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Performance in the View of the Managers Working in the Hotel Industry - An Empirical Study Made on Entities from Romania

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Abstract

Tourism plays a very important part in the economy of all the countries due to its economical potential, the occupation of the working force as well as its social and environmental involvement. Tourism and the hotel industry directly or indirectly, represent 10 % of the world's internal production (WIP). The industry of hospitality is that industry of the national and world economy that has been developed dynamically on a large scale in the XXI century in spite of the crises undergone by the world economy, defying the changes in the world markets influenced by political and safety factors, with major changes in the trends of technology. All these have a great impact on the perception and behaviour of all the consumers'. We want performance in our business, in all the activities performed on a daily basis, but we must ask the question "what is performance?" What do we mean by performance in the hotel and touristic industry /industry of hospitality and tourism? What is the perception of managers from this industry concerning the concept of performance? This question was asked to the managers from the hospitality and touristic industry in the county of Bihor during an empiric research viewing aspects such as the managers' perception concerning performance in this industry, the tools used to measure performance, the importance of the accounting information for the management of the entities from this field of activity. The empiric research is based on an enquiry made from November 2018 to January 2019. The tool/means used were a questionnaire made up of 38 questions on the field and on-line. The population is made of the 140 economical entities from Bihor from this field of activity. The sample is formed by 91 touristic entities, and because the answering rate was small for the on-line research, we preferred to go to the spot and thus the rate increased to 62.33%. 83.5% of the managers replied that performance/competitiveness in this area is influenced by the degree of occupation of the capacities that they dispose of, and secondly by the demand for services and touristic packages offered. This has been the view of 75.8 of the inquired managers. It is worth mentioning that unexpectedly under 50% mentioned the importance of the accounting balance as a factor influencing the performance in this field of activity. In spite of identified limitations (the small area where the questionnaires were applied, but also the big number of questions requiring a maximum of concentration) we still think that this research brought some added value to the local researches concerning the managers' perception on performance regarding various aspects of the managerial accounting in the industry of hospitality and tourism and the valorification of the accounting information in the process of taking decisions opening the perspectives to future research.

Keywords

Performance, industry of hospitality, accounting information, managers

JEL Codes: M41, L83

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1. Introduction

Tourism and the industry of hospitality is an industry of huge unexploited potential. The arrival of international tourists increased from 25 millions worldwide to a spectacular 1186 million in 2016 and the takings earned from international tourism for destinations all over the world, increased from 2 bill \$ in 1950 to 1260 bill \$ in 2015. By tourism and hospitality we mean first of all the activities that help people spend their spare/free time Secondly, we mean the industry of goods and services created to satisfy the wishes and preferences or motivations requested by the tourists at their destinations. So tourism results from the conjugated effects of several branches/fields of activities and we can say in conclusion that the touristic product is not of high quality unless the contribution of the other branches is of the highest quality. The economic entities that have an activity within the industry of hospitality and tourism can be performant only if they offer their guests high quality touristic product. The ever increasing expectations of the guests (because from our point of view we consider the tourists our guests) have created a huge competition in this field of activity. The most important part in organizing this business belongs to the managers. In this context the managerial accounting has to be of great help, offering relevant, credible, helpful information for the management of the entities from this field of activity.

2. Literature review

2.1. Performance – unattainable target or „fata morgana (illusion)”

We all look for performance, we want ourselves to be performant but we are curious to find out: What is performance? How can we measure it? What are the factors that influence it?

The sage Arsenie Boca used to say that „Performance is our permanent struggle with shallowness.”

The word performance comes from Latin from the word performare which means to totally shape an object/a thing. But its significance comes from English where the verb to perform means to regularly accomplish a thing that requires a certain ability or skill, to carry out a contract, to keep a promise. According to Business Dictionary performance means *the accomplishment of a given task measured against preset known standards of accuracy, completeness, cost, and speed. In a contract, performance is deemed to be the fulfillment of an obligation, in a manner that releases the performer from all liabilities under the contract* (DEX, 2016) and in contract terms means to successfully carry out the riders of a contract without any other interpretations.

Romanian Language Explicative Dictionary defines performance as being the (excellent) result that one gets in a sport competition, an outstanding result in a certain field, the best result got by a technic system, a machine, a device. Thus, performance is the result of a comparison, of describing certain results over a long period of time. To be performant means to accomplish or surpass your set goals.

The economical unit represents the basic unit of economy, being made out of more aspects: technical, financial, social, human, relational and even cultural. How can such a unit measure its performance? By comparing it to its previous situation? By comparing it to the top one/number one/the most performant entity? By considering the future? But what importance can predictions have over the typical circle of financial crises, speculations and announced economical collapses? (Jianu, 2007).

Table 1. interpretations and meanings regarding the word performance

Period	Authors	Performance definition
1957	Georgopoulos and Tannenbaum	It is the equivalent of organisational efficacy, the extent to which an organisation manages to accomplish its goals without an excessive effort from its members The criteria of measuring performance are: productivity, flexibility and inter-organisational tensions.
1966	Katz and Kahn	It means maximising the income which an entity can get out of its functioning by efficiently using its economical, technical and political means. The criteria of measuring performance are: growth, supplies, survival, environmental mastery/control.
1967	Yachtman and Seashore	It is the capacity of an entity to explore the environment in order to get rare resources and resources that are essential to its functioning. The criteria of measuring performance are: fiscal value, production costs, productivity, growth, the importance of administration, market penetration.
1976	Klein	A financially performant entity is characterized by: a constant investment policy (the growth of fixed assets), a good knowledge and mastery of production costs, effective management of the means of exploitation noticed at the level of the high-return of invested capital (covering operating needs by using the working capital), a good financial balance (Jianu, 2007).
1989	J Richard	From the audit's point of view the main factors to determine performance are Profitability, Lucrativeness, Productivity, Output (Richard, 1989)
1999	Bernard Colasse	Performance = Lucrativeness; Lucrativeness = Profit
1995	Bourguignon (Gilbert, Charpentier, 2003)	Has more meanings out of which three main meanings: A success (each financial entity has its own view on success, and performance will be different from one entity to another; the result of actions; the action itself because performance is a process not an outcome. Accomplishing organisational goals (performance connected to administration).
	T. J. Peter and R.W. Waterman	Performance can be equated with the concept of excellence which is based on four determiners: the efficiency of the organisation, social identity, goal accomplishment and the reputation of the organisation (Jianu, 2007).
1996	Norton and Kaplan	The performance of an entity in order to accomplish its strategic goals should not be regarded only financially, but also non-financially, perspective that pertains to the client, internal processes and the perspective of learning and growth.
1997	Atkinson et al.	The trend to develop performance is based on improving the financial markers (economic added value EVA), but also the non-financial markers (clients' satisfaction, staff satisfaction).
2003	Allouche, Charpentier et Guillot	Performance measurement indicators are: the price of shares, the return on capital, the rate of profit, the increase of sales, fiscal value, clients' satisfaction, quality, work productivity.
2004	Bouquin	The general issue of performance implies a series of phases: Economy-Efficiency-Efficacy. Economy means to get resources at minimal prices; efficiency means to maximize the quantity of products and services got out of a given quantity of resources (Lucrativeness=Profit/Invested capital and Productivity=Gained amount/Consumed amount); efficacy means to accomplish the set purposes and goals. To measure performance we need to measure its three dimensions that make it up (Dohou, Berland, 2007).
2006	Alegre et al.	Performance means innovation, developing new markets, environmental actions.
2010	Ya-Hui Ling and Ling Hung	Financial performance is not the only survival element faced with competition. Organisational performance means the actual results of relevant activities carried out within the organization departments in a certain period of time (Mei-Fen Wu et al., 2012).

3. Methodology of research

Our research is an exploratory one. It wants to analyse the managers' behaviour and thinking towards performance and the usage of information in the decision making process. The research is based on a questionnaire that we applied to hospitality industry managers in Bihor. We selected 146 economical units in this area. They all had authorisation to perform the activities specific to the hospitality and tourism industry. The survey was made during November 2013 – January 2014. The questionnaire was both online and face-to-face at the premises of the units. The questionnaire we applied contains 38 questions that can be organised in two categories:

General questions in order to get the most accurate picture of the personal profile of the managers in our sample but also to find out more about the economical units included in our sample;

Questions regarding the managers' perception on the hospitality and tourism industry regarding the importance of accounting information, their view upon performance in this field and the way to make decisions for the good management of the existing capacities.

The process of spotting the population started by identifying the economical units that declared at the beginning of their activity the main code of activity 55 „Hotela and other accomodation facilities according to the National Classification of Economical Activities. For this identification we consulted the information made public on the internet page www.listaфирme.ro. At the moment we started to spot the sample population for our research we found 230 authorised and classified hosting structures with accomodation in Bihor county on the website of the Ministry of tourism <http://www.mdr.ro/ro/turism/unitati-clasificate>. We eliminated 84 of them which were authorised natural persons, individual or family enterprises. Finally, we were left with a total population on which we based our research of 146 economical units authorised to carry out activities specific to the hospitality and tourism industry.

4. Data analysis

4.1. Descriptive Analysis of the Answers and results

The general questions of this questionnaire are referring on one hand to the aspects that mark the identity of the respondents and on the other hand to the characteristics of the entities undergoing the research. In the first part about data regarding the economic entity the questions were about the size of the entity (number/value of the business, total shares, number of employees) the distribution of the entities concerning the classification of the hosting units and the supplementary endowments (treatment facilities, possibilities of spending the spare time). The first general aspect we wanted to emphasize through our questions was the distribution of economic entities according to their income value.

Table 2. Distribution according to the income value

Answer Variants	Simple absolute frequencies	Simple relative frequencies	Cumulative relative frequencies
< 35.000 euro	34	37.4 %	37.4%
35.000 - 7.300.000 euro	50	54.9 %	92.3%
> 7.300.000 euro	5	5.5 %	97.8%
No answer	2	2.2 %	100%
Total	91	100.0 %	-

Source: personally drafted on the basis of the aswers in the questionnaire

Most of the entities from our sample have a social capital from 35.000 euros to 7.300.000, while the majority of entities are under 7.300.000. The mangers were also asked about the classification and the type of touristic structures with hosting functions. For a better characterization of the sample economic entities from this point of view we have built a 2 entries table.

Table 3. The distribution of the sample entities according to the classification of the hosting unit and its category

		Classification of accommodation units							Total
		**	***	****	1 daisy	2 daisies	3 daisies	4 daisies	
TOURISTIC STRUCTURES WITH ACCOMODATION	Tourist cottage	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Resort	7	3	4	0	0	0	0	14
	Hostel	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
	Hotel	8	14	6	0	0	0	0	28
	Minihotel	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Motel	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	5
	Villa	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	3
	Rural bed and breakfast	2	4	1	0	3	17	3	30
	Urban bed and breakfast	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	5
Total		22	31	12	1	4	18	3	91

Source: personally drafted on the basis of the aswers in the questionnaire

The number of 4 stars accommodation units is 13.18% . From these half are hotels and 1/3 are hotel complexes/resorts. The majority of board and lodging units are classified with 3 daisies (51.4%) and one has 4 stars.

The questions from part II and part III are regarding the aim and frequency of using accounting information and the organization of the managing accounting and the management of the costs in the industry of tourism and hospitality, the perception of the managers concerning performance of the entities in this field of activity and the factors of influence.

Part IV has questions of general interest that have in view the manager's profile.

We wanted to show the *distribution according to the profession* of the 91 respondents from our sample. We did this because we wanted to show the connection between the degree of professional qualification and their perception on the usefulness of the accounting information. Looking at Figure1 we can see that the majority are economists by profession. (60%) 12 persons have other professions (translator, engineer, forester). They represent 10% and about 25% are engineers.

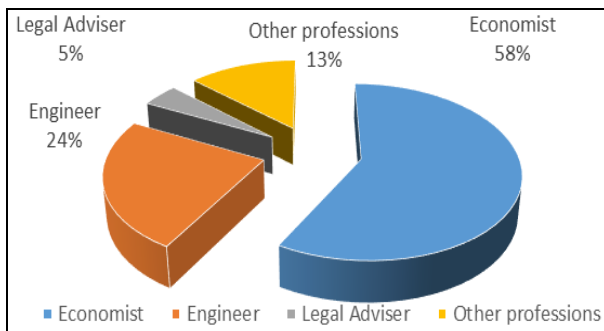


Figure 1. The distribution of respondents' sample by profession

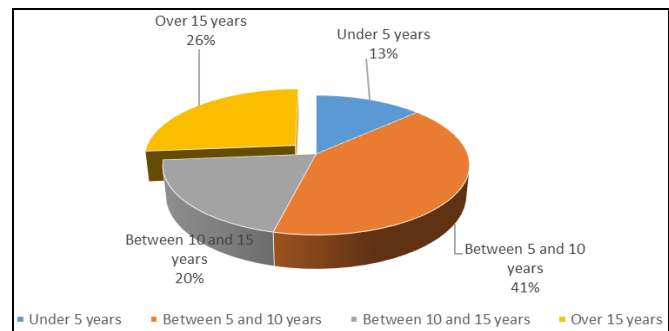


Figure 2. The distribution of sample respondents by the length in management

Source: personally drafted on the basis of the answers in the questionnaire

Another aspect we have had in view and the subjects had to answer was the length of their activity as managers. In our opinion the professional experience of the manager can influence significantly their perception on the importance, usefulness of the accounting information, their vision concerning performance and the factors/agents that can influence it. As we can see, in Figure 2 most managers have had this function for more than 15 years and more than half of them 56% have an experience of at least 10 years.

4.2. Testing the hypothesis of research

In the following pages we will analyze the validity of the research hypothesis concerning performance at the level of the sample and we will generalize the results at the level of the whole population. In respect of this research hypothesis we have divided it into 2 other sub-hypotheses because from our point of view the factors that influence the performance of an entity from the industry of accommodation can be divided into 2 groups.

Hypothesis H₁: The perception of the managers concerning the performance of the entity from the industry of hospitality can influence their option for the keeping /maintaining of certain touristic packages and their openness to make them more particular.

The questions on which the validation is based are as follows:

III.13. In your opinion what are the factors that can influence the performance of an entity in the industry of hospitality?

- The degree of the occupation of the places available
- The request for the touristic packages and services offered
- The contribution to the profit of each service and package
- The accounting result of the whole activity
- Other name it

III.15. What would be your option in the following situation (choose only one variant)?

- To maintain a package that is in great demand but less profitable
- To maintain a profitable package which is seldom demanded

III.16. To what extent are you willing to particularize a package or services (for example a special diet, for allergies, or a special entertainment request)?

III.17. Would you accept to particularize a package even if it affects the profitability of the offer or of the package but increases the degree of occupation?

If we want to validate this hypothesis we should separate our analysis on two other sub-hypotheses:

H1a To validate this we will use the following questions: question III13 with possible answers a, b, question III 15 answer a, as well as questions III 16 and III 17. H1b Here we will use questions III15 with possible answers c and d, and questions 15 answer b.

We will start now by presenting the distribution of the managers' answers from our sample for questions III15 and III 17.

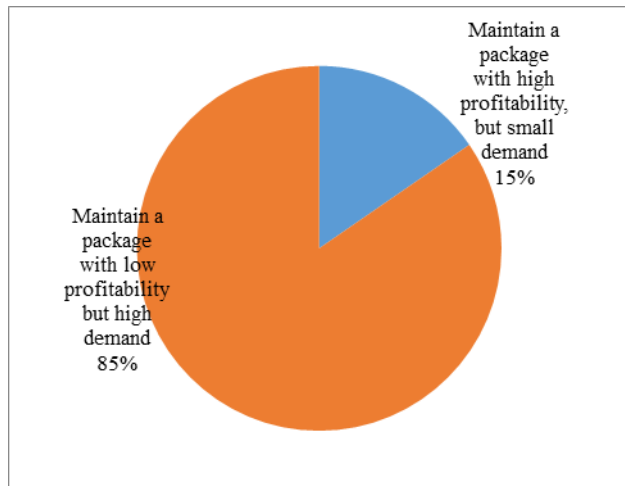


Figure 3. The managers' options concerning the keeping of some packages

Source: personally drafted on the basis of the answers in the questionnaire

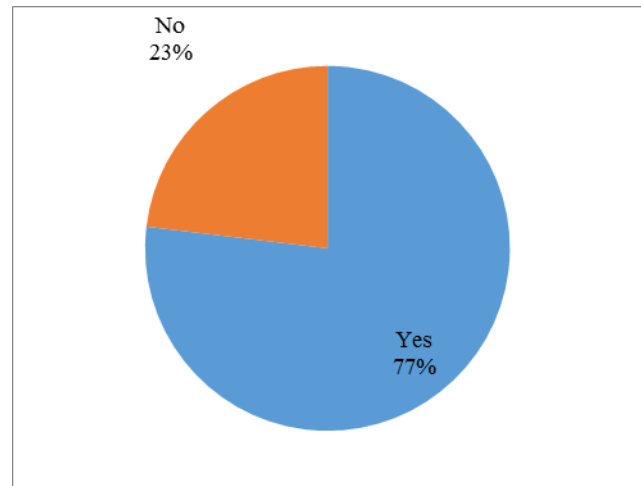


Figure 4. Distribution of the managers' answers to the question "Would you accept to particularize some packages even if it lowers profitability but increases the demands?/the degree of occupation?"

We can notice that many of our sample managers 85% prefer to maintain a package with small profitability but large demand. Also 77% of the managers accept to particularize the package even if it lowers the profitability but increases the degree of occupation. These answers converge to the answers received for questions III13 at which 83% of the managers answered that the degree of occupation is important. Analyzing figure 4 we can see that the commercial factors are on the first place for most managers, they don't take too much on account the book keeping information factors. (the contribution to the profit and the book keeping results are on the last place in their option for performance.

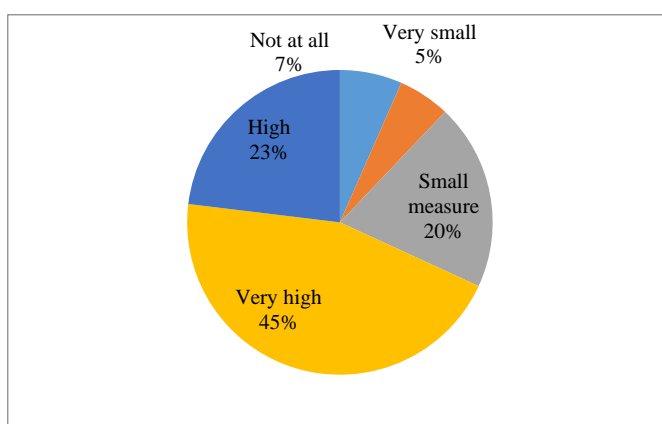


Figure 5. The distribution of the sample managers' answers to the question whether they are willing to particularize the packages in terms of diet, allergies or entertainment

Source: personally drafted on the basis of the answers in the questionnaire

We can notice that most of the managers-68% agrees with the particularization of their services and packages if these measures could increase the degree of occupation of their hotels. In our sample group only 7% of the managers answered that they would not agree to particularize their offers at the clients request no matter/regardless of/what impact it would have on the degree of occupation. 5% would agree in a very little way. Some of them do not have the financial, economical, material or human resources to cope/adjust to the clients' demands. and some consider that it is not worth the efforts would not be compensated by the profit. To validate this Hypothesis we proceeded as follows:

-referring to question III13 we scored the importance of each answer like this

-we scored 2 points for the managers who mentioned as an important factor of performance the degree of occupation of their entities in the industry of hospitality and the clients' demand for their services and touristic packages. 1 point goes to those who mentioned at least one of these factors and 0 point to those who mentioned neither of them.

- we scored 1 point for those who chose the answer -choose a package of small profitability but large demand/request at question III15 and 1 point for those who answered very much or much at question III 16 To what extent are you willing to particularize your services and packages and 1 point to those who answered that they would particularize their services and packages even if the profit is smaller but it increases the degree of occupation. Question III17. Then, we added up the scores to question III15a, III16 and III17. The next step is to make a table to correlate the answers to these questions. This table looks like this:

Table 4. Distribution of the answers related to the variables used to validate Hypothesis H₁

		Scor III15a, III16, III17				Total
		0	1	2	3	
Scor III.13a,b	0	1	0	2	2	5
	1	0	5	8	13	26
	2	2	11	13	34	60
Total		3	16	23	49	91

Source: personally drafted on the basis of the answers in the questionnaire

By analyzing the distribution of the answers we can notice a positive correlation between the answers to the 2 questions. The confirmation to the research hypothesis can be done through the test χ^2 .

The frequency table is recalculated with the help of formula $n'_{ij} = \frac{n_{i \cdot} \cdot n_{\cdot j}}{n}$: (1)

Table 5. Table of the frequency recalculated associated to table 4

		Scor III15a, III16, III17				Total
		0	1	2	3	
Scor III.13a,b	0	4,23	0,88	0,43	0,18	5
	1	0,86	0,04	0,31	0,07	26
	2	0,00	0,02	0,31	0,09	60
Total		3	16	23	49	91

Source: personally drafted on the basis of the answers in the questionnaire

$$\chi^2_{\text{calculated}} = \sum_i \sum_j \frac{(n_{ij} - n'_{ij})^2}{n'_{ij}} \quad (2)$$

With the help of the formula

we can determine the value $\chi^2_{\text{calculated}} = 7,41$.

As this value is bigger than 0 we can state that at the level of the sample there is a connection between the variables (the factors of influence on the performance, the disponibility to particularize a package at the request, the option to keep a one package or other)

To extend our result on the whole world, to all the managers of the economic entities of the hospitality industry in the county of Bihor we emit the following hypothesis:

$$H_0 : \chi^2 = 0 \text{ and its alternative } H_1 : \chi^2 \neq 0$$

The calculated value of 7.41 is compared to the values in the table determined for 6 degrees of freedom and a probability of 95% that is in our case 12.59. As the calculated value is smaller than the one in the table, the 0 hypothesis cannot be denied.

Conclusion: Sub hypothesis H1a The perception of the managers on the performance of an entity in the hospitality industry influences their option for the maintaining of certain touristic packages and their opening to be particularized with correlating questions III13a, b .III15a, III16, III17 cannot be validated.

H1b. To validate this we proceeded as follows:

-referring to question III13 we will score the importance of each answer we score 2 points for the managers who mentioned as factors of performance of their entities The contribution of each service or touristic package to the profit and The book keeping result of the whole activity, 1 point to those who mentioned only one of these factors and 0 point to those who mentioned none.

We scored 1 point for the managers who chose to answer at question III 15 To keep a package with high profit but little demand.

The next step in our research is connected to the validation of this hypothesis is the drawing of a table of correlation for all the answers this will look like table 5.

Table 6. Distribution of answers related variables used in validating the hypothesis H1b

		III15		Total
		1	0	
III13c,d	0,00	2	30	32
	1,00	6	25	31
	2,00	6	22	28
Total		14	77	91

Source: personally drafted on the basis of the aswers in the questionnaire

By analyzing the distribution of answers we can notice a positive correlation between the questions and answers. The confirmation of the research hypothesis is made with the help of the χ^2 test.

$$n'_{ij} = \frac{n_{i\bullet} \cdot n_{\bullet j}}{n}$$

The table of the recalculated frequencies using the formula

Tabel 7. The table of the recalculated frequencies associated to Table 6

		III15		Total
		1	0	
III13c,d	0,00	4,92	27,08	32
	1,00	4,77	26,23	31
	2,00	4,31	23,69	28
Total		14	77	91

Source: personally drafted on the basis of the aswers in the questionnaire

$$\chi^2_{\text{calculat}} = \sum_i \sum_j \frac{(n_{ij} - n'_{ij})^2}{n'_{ij}}$$

With the help of the formula we can determine the value of $\chi^2_{\text{calculated}} = 3.21$.

As this value is bigger than 0 we can state that there is a link between the variables at the level of the sample.

To extent our result on the whole population of the county Bihor, we emit the hypothesis:

$$H_0 : \chi^2 = 0 \text{ with the alternative } H_1 : \chi^2 \neq 0$$

The calculated value 3.2 is compared to the value in the table determined for 2 degrees of freedom and a probability of 95% that is in this case 5,99 as the value calculated is smaller than the one in the table we cannot deny the zero hypothesis.

Conclusion: The sub Hypothesis H1b The perception of the managers on the performance of the entities in the hospitality industry influences their option for the keeping of certain touristic packages and opening them to be particularized with the correlation questions III13c,d and III 15b cannot be validated.

5. Conclusions

The conducted study is wider, but in this work we presented only some aspects regarding the managers' perception on performance as results of our study and we tested our hypotheses regarding performance. For 85% of the managers performance also means the extent to which a certain product or service offered is in demand, even if its profitability is low; Only 7% of the managers said that they are not willing to customize their offer to guests' requirements, no matter how this will impact the occupancy, and 5% of the ones interviewed are very little willing to customize their offer. 68% however are open to their guests' suggestions; 70.3% of the managers declared that they are going to customize their offers by giving thematic tourism packages in order to increase the degree of occupancy. Secondly they will 64.8% of the managers will offer pricing and promotional rates; 77% of the managers agree to customize touristic packages even if this will affect upon the profitability of the offer or the touristic package, but will have a positive impact on the rise of the degree of occupancy.

We believe that the research we conducted brings new and original elements to local reseach in the field of managerial accounting in the hospitality industry, even though it has its limitations: the way we formulated the questions, the fact that we carried out this research only at the level of the economical units in Bihor county, the way we selected our research sample.

The present study will go on by investigating the hospitality industry managers' perception regarding various aspects connected to what performance in this field means, harnessing the information provided by accounting management, particularities of cost calculation in this branch of activity as well as different management practices applied in this field.

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