

CULTURAL MARKETING IMPLICATIONS ON ALBA COUNTY DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT: In nowadays, cultural productions are more and more important for a local community development. On one hand, cultural events could have a direct effect on tourism by attracting tourists to a particular destination and, on the other hand, these events are projecting a positive image to the destination. Local authorities includes such products in their regional development policies.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze how cultural marketing activities could influence tourism development in Alba County.

Keywords: cultural marketing, tourism development, tourist motivation

JEL Codes: M31, L 83

Introduction

In nowadays, cultural productions are more and more important for a local community development. On one hand, cultural events could have a direct effect on tourism by attracting tourists to a particular destination and, on the other hand, these events are projecting a positive image to the destination. Local authorities includes such products in their regional development policies.

According to Reverte and Izard, the impact of culture on local developments depends on factors such as: density and proximity of the markets, continuity for such cultural events, territorial agglomeration and concentration of cultural goods.

The effects that the presence of events and festivals cause on the local communities can be explained in three different levels: as social impulse (benefitting the development of a sense of identity in the community and the proud of its heritage), as generators of economical benefits (long term promotional benefits, induced and directed benefits or increased value of properties), and as elements of a basic portfolio of the local touristic product (ready to stimulate the demand in times of low season, to create opportunities to common action and to improve the image of the destination) (Callot, 2002; Chhabra et al. 2003; E.C., 2007).

Literature review

The specialty literature festivals studies are approached from very different perspectives, but in most cases converge toward performance evaluation and motivation.

Wu-Chung Wu in the work "Evaluating performance factors of art festivals: A case study in Taiwan" starting from Kotler's performance attributes developed the strategy of the festival's implementation.

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A special event requiring little capital for development is regarded as a unique type of attractions. Art festival is a popular form among all special events, famous example including Edinburgh Festival in England. However, the literature on the measurement of successful factors of art festivals is limited. This study uses Chiayi International Band Festival for a case study to evaluate performance factors of art festivals. The performance attributes are developed based on Kotler's Three Levels of Product framework. Importance–Performance Analysis (IPA) is used to evaluate the performance attributes perceived by the visitors. Further, a SWOT analysis is deployed to provide managerial strategies and implications.

In the same time, Yazicioglu E. and A. Fuat Firat shows in a research conducted in Turkey, in the case of a rock festival, aspects of modernism and conservatism and the influence of cultural factors in consumption in the case of this kind of events.

Ideology emerges as an important factor in consumption of these festivals and illustrates possible grounds to interpret cultural production. These practices suggest aspirations for experiencing different modes of being in the world and provide signs of the future of culture(s).

Research methodology

This research aims to assess the impact of an multicultural event which took place in Alba Iulia on its participants. This cultural festival organized in partnership with Alba County Council and its second edition took place in September, 2013, in Alba Iulia.

Researchers tend to primarily focus on examining festival visitors' economic impacts and motivations for attending. The research objectives were:

O1. Festival notoriety analysis

O2. Measurement and evaluation of sources of information

O3. Measurement and evaluation of participants' attitude toward the Festival organization and the Program.

In order to achieve the research objectives, a survey was conducted among a sample of participants. The survey provides to the decision makers the opportunity to identify solutions for improving the Festival and for exploring existing opportunities. The survey also provides a high degree of accuracy, relevance and representativeness of the data.

The research is based on a questionnaire administered by interviewers to a representative sample of respondents. The sampling frame – the based survey was established by the research team through the analysis of previous participation and of the tourist traffic. The observation unit is composed of the persons currently in Alba Iulia during the research period and participating at Festival.

The sampling unit was represented by the person who answered the administered questionnaire:

- ✓ Persons that were in Alba Iulia in the Festival area
- ✓ Persons that have participate to the Festival's events
- ✓ Persons that were visiting different touristic attractions.

The present research is a quantitative research. The questionnaire was administrated to all subjects in the same order and with the same wording. The type of survey used is probabilistic one.

Analyzing the responses obtained from the survey it can be concluded that 83% of the respondents are tourists and they came in Alba Iulia especially to attend to the festival activities. During the festival, a special application for smart phones was created. Analyzing the responses obtained we have seen that people who have used this application are generally young people and the income feature is not an important variable in this application user segmentation. It is interesting to analyze the connection that exists between the application users and the books read in recent months.

Results and conclusions

Festival participant profile: middle-income people, who spend time with friends, 74% prefer cultural activities such as theatre and music and do not appreciate watching TV very much.

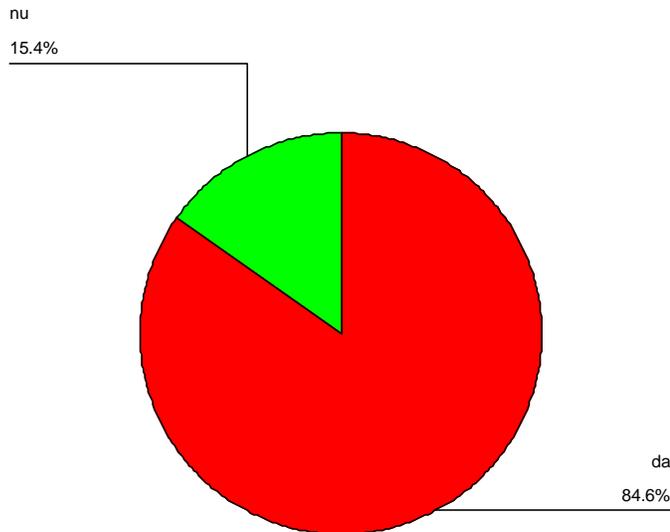


Figure no.1. - Persons who prefer to read books

More than half of the respondents participating in the Festival (56.9%) are tourists.

The participants of the festival were from towns like: Baia Mare, Braşov, Cluj-Napoca, Craiova, Haţeg, Hunedoara, Iaşi, Ploieşti, Sfântu Gheorghe, Sibiu, Timişoara, Turda and last but not least, residents of neighbouring towns of Alba Iulia.

When asked about the number of books read by respondents in the last three months, the majority of respondents (58.46%) answered that they read more than three books in the last three months, 20% said they have read two books in the last three months, 18.46% had read a book, the lowest percentage respectively 1.54% claim that they have read not even a book in the last three months, and an equivalent proportion refused to answer this question.

At this level it can be concluded that most of those who attended the cultural event are people who use to read at least one book per month. As regarding the respondents' opinion toward the importance of the event in the promotion of tourism, history and culture, 66.15% believe that this event is very important, 24.62% consider the event as important, while 3.08% of respondents consider that the event is less important or not important.

It can be though conclude that almost all the respondents believe that this cultural event has a very high importance, if not a high importance for the touristic, historical or cultural promotion.

The information collected allows us to shortly describe a participant profile in terms of geographic, demographic and behavioural features as follows:

Tabel no. 1

The participant profile

Participant	Geographical characterization	Demographical characterization	Psychographical characterization
Tourist	Other place	- Persons aged between 24 and 44 years - Male - University and post – university studies - Average income	- Participant to similar festivals - He reads more than one book per month - Magazines readers - He visited touristic objectives and participates at cultural events during holidays
Local	Alba Iulia		

Regarding the participants opinion toward the festival organizational aspects, these were appreciated favourably by the participants, who were satisfied and very satisfied both for the overall and for the outcomes evaluated such as: location, sound and program.

Most of the respondents wish that this event to be organized in the future. Most of the participants found out about the Festival from magazines, and as well from the social networks or recommendations from friends. Most of the respondents did not use the smart phone application that was specially created for this event.

Suggestions on the organization:

- Using locations / rooms that can allow the access to a greater number of people in the case of the conferences or debates;
- Where possible, ensuring translation into a foreign language or providing English language film subtitle projections, for foreign tourists;
- Inclusion in the program of more events involving the journalists of the magazine.

Suggestions on the promotion:

- Designing of tourism products that include the participation at the events' activities of the travel agencies from Alba Iulia or Romania;
- Better communication on how to get access to the lectures and the debates that have limited number of places;
- Early distribution and in different locations and manners (including the possibility of booking online) of the invitations that give access to the debates and conferences;
- Distribution, as far as possible at the beginning of the year, toward the travel agencies and other service providers (hotels, hostels, transporters, restaurants, etc.) of the guide about the events organized by the Alba County Council for the year to come;
- Identifying communication channels depending on the participants' profile (radio, TV, online media) in order to promote in a more efficient manner and to attract a larger number of participants;
- Editing maps with the locations of the festival events and distributing them to the participants;
- Promoting the event in neighbouring cities.

This study contributes to the opportunity of analyzing the convenience of developing cultural events in Alba County. The succsefull events could generate an important impact on tourism development regional economy development.

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