

**The 6th International Conference on Economics and Social Sciences
Geopolitical Perspectives and Technological Challenges
for Sustainable Growth in the 21st Century
June 15-16, 2023
Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania**

**An Analysis of the Consumer Satisfaction Regarding
the Beauty Services in Romania**

Oana TURCU¹, Cristian BRANCU^{2*}

DOI: 10.2478/9788367405546-041

Abstract

The authors of this article hypothesise that a salon's or specialist practice's level of client satisfaction will determine whether it succeeds or fails, and that understanding the major variables that affect these levels can help service providers develop their business strategies and improve their operations in the future. In this essay, a research methodology that was developed after reading the literature and tested on Romanian citizens is presented. The population's economic potential, the nation's expanding business climate, and the locales' population densities were taken into consideration when selecting the sample. The current study aimed to determine the variables affecting consumers' satisfaction with beauty services.

Keywords: beauty services, consumers satisfaction, consumer behaviour.

JEL Classification : D11, J28, C38.

1. Introduction

The appearance is becoming more and more significant to people, making the field of beauty more appealing and interesting for both men and women. In recent years, there has been an increase in interest in beauty services in Romania, with both women and men (for hairdressing, beard style, manicures, and pedicures) expressing a strong desire for these services. The number of salons and the number of specialists in the area, both of which have seen considerable year-over-year increases, directly reflect the consumer interest in beauty services. Customers are becoming more conscious of themselves, their physical appearance, and their psychological state, which has led to an increase in demand for beauty services. Customers prioritise their own demands and interests based on their perceived selves. Additionally, this trend may be seen in consumer internet behaviour, particularly in terms of how they get

¹ Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania, turcuoana22@stud.ase.ro.

² Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania, brancucristian22@stud.ase.ro.

* Corresponding author.

information. The studies conducted so far also reflect consumer preferences for beauty services. According to Ekaterina (2017), "Romanians are becoming increasingly attentive to the way they look and feel in their own bodies, and this is largely due to the diversity and accessibility of the offers on this market. "The specific services offered (massage, cosmetics, hairdressing, pedicure, manicure, make-up, and hairdressing, for example) or more general phrases (beauty, beauty salon, make-up, hairstyle, etc.) can be used to identify beauty services.

The progressive expansion of the fragrance services industry is influenced by consumer preference diversity, the recognition of shifting customer needs, and the rate at which the private environment adapts to those needs.

2. Consumer Satisfaction with Beauty Services

The first description of customer satisfaction that has been documented in the literature dates to 1969 and speaks to "the buyer's cognitive state of being adequately or inadequately rewarded for the sacrifices he has made" (Howard, Sheth, 1969, p. 145).

The modern approach offers definitions of satisfaction related to business financial performance, market competitiveness, and the cognitive, psychological, affective, and physical aspects that consumers pursue. The degree of satisfaction experienced is responsible for a business' success or failure, as well as for customers' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the experience (Wong et al., 2008; Radomir, Nistor, 2013; Busu et al., 2020). According to a 1969 definition in the literature, "the buyer's cognitive state of being adequately or inadequately rewarded for the sacrifices he has made" is the basis for customer happiness (Howard, Sheth, 1969, p. 145).

In the modern approach, satisfaction is defined in terms of a company's financial performance, market competitiveness, and the cognitive, psychological, affective, and physical aspects that consumers pursue. The degree of satisfaction experienced is what determines whether a business succeeds or fails, as well as whether customers are happy with their experiences or not (Wong et al., 2008; Radomir, Nistor, 2013; Busu et al., 2019)). Customers are divided into those who are satisfied with actual things and those who are satisfied with service experiences. The distinction is brought about by the fact that services are intangible, transient, and interdependent, as well as by several influencing variables (Fečíková, 2004; Dimitriades, 2006).

Comparing what was received to what was anticipated forms the basis of all definitions of contentment. A specific level of outcome or expectation confirmation results in satisfaction, and a lower level of pleasure results from a lack of or delayed reaction. A specific amount of customer happiness determines a company's success or failure. Annually, a substantial number of clients are lost from a company's statistics without any obvious explanations for why customers aren't making purchases, but this has a big influence on earnings. Dissatisfied people tend to have negative perceptions, attitudes, and sentiments that have a bigger psychological

influence, whereas content people cultivate positive feelings, emotions, and attitudes about the acquisition (Shun et al., 2001).

3. Influencing Factors in the Choice of Beauty Services

Studies that focus on how consumers make decisions about which services to buy demonstrate that both internal and external variables have a direct impact on people. External elements that affect the customer's purchasing decision include cultural and social influences. According to Harnad (1990), Hofstede defined culture as a group mind-programming that separates people into different categories. Three factors can be used to describe culture:

All the characteristics that make up a culture are interrelated, so if one changes, the others will be impacted as well (Petty, Weinmann, 1997). Culture also establishes the boundaries between various groups that members of a group share. Social variables include the influence of reference groups, such as family, friends, neighbours, and co-workers, as well as social roles and status, on a consumer's choice to make a purchase. According to Cătoiş and Teodorescu (2004, p. 32), reference groups are things that people use to categorise themselves based on similarities in their ambitions, social behaviour, and consumer behaviour. The level of influence that reference groups have on consumer behaviour is lower and unstable.

The information process of perception involves the senses being affected by stimuli. Given the current mental configuration, which is characterised by attitudes, experiences, and motivation, attention is focused on the early stages of information processing and stimulus interpretation (Baker, Baker, 2003; Luo, Bhattacharya, 2006). By contrasting expectations with the perceived service, positioning the service in the consumer's mind, and consumer retention, perception becomes the key to service quality (Luo, Bhattacharya, 2006, p. 216).

In simple terms, even though people are exposed to identical realities, their perceptions can differ substantially from each other. As a result, a talkative salesperson may be perceived by one individual as aggressive and unfriendly while being perceived positively by another. Every individual has a unique viewpoint and will respond in a distinct way (Kotler, Keller, 2006, p. 185).

4. Research Methods

This analysis starts with the formulation of the research questions: Which are the determinants that influence consumer satisfaction with beauty services?

The data collection method was a survey, empirical, non-probability, questionnaire-based method. The instrument of the study used was the questionnaire, which was conducted using the *isondaje.ro* website. The responses were collected using the snowball sampling method, and emails were sent via emails. The questionnaire contains 30 closed and open-ended questions. The authors used a Likert scale in 7 points for the questions regarding the consumer's perceptions.

The population on which the research was directed is the population of Romania, regardless of age (people over 18 were selected), gender, educational level, and income who went to a beauty salon between July 2022 and September 2022.

Most respondents are young women, aged 20 to 40, not married, from urban areas (75.1%), with an income of more than 3001 lei per month. The least expensive beauty service that is often used is 300 lei, and the most expensive beauty service has a minimum price of 80 lei. The cost of beauty treatments varies depending on the procedure needed, the brand of items used, the reputation of the practitioner, and the salon's reputation.

The following research hypotheses are the starting point for the statistical processing:

- H1: Each factor affecting the provision of beauty services (frequency, cost, time, social benefits, personalisation of services, advantages of treatments, brand of services, and physical proof) has a significant and favourable impact on the level of satisfaction experienced by the consumer.
- H2: Each factor affecting the cost and frequency of a consumer's repeat purchases (frequency, price, time, social benefits, personalisation of services, advantages of treatments, brand of services, and physical proof) has a significant and favourable impact.
- H3: The frequency of referral to beauty services is considerably and favourably influenced by each factor of beauty services (frequency, price, time, social benefits, personalised services, advantages of treatments, brand of services, and physical proof).

The SERVQUAL model, which has been modified to give a complete, complicated, and detailed picture of the precise aspects that significantly affect a consumer's level of satisfaction with beauty services, served as the foundation for the research model that we developed.

We have kept the five dimensions that Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) identified for the current study, while we have added items to each dimension specific to the field of beauty.

5. Findings

The five characteristics of the SERVQUAL model that have been modified are included in the study model: accountability (social benefits), empathy (service personalisation), dependability (treatment benefits), safety (service brand), tangibility (physical proof), and retention (satisfaction, repeat business, and recommendation). The Cronbach Alpha index was used to further confirm the scales:

- With a Cronbach Alpha index score of 0.915, the responsibility component (social benefits), which consists of 11 items, verifies the scale's measurement of customer satisfaction with beauty services.
- The scale accurately gauges the level of satisfaction felt by consumers of beauty services thanks to the empathy dimension, which consists of 10 items and is confirmed by Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.919.

- The reliability dimension, which consists of 11 questions and is validated by a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.899, indicates that the used model is accurate and assesses the level of satisfaction felt by consumers of beauty services.
- The safety dimension (service brand), which consists of ten items, is validated with a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.920, indicating that it accurately measures the level of pleasure felt by customers of beauty services. To calculate the number of components for each of the questions included in the scale validity analysis stage before, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) is used.

We constructed variables that would be used to establish and define the study hypotheses using the two analyses (Cronbach's alpha and PCA) that we used to identify how the items of the instruments employed grouped into global variables. With the aid of Principal Component Analysis, the operation of averaging the item scores of each extracted component was utilised to generate the construct variables. The database of all the responses provided by the people under investigation was subjected to the process of adding the scores. The responsibility dimension (social benefits) receives a KMO value of 0.900, and the total variance indicates breaking the dimension into two constructs: social benefits and personal image. These construct variables will be employed in the analyses that follow:

- The measure of empathy (personalisation of services) has a KMO value of 0.897, and the further personalisation of services construct accounts for all variances. Benefits of treatments, which measures reliability, has a KMO value of 0.884, and the overall variation is explained by a single construct known as additional benefits of treatments.
- The KMO value for the reliability dimension (service branding) is 0.897, and the overall variation points to the existence of the constructs known as provider notoriety and product notoriety. The research hypotheses could be validated or disproved once statistical tests were applied, depending on the outcomes.

As a result, hypothesis H1 is fully supported, but H2 and H3 are just moderately supported. The level of customer repeat purchases and the level of recommendation of beauty services are not impacted by price in the cases of hypothesis H2 and H3, respectively.

6. Conclusions

In addition to being considered a pioneer in the field, this paper presents a comprehensive picture of beauty services and consumer satisfaction measurement.

The study offers value by presenting a theoretical framework for customer satisfaction outcomes that emphasises the contrasts between expectations and perceptions, as well as the financial implications of a favourable result, symbolised by a level of satisfaction. Practically speaking, the research model's central tenet is the influence of factors typical of the beauty service sector on consumer pleasure, including the influence of satisfaction on future consumer behaviour and the influence of factors on future customer actions.

The research presents a complex, adequate, valid, and specific research model to study the factors influencing the satisfaction of consumers of beauty services and

determine the level of satisfaction based on the consumer benefits obtained from the performance of the beauty services, according to the applied research methodology.

Firstly, this analysis provides professionals and salon managers with a comprehensive and industry-specific tool to identify the most important factors that lead to increased client satisfaction. Secondly, the research determines satisfaction levels and the relationship between satisfaction and periodical customer actions, which are significant markers that can be used to direct future business-level initiatives.

Finally, the beauty consumer satisfaction research model provides leaders and employees with the opportunity to determine the degree of satisfaction perceived by consumers after receiving or reviewing beauty services.

The analysis could be extended by applying the questionnaire to the entire country to include the municipalities. Additionally, an extension could be made by making a comparison of the findings according to the eight regions of the country. By conducting qualitative research (interview/focus groups) among consumers to determine the most prevalent social, psychological, and behavioural aspects as expressed by customers toward an increase in the degree of satisfaction, further changes might be taken into consideration.

References

- [1] Baker, M.C., Baker, M.C. (2003). *Lexical categories: Verbs, nouns and adjectives* (Vol. 102). Cambridge University Press.
- [2] Busu, M., Clodnitchi, R., Mureşan, M.L. (2019). A correlation analysis of the spot market prices of the Romanian electricity sector, *Management & Marketing. Challenges for the Knowledge Society*, 14(1), 150-162.
- [3] Busu, M., Vargas, M.V., Gherasim, I.A. (2020). An analysis of the economic performances of the retail companies in Romania, *Management & Marketing. Challenges for the Knowledge Society*, 15(1), 125-133.
- [4] Cătoi, I., Teodorescu, N. (2004). *Comportamentul consumatorului*. Editura Uranus.
- [5] Dimitriades, Z.S. (2006). Customer satisfaction, loyalty and commitment in service organizations: Some evidence from Greece, *Management Research News*, 29(12), 782-800.
- [6] Ekaterina, K. (2017). PR technologies of health and beauty company's promotion: A case study of the Alex Fitness company in St. Petersburg.
- [7] Fečíková, I. (2004). An index method for measurement of customer satisfaction, *The TQM Magazine*.
- [8] Harnad, S. (1990). The symbol grounding problem. *Physica D: Nonlinear Phenomena*, 42(1-3), 335-346.
- [9] Howard, J.A., Sheth, J.N. (1969). The theory of buyer behavior, *New York*, 63, 145.
- [10] Kotler, P., Keller, K.L. (2006). Marketing management 12e, *Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pears Education*.
- [11] Luo, X., Bhattacharya, C.B. (2006). Corporate social responsibility, customer satisfaction, and market value, *Journal of marketing*, 70(4), 1-18.

- [12] Petty, T.L., Weinmann, G.G. (1997). Building a national strategy for the prevention and management of and research in chronic obstructive pulmonary disease: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute workshop summary, *Jama*, 277(3), 246-253.
- [13] Radomir, L., Nistor, V.C. (2013). An application of technology acceptance model to internet banking services, In *The Proceedings of the International Conference "Marketing-from Information to Decision"*, p. 251, Babes Bolyai University.
- [14] Shun, Z., Yuan, W., Brady, W.E., Hsu, H. (2001). Type I error in sample size re-estimations based on observed treatment difference, *Statistics in Medicine*, 20(4), 497-513.
- [15] Wong, M., Gardiner, E., Lang, W., Coulon, L. (2008). Generational differences in personality and motivation: do they exist and what are the implications for the workplace?, *Journal of managerial psychology*, 23(8), 878-890.