quality of organizational communication in tourism units) and at <<http://goo.gl/JUaLx>> (to assess customer satisfaction towards the quality of organizational communication in tourism units). We reveal that these platforms are permanently operative.

The first questionnaire, the one offering to entrepreneurs from tourism the opportunity to access the platform available at <<http://goo.gl/sgzjU>>, included questions about aspects with character: a) general concerning the organization and in the broad sense organizational communication; In this context, we sought to identify whether the profile activity is followed at the managerial level or at the one related with some organizational specialized subdivisions (as, for example, the marketing department, department of communication and public relations, etc.); b) specific, about *who* and *how* performs profile activities and what methods are used to stimulate and facilitate effective networking of tourism units, on the one hand and to ensure the development of training their employees, on the other part. This questionnaire has been accessed by 157 entrepreneurs/managers from tourism. There were some situations where those who accessed the online platform did not answer to all questions.

The second questionnaire available at <<http://goo.gl/JUaLx>>, offered to any customer of tourism units to formulate opinions on: travel frequency (internal and external) on interest category (private, for business or mixed); the documentary sources called before making the trip and whether they were helpful; their perception about the professionalism of entrepreneurs in tourism, from the perspective of the way to design and conduct organizational communication in accordance with their expectations and, especially, from the effectiveness of customer loyalty programs on tourism units (whether it is tourism accommodation units or the travel agencies). The number of respondents who accessed voluntarily specialized *websites* was of 2478.

From methodological point of view, to characterize the degree of professionalism of external organizational communication from tourism units, we used *the analysis of variance - ANOVA* coupled with *SPSS for Windows, version 15*.

Using *ANOVA* (according to Ostertagova and Ostertag, 2013, p. 256, "... most often cited research method in the literature of business" was a logical consequence of the questions used in the questionnaire. In our case, we started from the fact that *ANOVA* is used when:

- are analyzed differences between groups (tourism units classified by category of classification) from the perspective of one or more variables (each question);
- the participants (respondents) were tested (interviewed) in the study only once;
- are compared more than two groups (tourism units).

Briefly, *ANOVA One-Way* procedure (Ostertagova and Ostertag, 2013, p. 256-261) considered that we have values of the random independent and normal variables (tourism units, by type of classification) X_{ij} , where: $i = 1, 2, \dots, k$ and $j = 1, 2, \dots, n_i$, with the *mean* μ_i and with *standard deviation* constant σ , $X_{ij} \sim N(\mu_i, \sigma)$. Alternatively, each $X_{ij} = \mu_i + \varepsilon_{ij}$, where ε_{ij} are normally distributed, have values of errors $\varepsilon_{ij} \sim N(0, \sigma)$. Be $N = n_1 + n_2 + \dots + n_k$ total number of tourism units (n_1 being hotels from first group, with the classification of 5 stars). The parameters of this model are each question $\mu_1, \mu_2, \dots, \mu_k$, standard deviation σ .

Next it is proceeding to testing the *null hypothesis* (H_0):

$$H_0 : \mu_1 = \mu_2 = \dots = \mu_k \tag{1}$$

compared to the *alternative hypothesis* (H_1):

$$H_1 : \exists 1 \leq i, l \leq k, \text{ where } \mu_i \neq \mu_l \tag{2}$$

(there is, finally, a pair of unequal values)

Next, we accept that represents the *sample mean* i ($i = 1, 2, \dots, k$):

$$\bar{x}_i = \frac{1}{n_i} \sum_{j=1}^{n_i} x_{ij}, \tag{3}$$

\bar{x} is the *high mean*, respectively the average of *all data*:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^k \sum_{j=1}^{n_i} x_{ij}, \tag{4}$$

If we accept that s_i^2 represents the *sample variance*:

$$s_i^2 = \frac{1}{n_i - 1} \sum_{j=1}^{n_i} (x_{ij} - \bar{x}_i)^2, \tag{5}$$

and $s^2 = MSE$ is an estimation of the σ^2 variance, common to all *samples* (tourism units):

$$s^2 = \frac{1}{N - k} \sum_{i=1}^k (n_i - 1) \cdot s_i^2. \tag{6}$$

then *ANOVA One-Way* is focused around the idea of comparing the difference between groups (levels) and the *sample's variance* by analyzing the differences between them.

If we define the SST - total sum of *squares*, by ESS - total sum of *squared errors* and SSC - sum of *squares between groups*, then we have:

$$SST = \sum_{i=1}^k \sum_{j=1}^{n_i} (x_{ij} - \bar{x})^2, \tag{7}$$

$$SSE = \sum_{i=1}^k \sum_{j=1}^{n_i} (x_{ij} - \bar{x}_i)^2 = \sum_{i=1}^k (n_i - 1) \cdot s_i^2, \tag{8}$$

$$SSC = \sum_{i=1}^k \sum_{j=1}^{n_i} (\bar{x}_i - \bar{x})^2 = \sum_{i=1}^k n_i \cdot (\bar{x}_i - \bar{x})^2. \tag{9}$$

Let us consider that the *deviation* from a certain level of the *mean* is written as follows:

$$x_{ij} - \bar{x} = (x_{ij} - \bar{x}_i) + (\bar{x}_i - \bar{x}) \tag{10}$$

Consequently:

$$SST = SSE + SSC \tag{11}$$

The total sum of squares (*MST*), the one of squared errors *MSE*, and respectively, the one of squares between groups (*MSC*) will be:

$$MST = \frac{SST}{df(SST)} = \frac{SST}{N - 1}, \tag{12}$$

$$MSE = \frac{SSE}{df(SSE)} = \frac{SSE}{N - k}, \tag{13}$$

$$MSC = \frac{SSC}{df(SSC)} = \frac{SSC}{k - 1} \tag{14}$$

Considering that the conditions of the tests are satisfied, *ANOVA One-Way* uses statistical test:

$$F = \frac{MSC}{MSE} \tag{15}$$

Considering the *null hypothesis* (H_0) as valid, the statistical test has a *Fisher distribution* $F(k - 1, N - k)$, in which case applies to the testing criteria:

$$F > F_{1-\alpha, k-1, N-k}, \tag{16}$$

where $F_{1-\alpha, k-1, N-k}$ is $(1 - \alpha)$, respectively, the *quantile* (value taken at regular intervals from inverse of *cumulative distribution function* - CDF - of a random variable) of *distribution function* with $k - 1$ and $N - k$ degrees of freedom. Consequently, the *null hypothesis* (H_0) is rejected, having a level α insignificant.

The results of the *t* test are presented in the *ANOVA One-Way* table below (table no. 1):

Table no. 1: Model of table ANOVA One-way

Source of Variance	Sum of squares SS	Freedom degree df	Mean of squares MS	F - statistical F	Deviation size after F
<i>Between</i>	<i>SSC</i>	<i>k - 1</i>	<i>MSC</i>	<i>MSC / MSE</i>	<i>p value</i>
<i>Within</i>	<i>SSE</i>	<i>N - k</i>	<i>MSE</i>	-	-
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>SST</i>	<i>N - 1</i>	-	-	-

Source: processing after Ostertagova and Ostertag, 2013, p. 259

3. Research results

After consulting both *crowdsourcing* platforms, analyzing and interpreting the answers to the questionnaires, we found the following:

a) concerning the way in which entrepreneurs and/or managers of tourism units approaches organizational communication: in contradiction with the number of tourism units customers who accessed the *online* platforms to answer to the launched questions, number

that we consider to be important (2478) for an initiative like *crowdsourcing*, the number of respondents in tourism units may seem very small (157), compared to the existing one. We, however, consider, besides the fact that such a method is in the phase of proposal for implementation, being space for many improvements, both conceptual-methodological and operational and also the one according to which, as found, there is fear and even rejection, *a priori*, to new.

Related to the way in which tourism entrepreneurs develop and promote their image through organizational communication, respondents were able to express their views on the question "Who carries out external communication?". We found that, with majority, it is not in charge of a compartment or a skilled person, but in the one of the director or general manager, which explains the direct proportionality between the classification of the unit and the degree of professionalization of the activities related with internal communication and in particular, of promoting their own images to the environment. In cases where the director or manager assumes, exclusively, responsibilities related with the external organizational communication, the correlation coefficient is minimal ($F=15.132$), compared to the situation where there is a specialized compartment ($F=21.719$), as follows also from the data presented in table. no. 2. Statistically, *all thresholds of significance p are relevant*, which leads to the idea that the *results can be extrapolated to organizational reality*. Normal appears to us that also in the case where it appeals to external consulting ("external partners") the result is higher ($F=32.316$). The situation is presented with priority for 5 star hotels. Since all values of p are *statistically significant* ($p \leq 0.05$) it can be accepted **the validity of the main hypothesis**. In this context, eloquent appears to us that taking "control" on everything that means *organization's image* to the environment and even to its own employees can only have an adverse effect on the adaptability of entrepreneurial initiatives to its demands. We refer to the fact that not knowing the reality from the environment as little subjective as possible, coupled with even disregarding its *feedback*, these are generating, as a result of reliance on experience and intuition, empiricism in action.

By consulting the answers to the question "... Specify what ways you use in the external communication process and how do you appreciate their effectiveness", we found that in most tourism units, *internet*, *email* and *social networks* are estimated to be the most effective forms of external organizational communication. In this respect, the fact that F is high ($F=41.914$, respectively, $F=40.693$) only confirms the reduced focus placed by entrepreneurs/ managers on the *feedback* received from customers. As, again, in all cases, $p \leq 0.05$, **is reconfirmed the validity of the main hypothesis**, significant values of F (as shown in table no. 2) confirms also **the validity of the first secondary hypotheses**. As a particular aspect, we are really surprised by the confidence of tourism units' management given to *social networks*. We consider that it would be more useful to entrepreneurs in tourism, initiatives based on information provided by specialists in the field, context in which *crowdsourcing* can be an excellent alternative, specialized platforms being accessed only by those who are subscribed to them.

To allow us to form a more complete picture on the professionalism of entrepreneurs in promoting their own image, in order to attract and make loyal customers, we addressed the question: "Do you have in your unit, customer loyalty programs?". The responses received were demotivating for at least two reasons: either many entrepreneurs/managers say they don't have such programs or, if the answer "yes", the efficiency is totally insignificant (percentages of maximum 10 to 15 points of loyal customers, as a percentage in total customers). The conclusion is reinforced (table no. 2) also by the fact that the result in ANOVA $p=0.534$

indicates ($p \geq 0,05$), respectively, $F=0.824$. Consequently, we should not be surprised at all by the fact that the lack of professionalism in the field is a state of "normality", especially given that customer loyalty through "other forms" refers to "relations" of tourism units' management with syndicates from different organizations, "relations" whose direct result is to provide a greater degree of occupancy of the accommodation capacity. In this case, as shown in table no. 2, the effectiveness of the 'other forms' is supported, as "effectiveness" by the values of p and F ($p=0$ and $F=5.675$). These findings confirm the **validity of the second secondary hypotheses**.

Finally, the question "If you use internal communication audits, what aspects you follow with priority?" we were surprised to find out that the majority of respondents are interested in the image to third parties and customer relations, much less their loyalty. In this context, as is apparent from the data presented in table no. 2, the low values of F ($F=1.223$, $F=2.798$, respectively, $F=1.17$) correlated with the high p ($p=0.301$, $p=0.119$, respectively, $p=0.326$) lead to the conclusion of the insignificantly of organizational communication audits. Basically, we are not very clear whether, if indeed in Romanian tourism units (except those with a higher classification, 4 and 5 stars), are made this kind of audit actions. The findings lead us again to the conclusion of **validity also for the second secondary hypotheses**.

It becomes obvious, as a preliminary conclusion that the interaction between tourism entrepreneurs is real and not declaratively required. Context in which, we insist that appealing to crowdsourcing can prove useful by giving micro-tasks to anyone interested in contributing to the development of tourism activities. For example, a variant can be, by providing a crowdsourcing platform, nationally, offering, to entrepreneurs from the field (and not only) the opportunity to consult and to propose solutions to problems faced in their work, especially in the restrictive conditions imposed by the environment constantly changing and increasingly less friendly.

Table nr. 2: Synthesis of ANOVA Results for the Entrepreneurs/Managers of the Tourism Units

Question / Variants	Variance Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
1. Responsible for Org. Comm. (O.C.) - O.C. Department - Sales Department - Marketing Department - General Director (Manager) - External Partners	Between groups	32061.266	4	8015.317	21.719	.000
	Within groups	56465.037	153	369.053		
	Total	88526.304	157			
	Between groups	30910.003	4	7727.501	24.617	.000
	Within groups	48027.927	153	313.908		
	Total	78937.930	157			
	Between groups	32674.120	4	8168.530	21.700	.000
	Within groups	57595.051	153	376.438		
	Total	90269.171	157			
	Between groups	20603.242	4	5150.810	15.132	.000
	Within groups	52079.296	153	340.388		
	Total	72682.538	157			
	Between groups	24188.007	4	6047.002	32.316	.000
	Within groups	28629.493	153	187.121		
	Total	52817.500	157			
2. The most useful O.C. forms - Internet	Between groups	66185.687	4	16546.422	41.914	.000
	Within groups	60399.832	153	394.770		
	Total	126585.5	157			

Question / Variants	Variance Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
- E-mail	Between groups	20540.830	4	5135.208	13.700	.000
	Within groups	57347.885	153	374.823		
	Total	77888.715	157			
- Social Media (Facebook, Twitter etc.)	Between groups	44226.029	4	11056.507	40.693	.000
	Within groups	41571.060	153	271.706		
	Total	85797.089	157			
3. Customer Loyalty Forms - Phone or E-mail	Between groups	11318.678	5	2263.736	2.988	.013
	Within groups	115173.5	152	757.721		
	Total	126492.2	157			
- Customer Loyalty Programs	Between groups	1442.637	5	288.527	.824	.534
	Within groups	53226.122	152	350.172		
	Total	54668.759	157			
- Other	Between groups	11388.568	5	2277.714	5.675	.000
	Within groups	61006.122	152	401.356		
	Total	72394.690	157			
4. O.C. Audits - intended purpose - The Image to Third Parties	Between groups	2055.255	5	411.051	1.223	.301
	Within groups	51079.606	152	336.050		
	Total	53134.861	157			
- Customer Relations	Between groups	10828.872	5	2165.774	2.798	.119
	Within groups	117648.0	152	774.000		
	Total	128476.8	157			
- Create New Clients	Between groups	2899.195	5	579.839	1.170	.326
	Within groups	75310.754	152	495.465		
	Total	78209.949	157			
- I don't Know	Between groups	2681.119	5	536.224	1.049	.391
	Within groups	77734.457	152	511.411		
	Total	80415.576	157			

b) regarding the satisfaction degree of tourism units customers:

Concerning the manner of documentation appealed by customers to purchase travel services and their perception of their usefulness, the obtained results were convincing, as follows:

- the majority of respondents (2415, respectively, 97,45% from the total) appeals, with priority, at *internet* and at *friends and/or known people* (data are presented in table no. 3).

Table no. 3 The situation of information sources appealed before choosing a touristic destination

Information form	Number	Percentage in total (100%)
<i>Internet</i>	2415	97,45
<i>Leaflets from agencies</i>	406	16,38
<i>Tourist leaflets found in mailbox</i>	16	0,65
<i>Fairs and Exhibitions</i>	213	8,60
<i>Information from friends/known people</i>	2265	91,40

Processing in ANOVA has certified the conclusions regarding the appealing by customers of tourism units, at *internet* and at *friends or known people*. The coefficients *F* and *p* validate also the third secondary hypothesis ($F=59.607$ and $p=0.000$, respectively, $F=51.893$ and $p=0.0071$). The data are presented in table no. 7;

- regarding the level of customer confidence in the usefulness of information sources appealed, degree reflected in the fidelity towards the facts met in the field, from the data presented in table no. 4 (for 2411 respondents), results that, with priority (2097 respondents, respectively, 86.98% of the total), customers of tourism units have enough confidence in the usefulness of information sources consulted. Only 118 (4.89% of total) have total confidence in it. Again, the results of econometrical processing certified the findings regarding **the validation of the third secondary hypotheses** ($F=91.779$ and $p=0.000$), as follows from the data presented in table no. 7.

Table no. 4: Perception of the confidence degree in the usefulness of information sources consulted

<i>Confidence degree in the source</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage in total (100%)</i>
<i>Totally</i>	118	4,89
<i>Pretty much: advertising is the soul of commerce</i>	106	4,40
<i>Pretty much: i have a clear image</i>	2097	86,98
<i>Rather less: i don't trust</i>	87	3,61
<i>Not at all: I am interested to have a shelter</i>	3	0,12
TOTAL	2411	100,00

- assessing the real usefulness of the information received by the travel units' customers is shown in table no. 5 (we had 2411 responses). As can be seen, almost 95% of customers have a medium degree of confidence in the usefulness of the information provided by organizations in the tourism and hospitality industry:

Table no. 5: Perception of the usefulness of informational sources consulted

<i>Degree of satisfaction regarding the usefulness of the information</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage in total (100%)</i>
<i>Totally</i>	13	0,21
<i>Pretty much</i>	107	4,43
<i>So and so (approximately)</i>	2261	94,78
<i>Pretty less</i>	23	0,48
<i>Not at all: i am even surprised how can some lie</i>	7	0,10
TOTAL	2411	100,00

The results of processing in ANOVA (table no. 7) **validates the third secondary hypothesis** ($F=27.079$ and $p=0.000$);

- the overall customer perception on the interest of tourism units to have a significant feedback from their customers is unfavorable, most people who have used *online crowdsourcing* platform saying they believe that they were "interviewed" only statistically. Finally, our survey respondents said they did not feel to be treated as customers, just like "tourists" consumers. In this respect, deeply unfavorable for those responsible of tourism units (entrepreneurs, managers, etc.) is the perception of customers that their essential purpose is to "snag tourist". It is quite obvious, also in this case, that the ignorance of the reality perceived by customers can only be deeply unproductive for entrepreneurship in the Romanian tourism. Data for respondents' perception on the possibility of being treated as future loyal customers are shown in table. no 6.

Table no. 6: Perception of the respondents to the potentiality of being treated as future loyal customers

<i>Perception</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage in total (100%)</i>
<i>Totally</i>	11	0,44
<i>To a small extent; they just want to „pick us”</i>	1971	79,54
<i>They don't know the difference between customer and tourist</i>	61	2,46
<i>No way: almost everywhere I was treated with contempt</i>	428	17,27
<i>I don't know; I can't say</i>	7	0,29
TOTAL	2478	100,00

The obtained results (see table no. 7) certifies, once again, *the validity of the third secondary hypothesis* ($F=34,961$ and $p=0,000$).

Table no. 7: Synthesis of ANOVA Results for the Clients of the Tourism Units

Question / Variants	Variance Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
1. informational sources consulted before choosing the touristic destinations - Internet - Friends or known people	<i>Between groups</i>	35012.051	1	35012.051	59.607	.00000
	<i>Within groups</i>	91630.987	2477	369.053		
	Total	126643.000	2478			
	<i>Between groups</i>	1053.570	1	1053.570	51.893	.00171
	<i>Within groups</i>	86814.101	2477	556.501		
	Total	87867.671	2478			
2. The situation of the fidelity of informational sources consulted with the reality	<i>Between groups</i>	33451.9051	1	33451.905	91.779	.00000
	<i>Within groups</i>	56859.3920	2410	364.483		
	Total	90311.2970	2411			
3. The satisfaction degree of travel services beneficiaries	<i>Between groups</i>	7812.158	1	7812.158	27.079	.00000
	<i>Within groups</i>	45005.342	2410	288.496		
	Total	52817.500	2411			
4. The perception degree of the interest for the customers	<i>Between groups</i>	25222.253	1	6305.563	34.961	.00000
	<i>Within groups</i>	27595.247	2477	180.361		
	Total	52817.500	2478			

Conclusions

The concerns regarding diversification of the ways in which tourism entrepreneurs can motivate participants at *crowdsourcing* dates back more than 10 years. As relevant in the part dedicated to literature review, entrepreneurs in tourism considers a priority the manner of information transmission, using various means offered by the digital age. Smith, Gharaei-Manesh and Alshaikh showed that, "... with the involvement of as many customers as possible

in crowdsourcing activities, their desires and requirements may be established and retained" (2013, pp. 24-25). Currently, worldwide, there are some great *crowdsourcing* projects in tourism, from the collection of comments and descriptions relating their experiences of tourists, to the collection of images of the places they visited in order to create reference albums.

Our study is the first of its kind in Romania. A limit of our research could be that the two *online* platforms for data and information collection are only a first attempt of *crowdsourcing*, not giving *crowdsourced* services or *micro-tasks*, to be paid. However, we believe that with further research, including by making available to those who represent entrepreneurs in tourism and their interests (*Romanian Minister of Tourism, ANAT* etc.) ideas and potential ways of concrete action, we can sensitize decision makers in the creation of *crowdsourcing* platforms in order, first, to facilitate the collection of information from customers of tourism units, extremely useful information for future business development in the field and/or improvement of existing ones. In this sense, an example of how *crowdsourcing* can contribute to the stimulation of entrepreneurship in tourism is provided by *Wikitravel*, a project that aims to create an *online* travel guide available for worldwide use. Another very good example is *Holidaycheck*, a *crowdsourcing* platform through which increasingly more tourists are informing before starting a journey. In Romania this is possible by creating, for example, a portal where customers should express their impressions, evaluations and advices for prospective customers and entrepreneurs and/or managers in the tourism and hospitality industry.

We made these considerations because our study aims to reveal how *crowdsourcing can contribute to the development entrepreneurial spirit in Romanian tourism*. As a result of analyzing the views expressed by respondents who accessed the websites available at <http://goo.gl/sgzjU> and at <http://goo.gl/JUaLx>, we demonstrated that, at present, the approach to organizational communication of units tourism is primarily empirical and based on experience and intuition of the decision makers. As a direct consequence, both entrepreneurs and/or managers from tourism (157 respondents) and the beneficiaries of their services, customers (2478 respondents, of which, to a question answered only 2411 people), are likely to base their decisions on subjective perceptions, respectively on personal effort documentation.

The fact that in many of the tourism units in our country there is no consistent scientific approach to activity promotion and development of their image, which should be based on reliable information from beneficiaries of the services offered, this can be improved substantially and decisively by appealing to *crowdsourcing*. Basically, through *crowdsourcing*, entrepreneurs can, on the one hand, stimulate customers of tourism units involvement in the improvement of profile activities and, on the other hand, they can redesign and/or extend development strategies taking into account their opinions.

The results of our research approach (approach which will be extended in a more ample work, first in the domain of methods for improving organizational communication in tourism units from Romania) constitutes a first step towards a new way more constructive, scientifically more rigorous of substantiating the services offered by tourism entrepreneurs to their customers on their expressed *feedback* on *crowdsourcing* platforms.

Finally, we express our belief that appealing to *crowdsourcing* practice is much more than just a necessity, it constitutes itself into an alternative for developing dynamic, viable and sustainable entrepreneurial spirit in Romanian tourism.

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