

# Identification of **customers' needs** for **tours**

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**Keywords** | Customers' needs, Tours, Lithuania, Tourism.

**Objectives** | Customers needs have widely been analyzed in scientific literature from various points of view (Marsden & Littler, 1998; Herrmann *et al.*, 2000; Riley *et al.*, 2001; Reinartz & Kumar, 2002; Assael, 2003; Robertsas, Varki & Brodie, 2003; Stankevičienė, 2004; Reichheld, 2006; Zulganef, 2006; Navickiene, 2010). This field of research is also very relevant for tourism sector because it helps to understand the customers' motivation to travel and, based on the analysis of their motivation, to make and offer such tours for customers that would meet their needs. A great deal of research has been made to find out customers' needs as concerns their satisfaction of the service, makes it comprehensible accessible benefit or comprehensible quality, raises certain emotions, and etc. Irrespective of the aspect the customers' needs have been analyzed, it should be kept in mind that customers' needs are different depending on the age group. The appreciation of customers' needs and their satisfaction allows developing a model of customer loyalty in prospect.

The problem of the research: The research that has been made until now fails to represent present day tourism business due to the changes of a customer that have been influenced by the economic crisis.

The aim of the research is to identify customers' needs for tours.

**Methodology** | Qualitative research has been made following the discovery of theoretical aspects as concerns customers' needs. This method of research has been preconditioned by the purpose of the research as it has been aimed at receiving deep providences of the respondents rather than receiving presumptive statistical results. The research was accomplished in the period of September - November 2011. Nineteen respondents participated in this qualitative research. The names of the respondents were encoded by giving the following codes: "respondent1", "respondent2", and etc. All the respondents belong to the same age group of "young people" (19-28 years) and all were asked the same 3 questions. The purpose of this research was presented to all participants at the end of the interview. Nine respondents agreed the interview to be recorded on the Dictaphone, while the interviews of the other 10 respondents were written down. The average duration of the interview was 1 h 46 min. The texts of the interviews were systematized and analyzed. Following the latter stage, categories and subcategories were segregated. The research was completed when the information received from the respondents started to repeat, i.e. when the effect of information saturation was displayed.

**Main results and contributions** | It has been found out what the customers' needs for tours are for the tourists belonging to the category of 'young people'. The results revealed that tours have to be more specialized. Also, slightly standardized tourist services are not attractive anymore, as they were before the crisis. Tourism companies, producing tour packages, have to know that for 'young' customers, they should marginally standardize services, classify services according

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to the age groups and leave more space for self-expression. Although tourism services are planned in advance, 'young' people want that the itineraries to be more flexible, i.e., easy to shorten or extend the duration of sightseeing or including new interesting attractions which were not visited during the first tour. The research also revealed that 'young people' are sensitive to price. This is the reason why tourism organizations should include basic services to the tour and give the possibility to choose an 'economic version' of services. This would help to compose the list of objects independently and decide on the most interesting and acceptable objects for customers. 'Young people' request what is exotic at the tours, i.e. new feelings and emotions which cannot be experienced at stable residence; they also request not to be passive listeners of tour guides but also to participate actively in the process of the tour. This research demonstrated that tourism services should be categorized according to the age groups and family status. More space should be left to self-expression of the costumers. In summary, it is possible to claim that it a clear service has been identified, following the appreciation of the customer, that is a tool for new business ideas of tourism companies.

**Limitations** | The analysis of only 'young age group' customer's needs for tourist travels has been presented in this article. The age of customers is important because their travel and life experience, financial position, physical health state, quantity of free time, family status and other factors are different.

**Conclusions** | Qualitative study allowed to identify tourists' needs for tourist trips. This study has a direct interface with practical application, because it was based on the results of the survey, so that tourism companies can create packages for tourists which satisfy their needs.

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