

CULTURAL TOURISM

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Abstract

The present work features a detailed analysis of the multitude of elements encompassing cultural tourism. In this paper, we will define the concept and describe the numerous particularities and forms of this type of activity. We will highlight its complex and dynamic nature and underline the important interconnectivity characteristic. Furthermore, we will submit a target market analysis, emphasizing the typical profile of the cultural tourism consumer. To illustrate the conceptual elements, we will present a case study, analyzing the George Enescu classical music festival in Romania and highlighting the economic and cultural benefits brought by this cultural tourism event.

Key words: tourism, culture, interconnectivity, target market, music festival

JEL classification: L83, M31, Z3

1. Introduction

Culture has always had an important role in all human activities. As such, in our modern society, we encounter the cultural aspect in many fields, including in the tourism industry, thus influencing tourism and its origins. With the growth, development and diversification of the tourism industry, cultural tourism became somewhat of a niche in the big tourism market.

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There are numerous factors that contribute to cultural oriented travel: most people are interested in knowing the past, in being more in tune with their ancestry and in exploring theirs and other peoples' cultural heritage.

Cultural tourism is a long-term evolving phenomenon. It has greatly enhanced our ability to communicate and to step beyond territorial, economic, social and religious frontiers. Our society is pulled between two contradicting tendencies. On one side we focus on modernization and globalization, on the other side we have a tendency to organize and develop on a regional basis. Cultural tourism has a very important role in maintaining and promoting the specific values of each country or region and, at the same time, is actively contributing to spreading multiculturalism through diversity, tolerance, international cooperation and a sense of belonging to our common humanity.

The marketing of cultural products has developed into a cultural industry, in which history has become a tangible and lucrative asset. The discovery and exploration of different cultures is a developing trend in our society, based on consumer demand and on an increasing number of people who can afford accessing this kind of product.

This type of tourism is immensely diversified and targets a large range of possible consumers. Because of this, cultural tourism has become one of the most important tourism activities in our modern society.

2. The concept of cultural tourism

With the scientific and technical progress of human society with major focus on improvements in urban development, many of the remaining local cultural values and venues are now of greater interest. Cultural heritage is the product of many generations, of the originality and ingenuity of many people.

Throughout time, each nation has, in one way or another, strived to capitalize their cultural heritage and to give it useful economic and educational purposes, which can financially support conservation, protection and maintenance activities.(Bodinier & Breteau, 2000)

It is very difficult to find only one definition of cultural tourism. In the 1980s, the WTO (World Tourism Organization) defined the concept of cultural tourism, acknowledging the fact that, in contrast with recreational tourism, cultural tourism is motivated by tourist desire in acquiring new information and living new and varied experiences.

In this context, cultural tourism has been defined as the form of tourism that includes people engaging in travelling for essentially cultural

motivations such as study tours, performing arts and other cultural tours, travel to festivals and other cultural events, visit to sites and monuments, travel to study nature, folklore, art or pilgrimages. (Sigala & Leslie, 2005)

There are many definitions and viewpoints regarding the contents of the concept of cultural tourism. One such view considers cultural tourism as visits from individuals from outside the host community, which are partially or totally motivated by interest in historical, artistic, scientific or lifestyle particularities of a specific community, region, group or institution. (Gonzalez-Ortega, 2002)

Cultural tourism is considered to be a form of sustainable tourism that can bring economic and social benefits and contribute to environmental protection.

Cultural tourism includes holiday trips with the main goal of visiting museums, theatre plays, musical performances, archaeological sites, churches or other cultural manifestations. That aim is applicable to almost any vacation form, as even package tourists may leave the beach for a day or two in order to discover the surrounding area and local culture. However, an actual focus on learning about other cultures on vacations can mainly be found with city trips and educational vacations, such as study trips, language holidays or guided tours. Thus, the main challenge of tour operators in positioning in the niche of cultural tourism is the actual definition and restriction of their niche. (Papathanassis, 2011)

To summarize all the above, cultural tourism includes all tourism travel that features educational or religious motivations, in which the tourist visits cultural venues and experiences and learns about the local community and values, while preserving the environment.

3. Particularities and forms of cultural tourism

Cultural tourism has a specific set of particularities which are derived from its content, from its range of activities and from its evolution throughout time. Cultural tourism mainly addresses an educated, cultural-driven consumer base.

It is a very complex tourism activity, encompassing a wide range of different products. These products include regular tourism services like accommodation, food services and transportation. They also include specific services offered by cultural institutions like museums, churches and monasteries and through cultural shows, concerts, festivals and other cultural

events. These specific services can greatly vary from culture to culture, thus, in practicality, it is very rare for identical cultural products to exist.

An essential characteristic of cultural tourism is that it is based on a vast range of resources: artists, artisans, tangible and intangible objects and interactions between different arts. (Moldoveanu & Ioan-Franc, 1997) All of these have shaped other sub-forms of cultural tourism: urban vs rural cultural tourism, ethnography, museum centered tourism, religious and pilgrimage based tourism, archeological tourism.

The cultural tourism sector has a multitude of tourism products, both separate and interconnected, and that kind of variety needs to be reconciled with the consumer base, also diverse in demands and motivations. Furthermore, these demands and preferences have a dynamic nature. This makes the cultural tourism market very segmented, both regarding competing products, and also regarding consumers. (Dumitru, 2004)

Cultural tourism differs from other forms of tourism through the specific demand for particular goods and services, determined by the characteristics of the addressing tourists' cultural life and features.

The complexity of cultural tourism is further generated by customer motivation diversity, induced by differences in education levels, tourism experience, quality of life and quality of the tourism products being offered. (Davidson, 1993)

Cultural tourism is greatly influenced by numerous interferences between tourism and culture. These interferences can generate both opportunities and constraints, which manifest themselves through time, both at national and global levels, and can determine a diversification and also instability in potential clients. In contemporary society, there are and have been many sub-groups and sub-cultures existing in various geographical regions and at different periods of time: hippie, rock, techno, etc. These can generate distinct groups of tourists interested in a particular type of sub-culture.

Cultural tourism is, by default, a more expensive product than other types of tourism, but it is not considered a luxury product. In most cases, the cost of accessing cultural sites and services is reasonable, but the most renowned cultural attractions are more expensive to access. Cultural oriented tourists tend to be people with higher income and thus have the possibility to travel greater distances in order to visit a particular venue or site.

The tourism seasonable characteristic is less important in cultural tourism because this type of tourism is not so much influenced by climate particularities and weather changes. Even so, less impactful seasonal patterns still exist because holidays are primarily organized in the same specific periods of time in many cultures (summer, winter holidays, religious holidays, etc.)

All these attributes determine the way in which cultural tourism activity is being managed to ensure customer satisfaction and to enhance future profits and development.

Cultural tourism has numerous forms. Identifying and structuring them allows for better management and development. We can categorize different forms of cultural tourism by the features of different venues and activities related to them: cultural-artistic events, cultural related circuits, ethnographic tourism, archeological tourism, urban historical centers, religious and pilgrimage related cultural tourism. (Busuioc, 2008)

Cultural-artistic tourism is a form of cultural tourism characterized by thematic artistic festivals or events. These include film festivals, theatre shows, opera and ballet shows, music concerts, etc.

Cultural related circuits are based on travel through multiple regions and/or countries in which tourists visit numerous important cultural venues. As an example, we can mention “The Silk Road” (Asia - Eastern Europe), “Medieval Castle Country” (Czech Republic) and “Baroque Style Circuit” (Austria, Hungary). (Glăvan, 2000)

Ethnographic tourism is based on rural areas and their traditions and customs. These differ greatly from country to country and they are an important and defining element of national cultural identity. There are many nations renowned for their cultural variety and wealth: Greece, Spain, Romania, Italy, China, Ireland, etc.

Archeological tourism is focused on relics and landmarks of ancient cultures. These can be ancient monuments, temples, amphitheatres, castles, etc. We can find such venues in countries with rich historical background like Egypt, Iraq, Greece, China, etc. In this form of tourism, we can also include national history and archeology museums.

Urban historical center tourism is described as the tourism activity in old neighbourhoods, markets, old residential complexes, etc., which have endured the test of time.

Religious and pilgrimage related cultural tourism focuses on learning about and visiting religious venues. Many of them are world renowned, such as the Westminster Abbey in London and the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. Pilgrimage tourism is based on the visiting of religious edifices which have a significance for a particular religion, such as the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem.

The numerous forms of cultural tourism characterize its complexity, dynamic nature and the fact that it targets a very varied clientele. These factors, corroborated with the other cultural tourism particularities presented before, present a challenge in evaluating, planning, strategizing and management of this type of tourism activity.

4. The interconnectivity between cultural tourism and other forms of tourism

In tourism activities, multiple forms of tourism are often combined and associated in order to enhance the attractiveness of specific destinations and to highlight less known venues. There are many types of interferences between cultural tourism and other forms of tourism.

One such interference is between cultural tourism and urban tourism. Large cities and metropolises are often places with many tourist attractions of many different forms. Beside recreational and accommodation services, most cities will offer a large variety of cultural products. Highlighting these products will ensure that tourists coming to a metropolis will engage in a cultural product even if that was not their primary concern.

Another area of tourism interconnectivity can be also observed in the rural environment. Tourists visiting rural areas for active relaxation, recreation and a return to nature will also be interested in the local ethnography in order to experience local craftsmanship and customs.

Business and congress related tourism can also be an opportunity for participants to visit, in their free time, different cultural venues like museums, monuments and memorial homes.

Another interference is the one between cultural tourism and ecotourism. When visiting national parks, protected wildlife habitats and great vistas, many tourists are interested in knowing more about local communities and customs. They also engage in local traditional celebrations and are interested in purchasing artisanal and other objects with cultural significance to the specific destination.

Medical tourism is another type of tourism that interconnects with cultural tourism. People that visit different countries primarily for medical treatments often spend some time visiting local cultural venues and want to learn about the place they are visiting.

Seasonal recreational tourism for mountain hiking, skiing, seaside activities, etc. also allows for tourists to spend some time visiting local monuments and historically significant venues. These types of destinations also usually feature numerous entertainment activities, such as concerts, festivals and other special events.

The connections between cultural tourism and other forms of tourism is very important because it generates a lot of revenue from people whose primary goal is not cultural tourism and also because it maintains and spreads historic and cultural knowledge over generations. This type of interconnectivity is also an important factor in reducing the seasonable character in a destination and ensures that standards are maintained and that the tourism products are diversified and constantly improved.

5. Market focus

Cultural tourism has been identified as one of the most rapidly growing areas of global tourism demand. (Richards, 2005)

As we have stated before, cultural tourism has a lot of branches and, thus, it is difficult to define who cultural tourists are in order to properly determine the target market for this niche type of tourism. Another problem occurs when we try to accurately delimitate the target group: not every person who visits a cultural venue is a tourist.

A further problem in defining the target group for cultural tourism is drawing a line between regular package tourists that may visit one or more cultural sites on their vacation and the real cultural tourist, whose main goal is to learn about other cultures on their holidays. (Papathanassis, 2011) The basic idea here is that there are serious cultural and heritage/historical tourists who are motivated by the inherent characteristics of cultural sites and, at the other end of the spectrum, there are people who accidentally visit such venues but are not truly interested in the sites' inherent cultural and heritage assets. (Morrison, 2013)

Nevertheless, the demand for this form of tourism is on the rise and is directly stimulated with income growth and an increase in education levels. Most tourists interested in cultural tourism are middle class highly educated

citizens who desire to learn more about different cultures, visit unique cultural landmarks and partake in local customs.

According to the ATLAS Cultural Tourism Research Project, the most important reason of the surveyed people for travelling was going on a general holiday (over 55%), followed by the wish to visit a cultural attraction (above 15%) and visiting relatives and friends (almost 10%). The percentage of visitors that considered their travel a purely cultural holiday was about 35%. The remaining 65% were a mixture of touring holidays, city trips, sun/beach holidays, ecotourism, health/wellness trips, rural holidays, creative/educational holidays and sports holidays. (Richards, 2005) Even though the majority of tourists don't consider their holiday a purely cultured oriented one, many of them will most likely engage in some form of cultural tourism, even if their main goal is a different one. This type of interference, which we discussed earlier, is a very important characteristic of cultural tourism and is an impediment in clearly defining the target focus of consumers. In some sense, we can say that a majority of tourists can, at some point in their holiday, be considered as target group for cultural tourism related activities.

The profile of cultural tourists can be determined by analyzing cultural attraction visitors.

In general, the profile of a typical visitor of cultural sites has not changed within the past 10 years in which ATLAS has been conducting its surveys. In 2007, 53% of the interviewed people were female and the largest age group present was the one between 20 and 29 (30%). Further research showed that discovering other cultures was the single most important reason for young people to travel. (Richards, 2005) Some of them are young students interested in foreign cultures and, because they are less financially potent, they often engage in a lower budget form of cultural tourism, named backpacking.

Nevertheless, cultural tourism is especially interesting for suppliers because, as a rule of thumb, people that focus strongly on cultural attractions spend more money than regular tourists. Also, they show a tendency toward staying longer at the destinations, which, in turn, brings even more revenue. (Richards, Cultural Tourism: Global and local perspectives, 2007)

Another important segment of cultural venue visiting is the local population, interested in its own past and culture. In urban areas and especially in metropolises, this can substantially contribute to an increase in revenue,

which can, in turn, be used for maintenance and further development of cultural venues and projects.

The demand for cultural tourism is unlikely to cease, as the interest in other cultures will always be there, even more so in today's globalized society. After all, the older a cultural attraction is, the more attractive it becomes. (Papathanassis, 2011) Furthermore, it will continue to grow because it is very well intertwined with other forms of tourism and can be engaged in even for brief periods of time.

6. Case Study: George Enescu Festival in Romania

The George Enescu Festival is an important classical music festival and international competition held in Romania. It is a widely acclaimed music festival and is attended by numerous world renowned musicians and orchestras. The festival is held in honor of the celebrated Romanian composer, George Enescu.

The 2013 edition featured over 150 events in many Romanian cities, including Bucharest, Arad, Iași, Timișoara, Sibiu and Oradea.

The festival's first edition took place on the 4th of September 1958, merely three years after George Enescu's passing. The festival was meant to occur once every three years, being accompanied by an international competition, that was interrupted after the 5th edition, only to be reintroduced in the festival in 1991. Since then, there have been 22 editions of the festival, the 2015 edition being the last one to date. (Enescu, 2016)

The 22nd edition of the George Enescu Festival took place between the 30th of August and the 20th of September 2015. It featured personalities like famous conductor Zubin Mehta and violonists David Garrett, Sarah Chang and Alexandru Tomescu. Highlights of the 2015 edition included the London Symphony Orchestra and Berliner Philharmoniker.

Each edition also averages around 20 works by romanian composer George Enescu in the contemporary vision interpretation of distinguished conductors and orchestras. One of the more important goals of the festival is to promote Enescu's repertoire and to spread the romanian cultural heritage overall.

A premiere of the 21nd (2013) edition was the Bucharest transformation into a magical space, in a capital of creativity. Creative Bucharest is an original project developed during the festival in order to show

romanian cultural heritage and the joy and creative spirit of the romanian people. (Enescu, 2016)

The festival advocates for values in which Enescu deeply believed in, like creativity, generosity and involvement. By promoting the Romanian composer, the festival implicitly promotes Romanian culture all over the world. As such, it is considered an important landmark for the cultural development of the region and one which can serve as a significant tourism attraction.

The George Enescu Festival is a perfect example of a distinct and important form within the greater cultural tourism industry: cultural-artistic tourism. This particular form is characterized by thematic artistic festivals or events, in this case a classical music festival which features classical music concerts.

Taking place in large cities and especially in Bucharest, the capital city of Romania and a major cultural, industrial and financial centre, the festival also overtly engages in a type of tourism interference. The type of interconnectivity we are referring to is between cultural tourism and urban tourism. Tourists visiting Bucharest for the George Enescu Festival will require accomodation, food and other recreational services and will most likely visit numerous other venues, including engaging in other cultural activities and purchasing different other products.

In 2011, the budget of the festival surpassed 8.1 million Euros, from which 7.6 million Euros came from public funding, and the rest from sponsors. Over 125.000 tickets were sold. The price of one ticket was between 9.5 and 21.5 Euros. 29 concerts sold out and the overall occupancy rate surpassed 96%. The festival registered over 10 000 spectators per day and brought almost 16 000 foreign tourists to Romania. (Popescu & Corboş, 2012)

According to the Austrian economic magazine “Gewinn”, the 2011 George Enescu Festival was included in an annual selection of the most prestigious thematic (cultural, musical and artistic) destinations for tourists. Romania has occupied the 16th place as destination, being recommended for the 2011 George Enescu Festival. (Popescu & Corboş, 2012)

The latest edition (2015) brought over 20 000 foreign tourists to Bucharest. Many renowned international television channels, like CNN, Euronews and BBC covered the festival. This latest edition also featured online live transmissions and social media coverage. (Enescu, 2016)

The typical profile of the George Enescu Festival visiting foreign tourist is a highly educated, high income and relatively young tourist (35-45 years old). This type of tourist will often stay in 4 or 5 star hotels and will spend an average of 200 Euros per day, including accommodation, restaurants, festival fees and other expenses. Most foreign tourists stay between 3 and 12 days during the Festival. At an average of 5 nights/tourist and 200 Euros/tourist spent per day, the city of Bucharest gains over 24 million Euros from foreign tourists visiting for the George Enescu Festival. Foreign tourists mostly come from Europe (Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy) and Asia. Furthermore, the number of local Romanian tourists has also increased in recent years. (Oprea, 2015)

The first cultural marketing study, initiated by the Enescu Festival, and carried out in partnership with Reveal Marketing Research, discovered that the Enescu Festival is a major contribution to the improvement of Romania's world image and a significant cultural benefit for the local population. The study took place between the 30th of August and the 20th of September in 2015. 903 people were questioned through face-to-face interviews, in the Festival's key spots (Palace Hall, Romanian Athenaeum and the Festival Market). The study revealed that the audience of the George Enescu Festival 2015 edition consisted mostly of people with higher education (aprox. 80% of respondents). Also, the study highlighted the fact that, for the festival audience, the value of participating resides in the quality of the artistic act (prestigious artists performing world renowned classical music), the public international recognition the festival has and the exemplary organization of the event. (George Enescu, 2015)

The George Enescu Festival is an prominent landmark in Romanian culture which brings significant financial gains for the local and national economy and numerous educational and cultural benefits for both tourists and local population. Renowned and appreciated for its musical expertise and its importance in Romania's cultural heritage, the George Enescu Festival is a relevant international cultural event that attracts a significant number of foreign tourists.

7. Conclusions

Cultural tourism is an important segment of the tourism industry but is rather difficult to clearly define, because of the numerous forms that it encompasses and the complexity of the services and products being offered.

It is a type of sustainable tourism that features cultural, educational and religious motivations in which tourists visit cultural venues and experience and learn about a specific community and its values.

Cultural tourism is an activity based on a multitude of resources and products, both separate and interconnected. Because of this complexity, the consumer base is also very diverse in its demands and motivations.

Another aspect of the intricate characteristic of cultural tourism is represented by its many forms. These offer a great variety of products but are all focused on presenting aspects of the cultural heritage of a particular region or country.

Besides the numerous forms of this type of tourism activity, there are also many interferences between cultural tourism and other forms of tourism. This interconnectivity is essential both in generating revenue and in spreading historical and cultural knowledge over generations.

From the studies and analyses presented, we can infer that the predominant characteristics of the typical cultural tourism consumer are high levels in education, high income and the preponderance of tourists being registered as young adults.

The case study highlighted that a cultural-artistic event like the George Enescu classical music Festival can generate a lot of revenue and can be an important factor in promoting certain cultural values and the distinct cultural heritage of Romania, thus being a perfect example of the formidable impact that a properly managed and implemented cultural tourism activity can have.

Interest in visiting and learning about foreign cultures will continue to grow in today's globalised society. Because of the rise in education levels and easier access, cultural tourism motivations will tend to focus mainly on a more general interest in culture overall. The segment of cultural tourism holds a promising future and it will likely continue to be a significant and thriving component of the tourism industry.

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