
EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGIOUS SERVICE CHARACTERISTIC ON PARISHIONERS' OVERALL SATISFACTION IN PROTESTANT CHURCH

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the factors influencing the satisfaction of churchgoers. The research framework was developed by conducting an extensive literature review to establish hypotheses. The conceptual model, ServQual, was adapted to focus on the environment of religious congregations, specifically the Five Pillars (Tangibility, Reliability, Assurance, Responsiveness and Empathy). To assess the impact of religious services on members' satisfaction, an exploratory quantitative study was conducted among members and participants of the Seven Day Adventist Church in Romania. Selecting this particular Church as the research context was justified due to the shared expectations of its members, similar to other Protestant Churches worldwide. A questionnaire was designed, consisting of thirty-one sub-attributes categorized into five areas (message, preacher, entourage, ambiance and location) representing the characteristics of religious services to be examined. The findings revealed sixteen factors that significantly and positively influence the overall satisfaction of churchgoers. Moreover, the results confirmed that the overall satisfaction of parishioners differs significantly based on certain controlling factors related to dimensions of religious services, providing crucial information for religious congregations. This research pertains to the relationship between religion and everyday life within the context of European philosophy in the 20th-21st centuries.

Keywords: churchgoers, satisfaction, religious, marketing, service

1. Introduction

In European Philosophy from the 20th to the 21st centuries, the intersection of religion and everyday life has been a subject of profound examination and analysis. This philosophical exploration becomes particularly relevant when considering its correlation with the influence of religious service characteristics on the overall satisfaction of parishioners.

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Throughout this period, philosophers delved into the complexities of religion's role in shaping individuals' daily existence. Existentialist thinkers like Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus contemplated the human experience without traditional religious frameworks [1]. Their philosophies emphasized personal freedom, responsibility, and the creation of individual values, which, in turn, could impact the level of satisfaction derived from religious services [2].

Meanwhile, other philosophers, like Martin Heidegger and Paul Tillich, sought to reconcile religion with the challenges posed by modernity. They explored the idea of a transcendent dimension or a 'ground of being' that underlies human existence [3, 4]. In the context of religious services, aligning these characteristics with parishioners' concerns and existential yearnings could significantly influence their overall satisfaction.

Furthermore, as the 20th century progressed, postmodern thinkers like Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault called into question the dominant narratives, including religious ones and deconstructed their power dynamics. Their critical analyses challenged traditional notions of religious authority and its impact on the everyday lives of individuals [5]. Consequently, parishioners' overall satisfaction with religious services could be influenced by their alignment with postmodern sensibilities and the extent to which these services acknowledged and addressed power imbalances.

In the 21st century, the exploration of religion and everyday life within European philosophy has continued to evolve [6]. Philosophers now contemplate the impact of globalization, technological advancements and consumerism on religious practice and its satisfaction. This necessitates a re-evaluation of religious service characteristics to ensure they remain relevant and resonate with the evolving needs and expectations of parishioners.

In summary, European philosophy from the 20th to the 21st centuries has engaged deeply with the interplay between religion and everyday life. When examining the influence of religious service characteristics on parishioners' overall satisfaction, philosophical inquiries have encompassed existentialist considerations of personal freedom, postmodern critiques of religious authority and contemporary reflections on the impact of globalization and technology. These philosophical perspectives shape our understanding of the complex relationship between religion and everyday life, shedding light on the factors contributing to parishioners' overall satisfaction with religious services.

Researchers began to grant conceptual and observational support for marketing to religious organizations [7-9]. Drawing on the conception of marketing, church marketing: i) points out to any activity taken by a religious institution to minister, retain or recruit more members [8]; ii) is the management of the voluntary relationship between the congregation and its members to meet both 'sides' needs; in deep, the focus of marketing used by congregations is creating high-quality services/programs, communicating efficiently and obtaining necessary resources to sustain their activities [10-12]; iii) core aim in the congregation is to recognize the requirements of the community and deliver proper programs that meet those demands [9]; iv) reveals that marketing within

Churches and other religious organizations is an endeavour to intensify members satisfaction and secure their commitment [7].

'Religious service quality' is a relative concept dependent on the perception of the parishioners, and the research results related to quality in religious organizations point to the importance of continuing members' satisfaction and long-term relationships [13]. Since the religious organization has become receptive to the idea that service quality and customer satisfaction management are critical in their mission, research has been completed to measure the interaction between specific service encounters, perceived determinants, and churchgoers' satisfaction. The present study collates with the idea that service quality is an antecedent of customer satisfaction [13], and a series of service variables shape overall satisfaction. Literature addressing the need to discover the indicators that underline service quality focus on: i) differences between expected quality and experienced quality explained by attitudes and behaviour, accessibility, flexibility, recovery, reputation and credibility [14]; ii) comparison between forming expectations and perception of services based on five dimensions of a predesign service quality model ServQual [15].

Religious organizations may apply service quality and 'parishioner's satisfaction research methods for the same purpose as a business organization, understanding how to better meet their members' needs and retain them in a very competitive environment.

There are several studies reflecting members' attitudes toward Church characteristics. Attaway, Stevens, Casidy present attributes (Church environment, ministry, music and congregational participation) that determine 'churchgoers' satisfaction to improve the quality of congregational worship [15-17].

2. Exploring the link between marketing, service quality and parishioners' satisfaction in religious organizations

Among academics, there is some debate about what type of marketing is related to religion and a theoretical research gap for how marketing approaches religious organizations [18]. Some here describe religious marketing as non-profit marketing [19, 20], while others describe service marketing. Santos et al. present two arguments for why congregations should be considered part of the services sector [20]. First, Church services are ethereal (the main criteria for the service sector), and second, members' degree of engagement of members in the Church supply chain, production (partial involvement), ministry and consumption, all of which contribute to service quality. Applied to congregations, Wrenn et al. mentioned that "churchgoer retention is the main marker of quality service, presenting the provider's ability to connect with its customer's" [21]. The delivered service is the forerunner for customer satisfaction [13]; their subjective assessment is based on personal involvement in

the service delivery process [22]. In conclusion, service quality is the important variable that triggers the satisfaction of parishioners [12, 21, 23].

Cronin et al note that customer satisfaction has garnered considerable attention in the literature about this field because of its capacity to affect customer behaviour and loyalty [23]. Various approaches, including cognitive and affective methods, have been used to define customer satisfaction and other indicators. The satisfaction of consumers with services, in general or dimensional, is determined by two main variables: qualitative service and perceived value [24, 25]. Based on this cross-bound, customer satisfaction is the main indicator of service performance. Anderson affirms that customer satisfaction is the organisation's fundamental responsibility since clients require continuous improvement of services [25]. When service quality exceeds the minimum needs and expectations of the customer, a high level of satisfaction is achieved [26]. When satisfied, religious consumers present a high level of fulfilment as a cognitive and emotional response to religious service [27-29]. Finally, for religious congregations, parishioners' satisfaction is an important determinant of participation, membership, doctrinal evangelism and loyalty of believers.

3. Conceptual model development

Developed by Parasuraman in 1985, the ServQual model [22] is successfully used in a diverse range of industries and types of customers [30]. However, the model is modestly presented for non-profit services, especially for religious services. The model is structured in five dimensions Tangibility, Reliability, Assurance, Responsiveness and Empathy (RATER) [31], being based on a comparative approach between the expectation and perceptions of consumers related to the five constitutive pillars [32]. Brown et al. [32], Jones [33] release notable criticism of the model, identifying that customers' expectations are susceptible to reliability and validity problems. The present study relies on the flexibility of the ServQual model, which provides the possibility to reshape based on the characteristics of religious congregations without damaging the model's basic structure of the model. The literature presents few models adapted to religious services: Santos et al. [20], a model based on 16 dimensions using variables from Johnson [34], and Mulyanegara [35], a model based on 37 dimensions. The authors approach the adoption of ServQual for two primary reasons: i) religious congregations as research foundations must reflect the considered environment, and ii) the model must be developed to reflect the study's objective, namely, the satisfaction of parishioners. The proposed model is based on five pillars of the ServQual model and 31 subdimensions of religious services, closely following the recommendations of previous research [9, 12, 21, 25].

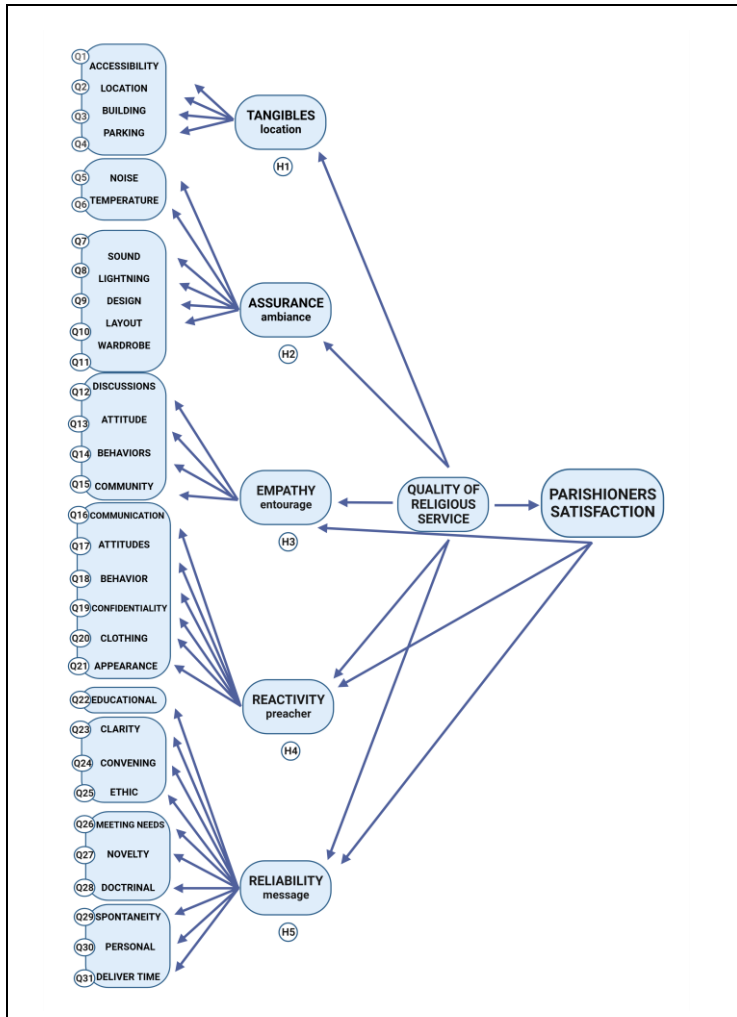


Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

4. Research methodology

4.1. Research hypothesis

Based on the reviewed literature, the conceptual framework in Figure 1 has been suggested. The general hypothesis of the conceptual model states that the features of the religious service have a direct or indirect impact on the churchgoer's satisfaction. The presented structure is a representation that over represents the variables and their relationships with each other. The dependent variable in this study is overall customer satisfaction, whereas the predictor constructs consist of the 31 subdimensions of religious service and the five dimensions of the ServQual model. To determine the relationship between each

dimension of religious service and parishioners' satisfaction, the following hypotheses were formulated for the study [36, 37]:

- H1: location has a positive and significant impact on parishioner satisfaction,
- H2: the atmosphere has a positive and significant impact on satisfaction,
- H3: the entourage has a positive and significant impact on satisfaction,
- H4: the pastor has a positive and significant impact on satisfaction,
- H5: the message has a positive and significant impact on satisfaction.

According to the conceptual framework, the characteristics of religious services may influence a churchgoer's happiness directly or indirectly. The study formulated hypotheses to determine the relationship between each dimension of religious service and parishioners' satisfaction, including location, atmosphere, entourage, pastor and message. The overall outcome variable is customer satisfaction.

4.2. Sampling method

After analysing factors that can influence the choice of sampling method, we concluded that an on-the-spot inquiry is an optimal solution [38]. A questionnaire was developed to collect the information that will solve the proposed hypothesis. A face-to-face survey was a method of contacting interviewees to obtain high-quality information. The designed questionnaire was adapted from research that used the ServQual model as the essential framework [12]. The document contains 28 questions, of which three filters, five identification questions, and the rest determining the influence of religious services on parishioner satisfaction and consumption behaviour. The main questions are related to overall satisfaction and related and explained by religious services. The inquiry is based on the importance and satisfaction scale of 5 steps (1 most important/most satisfied; 5 less important/satisfied) [39].

4.3. Statistical population

To determine to what extent religious services affect members' satisfaction, the authors adopted an explorative quantitation study among members and various participants of the Seven Day Adventist Church in Romania. The selection for this study was based on strategic considerations rooted in aligning its membership aspirations with those of Protestant Churches worldwide. Like its counterparts globally, the Seven Day Adventist Church in Romania shares fundamental theological and doctrinal underpinnings that echo across the broader Protestant Christian landscape. This cohesion in belief systems creates an ideal research context that potentially allows for the generalization of findings to a wider Protestant context [12, 21]. This study followed the investigation approach and used a self-administered questionnaire as a research instrument. The invitation to participate was distributed directly by the authors to various Church settings. Romanian residents filled out the inquiry,

participants in a Seven Day Adventist Church service at the moment of the investigation. The data were collected over the March-September 2022, totalling 400 complete and valid questionnaires according to the literature specifications [Statistica, I.N.S., *Rezultate definitive ale Recensământului Populației și al Locuințelor - 2021 (caracteristici etno-culturale demografice ale populației)*, 2021]. Of the almost 500 collected questionnaires, those with missing data were excluded.

4.4. The demographic structure of the population

The sampling structure by type of member is shown in Table 1. Respondents were members and participants of the Seven Day Adventist Church who lived in Romania with different religious and doctrinal backgrounds. The most significant number of respondents were members of the Seven-Day Adventist Church (92%), of which most members came from Adventist families (64%) with an average conversion time to Adventism of more than 10 years (48%).

Table 1. The structure of the sampling according to the type of members (n = 400).

Characteristic	Description	Quantity	Percentage
Gender	female	236	59
	male	164	41
Age	up to 30 years	68	17
	31 to 40 years	108	27
	41 to 60 years	224	56
Education	associate	164	41
	bachelor	160	40
	master and above	76	19
Status	members	368	92
	non-members	32	8
Members Status background	Adventist	256	64
	Orthodox	128	32
	Agnostic	8	2
	Pentecostal	8	2
Non-members Status background	Adventist	100	25
	Orthodox	300	75
Members' average conversion time	less than 6 months	68	17
	7 to 12 months	32	8
	1 to 3 years	44	11
	3 to 10 years	64	16
	more than 10 years	192	48

One-third of the respondents are former Orthodox Christians. This is an anticipated outcome, considering that a significant portion (according to the 2021 census data, nearly 74% of Romania's population identifies as Orthodox)

of the population in Romania adheres to this religion [Statistica, I.N.S., *Rezultate definitive ale Recensământului Populației și al Locuințelor - 2021 (caracteristici etno-culturale demografice ale populației)*, 2021]. The Seven Day Adventist Church in Romania operates (doctrinal mission) within an Orthodox environment, as a notable portion of the country’s population adheres to the Orthodox faith. The study was conducted in larger congregations to maintain sampling according to the distribution of Seven Day Adventist Church members by age and gender: 59% were female respondents, and 41% were male, with an average age between 40 and 50. Moreover, 41% have an intermediate level of education, while the rest declare a high university level of education.

5. Results (data analysis) and discussion - analysis of variables influencing religious experience

The parameters examined in Figure 1 have been operationalized according to the requirements of the literature, and the authors use a scale for measuring satisfaction. Encoded data analysis was performed using Informatic Soft SPSS 21 [40].

Data were examined individually (relative and absolute frequencies) [41] and crisscrossed to elaborate multidimensional analysis. A variable fulfils a mediation/correlation role if the relationship between the determinant and result [42]. Bivariate correlations using χ^2 test reveal if there are any statistical links between the analysed variables [43]. Standardized regression coefficients (Beta) helped determine the weight of the variable.

Table 2. Influence average scores.

Message	Educational	Clarity	Convincing	Ethic	Meeting needs	Novel	Doctrinal	Spontaneity	Personal	Deliver Time
	1.67	1.75	1.79	1.91	1.91	1.96	2.04	2.08	2.14	2.43
Preacher	Communication	Attitudes	Behaviour	Confidentiality	Clothing	Appearance				
	2.06	2.20	2.22	2.22	3.07	3.27				
Entourage	Discussions	Attitudes	Behaviour	Community						
	2.39	2.51	2.67	2.81						
Ambiance	Noise	Temperature	Sound	Lighting	Design	Layout	Wardrobe			
	2.67	2.87	2.99	3.10	3.23	3.37	3.59			
Location	Accessibility	Location	Building	Parking						
	3.21	3.29	3.47	3.67						

The present study reveals that the variables most significantly influence religious experience are related to the message delivered. Ideally, those implications of religious experience that have the most significant impact on believers should be the dimensions for which participants are most satisfied. As presented in the Influence average score table (Table 2), the most influent dimensions of religious experience are the educational message (avg. 1.67), the clarity of the message (avg. 1.75), the convincing message (avg. 1.79), ethical message (avg. 1.91) message meeting needs (avg. 1.91) message novelty (avg. 1.96). The least influent factors are parking (avg. 3.67), wardrobe (avg. 3.59), building (avg. 3.47), interior design (avg. 3.37), wardrobe (avg. 3.59) and location (avg. 3.29). Conversely, the worship location and ambiance variables are less critical for the parishioner’s experience.

As presented in Table 3 satisfaction ranking is determined by location factors, followed by preacher and message category. In particular, dissatisfaction is determined by the variables in the entourage. The highest satisfaction levels are given to members by location (avg. 1.77) and accessibility (avg. 1.83). Also, the preacher's behaviour (avg. 1.88), attitude (avg. 1.95), communication skills (avg. 1.94) and confidentiality (avg. 1.91), message ethics (avg. 1.91) and clarity (avg. 1.94) provide great satisfaction. Dimensions of religious experience in which churchgoers get the least satisfaction are ambiance noise (avg. 3.23), parking (avg. 2.97), wardrobe (avg. 2.71) and entourage discussions (avg. 2.57).

Table 3. Satisfaction average scores.

Message	Educational	Clarity	Convincing	Ethic	Meeting needs	Novel	Doctrinal	Spontaneity	Personal	Deliver Time
	1.99	1.94	2.01	1.91	2.08	2.12	2.12	2.17	2.01	2.35
Preacher	Communication	Attitudes	Behaviour	Confidentiality	Clothing	Appearance				
	1.94	1.95	1.88	1.91	1.98	2.01				
Entourage	Discussions	Attitudes	Behaviour	Community						
	2.57	2.48	2.46	2.19						
Ambiance	Noise	Temperature	Sound	Lighting	Design	Layout	Wardrobe			
	3.23	2.43	2.71	2.30	2.25	2.24	2.70			
Location	Accessibility	Location	Building	Parking						
	1.83	1.77	2.02	2.97						

Multiple regression analysis is performed to determine the ability to estimate performance scores of the dimension of religious experience. Although it is not an absolute test for the importance of each estimator, non-standardized regression coefficients (beta) are very useful in determining the right of independent variables in the regression occasion.

As shown in Table 4, the preacher's appearance and clothing are two strong and significant estimators of satisfaction (Beta 0.369, respectively, 0.424 and $t = -1.648$, respectively, -1.548). Churchgoers are often defined by exemplary behaviour (Beta = 0.358, $t = 1.402$). Particular importance should be given to those who preach in the church to keep their message convincing and ethical (Beta = 0.270, $t = 1.041$; respectively, Beta = -0.317 ; $t = 1.605$).

The χ^2 statistical test confirms the link between the characteristics of religious services and overall satisfaction with attending the church. The analysis reflects a direct relationship between the variables and allows measurement of its intensity. To complete the examination, Pearson's coefficients were calculated to present the intensity between variables and the asymp. sig. values, indicating whether the results are guaranteed with a 95% probability. For each variable indicated in Table 5. Below, both Person's coefficient and asymp. sig.

Data reveal the dimension of religious services, for which the Person coefficient ranks between 0.3-0.7, indicating the existence of an average correlation between the analysed variables. The remaining characteristics show a weak correlation with the general satisfaction of the study participants. Regardless of the existence of a medium- or low-intensity link, only those correlations present values of asymp. sig. less than 0.005 can be guaranteed with a 95% probability [43]. It is thus demonstrated that the parishioner's satisfaction in their participation in the religious services depends largely on all aspects of

the message conveyed, on the behaviours and attitudes of the preacher and other participants.

Table 4. The impact of religious experience dimensions in estimating overall satisfaction of parishioners.

Religious services dimensions	Unstandardized Coefficients	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B		Beta		
(Constant)	0.592	0.033		17.865	0
Location - location	-2.953E-02	0.083	-0.087	-0.354	0.324
Location - accessibility	-4.574E-02	0.077	-0.133	-0.597	0.153
Location - building	9.801E-03	0.073	0.029	0.135	0.393
Location - parking	2.129E-03	0.046	0.006	0.046	0.663
Ambiance - wardrobe	1.058E-02	0.060	0.031	0.177	0.360
Ambiance - layout	-7.417E-02	0.145	-0.215	-0.510	0.222
Ambiance - design	7.184E-02	0.143	0.212	0.502	0.217
Ambiance - lightning	-3.740E-02	0.058	-0.111	-0.648	0.219
Ambiance - sound	3.927E-02	0.065	0.116	0.600	0.251
Ambiance - noise	2.959E-03	0.058	0.009	0.051	0.360
Ambiance - temperature	8.962E-03	0.047	0.026	0.190	0.350
Preacher - appearance	-0.147	0.095	-0.424	-1.548	0
Preacher - clothing	0.126	0.077	0.369	1.648	0
Preacher - behaviour	-2.942E-02	0.092	-0.086	-0.321	0.249
Preacher - attitudes	6.980E-02	0.072	0.206	0.976	0.003
Preacher - confidentiality	-5.116E-02	0.068	-0.150	-0.752	0.155
Preacher - communication	6.709E-02	0.087	0.200	0.771	0.144
Message - novelty	0.106	0.072	0.316	1.477	0.001
Message - spontaneity	3.606E-02	0.080	0.106	0.448	0.156
Message - clarity	4.114E-02	0.073	0.312	0.567	0.005
Message - personal	-4.999E-02	0.073	-0.148	-0.682	0.198
Message - doctrinal	-3.193E-02	0.089	-0.096	-0.357	0.222
Message - educational	-1.013E-02	0.078	-0.300	-0.129	0.003
Message - convincing	-9.228E-02	0.089	-0.270	-1.041	0
Message - ethic	0.107	0.067	0.317	1.605	0
Message - meeting needs	4.774E-02	0.060	0.140	0.796	0.129
Message - delivery time	1.838E-02	0.046	0.054	0.403	0.388
Entourage - community	-3.915E-02	0.049	-0.115	-0.798	0.128
Entourage - behaviours	0.122	0.087	0.358	1.402	0
Entourage - attitudes	2.095E-02	0.082	0.061	0.257	0.298
Entourage - discussions	-3.181E-02	0.073	-0.393	-0.438	0.005
R	0.676				
R Square	0.574				
Std. Error of the Estimate	0.31134				

Table 5. Test χ^2 : correlation analysis between characteristics of religious service and 'churchgoers' satisfaction ('Person's coefficient, Asymp. Sig.).

Message	Educational	Clarity	Convincing	Ethic	Meeting needs	Novel	Doctrinal	Spontaneity	Personal	Deliver Time
	0.376/0.000	0.373/0.000	0.439/0.000	0.365/0.000	0.365/0.000	0.417/0.000	0.374/0.000	0.406/0.000	0.294/0.001	0.305/0.001
Preacher	Communication	Attitudes	Behaviour	Confidentiality	Clothing	Appearance				
	0.423/0.000	0.346/0.000	0.315/0.001	0.237/0.010	0.314/0.001	0.156/0.097				
Entourage	Discussions	Attitudes	Behaviours	Community						
	0.360/0.000	0.324/0.000	0.290/0.002	0.237/0.003						
Ambiance	Noise	Temperature	Sound	Lighting	Design	Layout	Wardrobe			
	0.236/0.008	0.212/0.020	0.224/0.014	0.178/0.053	0.172/0.062	0.197/0.032	0.137/0.127			
Location	Accessibility	Location	Building	Parking						
	0.042/0.652	0.068/0.471	0.118/0.200	0.190/0.036						

The present analysis allows us to classify the religious service characteristic by their importance in the 'churchgoer's satisfaction. The highest share is determined by convincing message (PCC 0.439, Symp. Sig. 0.000), communication skills of the preacher (PCC 0.423, Asymp. Sig. 0.000), message spontaneity (PCC 0.406 Asymp. Sig. 0.000) and novelty (PCC 0.417 Asymp. Sig. 0.000) and attitudes (PCC 0.324, Asymp. Sig. 0.000) and discussion of other participants (PCC 0.360, Asymp. Sig. 0.000).

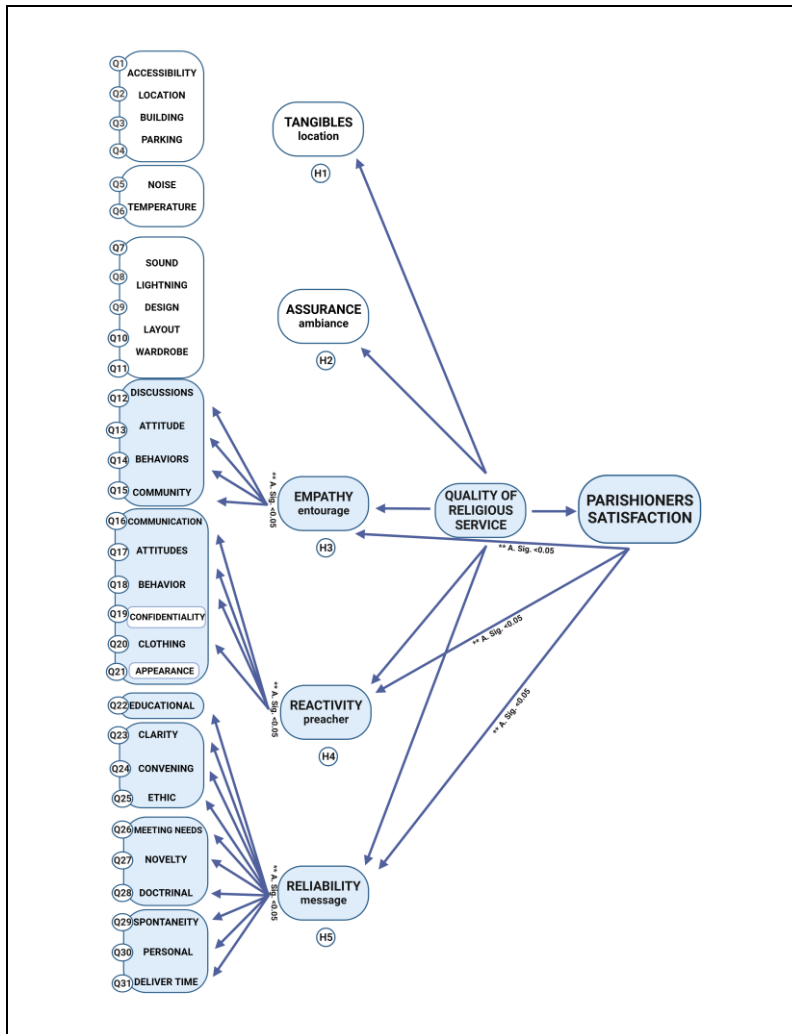


Figure 2. Results showed on the conceptual framework.

Figure 2 presents the conceptual framework, where working hypotheses 3, 4, and 5 are realized, the preacher delivered the message, and the congregational entourage influenced members' satisfaction. The preacher has an important role in mobilizing and educating the faithful members and attracting the dissatisfied and uninvolved ones [12]. The central message of the principal divine service is

to meet the needs of participants through values and doctrine communications. Entourage forms long-term relationships by exchanging values between the Church and believers.

Moreover, an average correlation between the multidimensional religious service construct and overall satisfaction emerged. The Person coefficient represents this correlation between 0.3 and 0.7, signifying a meaningful interplay between religious service dimensions and participant satisfaction. The analysis shows that the satisfaction of churchgoers depends mainly on various aspects of the message, the behaviours and attitudes of the preacher, and other participants (Table 6).

Table 6. Impact of religious service characteristics on churchgoer satisfaction - evidence from multiple regression analysis and Pearson correlation coefficients.

Research hypothesis	Variables	Average scores	Standard Beta Coef.	P-Value ** 0.3-0.7	Results
H5 - Message	Educative, Clear, Convincing, Ethic, Meeting needs, Novel, Doctrinal, Spontaneous	< 2	> 0.350 A. Sig < 0.005	** A. Sig < 0.005	Approved
H4 - Preacher	Communication, Attitude, Behavior, Clothing, Appearance	< 2	> 0.350 A. Sig < 0.005	** A. Sig < 0.005	Approved
H3 - Entourage	Discussions, Attitudes, Behavior	< 2	> 0.350 A. Sig < 0.005	** A. Sig < 0.005	Approved
H2 - Ambiance	-	N.s. Insignificant correlation			Reject
H1 - Location	-	N.s. Insignificant correlation			Reject

6. Conclusions - enhancing churchgoer satisfaction: insights from religious services

This comprehensive study delved into the intricate relationship between the diverse dimensions of religious services and their profound impact on congregants' contentment. Focusing on the Seven Day Adventist Church in Romania, the research embraced a conceptual framework that acknowledged religious service characteristics' potential direct and indirect influences on individual well-being.

The study diligently constructed hypotheses, meticulously formulated to explore the intricate interplay between distinct dimensions of religious services and the satisfaction levels of parishioners. These dimensions encompass crucial

facets like location, ambiance, entourage dynamics, pastoral guidance and the content of the message.

From the demographic structure of the sample emerges the fact that one-third of the initially selected Seven Day Adventist Church sample is classified as Orthodox. This indicates a religious landscape with fluid boundaries and affiliations. This transformation within the sample raises questions regarding the factors contributing to this shift. Additional examination could shed light on whether this change results from authentic conversion, a gradual shift in belief, or other factors. This unexpected transformation opens avenues for a deeper exploration into the nuances of religious identity and religious transformation within the Romanian context.

The implications of the results for the services of the Seven-Day Adventist Church can be substantial. The meticulous examination of different dimensions of religious services and their correlation with parishioner satisfaction offers invaluable insights for optimizing congregational experiences. The prominence attributed to aspects like the clarity and novelty of the message, the demeanour of the preacher and the dynamics of congregational interactions can inform strategic decisions within the Church.

For instance, the focus on enhancing the message's educational, ethical and conviction-based aspects can potentially deepen engagement and foster spiritual growth. Similarly, investing in developing pastoral communication skills and authenticity can cultivate a more profound connection between clergy and congregants. The finding that ambiance-related variables hold less sway on satisfaction might encourage allocating resources toward areas that directly affect spiritual nourishment rather than concentrating solely on superficial enhancements.

Furthermore, the study's insights into dissatisfying elements, particularly within the entourage context, offer opportunities for targeted improvement. Addressing areas where dissatisfaction exists, such as ambiance noise or parking, can enhance the overall experience for attendees.

In essence, the study's results provide the Seven Day Adventist Church with actionable insights to enhance the spiritual journey of its members. By strategically leveraging the dimensions that significantly influence satisfaction and addressing those that yield dissatisfaction, the Church can foster an environment that nurtures robust spiritual engagement and a sense of belonging and community.

Churchgoers, like any other customer, insist on continuous improvement in the quality of service. Even when they are content, they are open to change and eager to do so if not. This erosion of customer loyalty is the key driver in any congregation strategy. According to Anderson et al [25], customer loyalty depends critically on overall satisfaction, a high level determining customer retention. Effective customer satisfaction measurement should give the congregation's clergy a foundation for development in this area. Both professionals and academics agree that religious organisations need to go above and beyond satisfaction to keep people in their ranks. High levels of satisfaction

determine the loyalty and retention of parishioners and their appetite for ministry in the church doctrine [25].

Systematically revealing sought insights, a thorough evaluation of sampling methods led to favouring an on-the-spot inquiry as the optimal and efficient data collection method. This encompassed a meticulously crafted questionnaire, aligned with the ServQual model, and complemented by face-to-face surveys for in-depth information gathering.

Multiple regression analysis was used to assess the importance of different variables in predicting satisfaction with religious experience. The preacher's appearance, clothing, exemplary behaviour and convincing and ethical message strongly influenced satisfaction. The results emphasize the importance of these factors in creating a satisfying religious experience for churchgoers.

The study's empirical analysis utilized the χ^2 statistical test to establish a robust connection between distinct religious service characteristics and overall satisfaction. This analytical endeavour revealed a direct, substantial link, emphasizing their intrinsic interdependence.

The depth of this relationship was quantified through Pearson's coefficients. These coefficients, along with their asymp. sig. values, firmly indicated statistically significant connections with 95% accuracy. This statistical rigor reinforces the insights' reliability in broader contexts.

The study ranked the characteristics of religious services according to their importance to churchgoer satisfaction. The highest share was determined by a clear message, the communication skills of the preacher, the spontaneity and the novelty, attitudes and the discussion of other participants.

The evangelization environment of the Seven Day Adventist Church in Romania is predominantly Orthodox, as demonstrated by the national statistics. The qualities of the religious service, highlighted by its prominent dimensions (as revealed in the study), significantly impact other denominations and, in turn, their conversion.

These encompass educational content, clarity, conviction, ethical nuances, the capacity to meet individual needs, and the novelty of the message. In sharp contrast, attributes like parking facilities, wardrobe provisions, architectural aesthetics and interior design emerged as less influential in shaping the overall religious experience satisfaction.

Through multiple regression analysis, the research displayed the potency of the preacher's appearance and clothing, alongside exemplary behaviour, in forecasting satisfaction levels. Robust statistical examinations underscored the direct links between the intricate characteristics of religious services and the holistic satisfaction of attendees.

Pearson's coefficients unveiled a panorama of correlations, offering nuanced insights into the degrees of association. Foremost among these was the pivotal role of message content, pastoral behaviour and congregational interactions in sculpting the intricate landscape of parishioner satisfaction.

Ultimately, this comprehensive exploration elucidates a profound insight: the satisfaction experienced by parishioners within the context of religious services is inexorably intertwined with the dimensions encapsulating the message, the conduct of the pastoral leader, and the interactions within the congregational community.

The findings holistically underscore the importance of these dimensions, proffering a robust foundation upon which Churches and religious institutions can deliberate strategies to optimize their attendees' contentment and spiritual enrichment. Thus, the clergy of the Church should consider the variables that influence the satisfaction of the members, as they are the ones who support the Church's activities.

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