MARKETINGUL AND E-MARKETINGUL IN EUROPEAN RELIGIOUS TOURISM

MARKETINGUL ŞI E-MARKETINGUL ÎN TURISMUL RELIGIOS EUROPEAN

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Abstract: *From the point of view of the moment crises in tourism occur, they are of three types: potential (i.e. imaginary), a condition almost normal of the travel company; latent (just triggered), impossible to quantify with the normal instruments of the travel company; and acute (in which we perceive the damaging effect) whose symptoms are acknowledged by the travel company. From the point of view of the nature of a crisis in tourism, they can be of two types: natural (caused by natural catastrophes such as avalanche, tropical storms, earthquakes, floods, storm-caused ocean tides, etc.) and anthropic (racial revolts, strikes in transports and tourism, etc.). Marketing and e-marketing play an important role in the promotion of religious tourism activities at European level.*

Key words: *marketing, e-marketing, religious tourism, Europe*

INTRODUCTION

The development of the tourism industry is more and more threatened by negative events with economic impact that have not been dealt with in the economic sphere so far: the terrorist attack in Egypt, SARS in Japan, September 1 in the U.S.A., the tsunami in Asia are only some of the examples of crisis that caused economic losses in the tourism industry.

These events are considered negative-impact events that hinder tourism and traffic (traffic intensification, increase of transport costs, country and/or company image damage, etc.).

Tourism crisis is considered (1, 2, and 4) as "an unwanted, extraordinary, sometimes sudden, time-limited process that can develop ambivalently. A crisis needs decisions to be made and counter-measures to be taken immediately to impact the further positive development of the organisation (destination) and to limit as much as possible negative impacts". Likewise, "a crisis situation is determined by assessing the seriousness of negative events that threat, weaken, or destroy the competitive advantages or the important goals of organisations".

The causes that have an impact on the tourism market and that generate crisis situations are varied. Glaesser (4) enumerates, among them the following: *people's living conditions* (degree of development of mankind, life span expectancy, technical progress, demographic trends, the increasing amount of information, etc.); *changes in nature* (the great natural catastrophes – whose number increased from 20 (1950-1959), to 27 (1960-1969), to 47 (1970-1979), to 63 (1980-1989), and to 91 (1990-1999).

As a conclusion, the most frequent causes of crises in the tourism industry are as follows: *diseases*, *epidemics*, *economics*, *environment*, *politics*, *war situations*, *terrorism*, *delinquency*, and *transports*.

The concept "**management of tourism destination**" has suffered, in the last decade, significant mutations. Thus, Mitchell (6) analyses the links between the social responsibility of the corporations and the tourism company strategies from different tourism destinations and reaches the conclusion that if the discussion concerning tourism management were dominated, in the last century, by the research on the tourist perception and of the cooperation between the government and the tourism industry in the approach of the physical and social impact of tourism, at the beginning of the 3rd Millennium we should focus on sustainable tourism and on the responsibility in the field of the decision-making factors in tourism.

The solution of the conflict between the diverging objectives of the locals related to the practice of tourism needs long-term constructive cooperation between tourism operators, government, and local communities (7). The introduction, in this equation, of a new parameter – sustainability – implies new requirements and the appearance of new issues: the achievement of a balance between the theory and practice of management in

business and the practice of sustainable tourism. In this context, the main issue in sustainable tourism is **long-term management of tourism activities in rural areas with natural and/or anthropic heritage**.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The goal of the present scientific paper is to present the analysis of the forms of religious tourism in Europe from two different perspectives: tourism marketing and tourism e-marketing aiming at adapting them for the Banat area and at developing models that enhance tourism development in this area of particular potential as a source of income for rural communities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main two aspects of marketing in European tourism are **e-marketing** and **destination marketing**.

E-marketing is defined as the marketing of products and services on the Internet, a form of marketing recommended by the interactive nature of instantaneous answers and of clarifying answers. E-marketing also includes the posting on media in the different stages of the marketing cycle through the following: marketing through the search engine; optimising the search engine; banner advertisement on specific websites; marketing through e-mail; Web 2.0. strategies.

E-marketing is associated with a few business models, among which the following:

- *e-commerce*, in which the goods are sold directly to the consumers or to the companies;
- *lead-based websites*, organisations that generate value through the purchase of *sales leads* (entities potentially interested in purchasing a product or service and that represent the first stage of a sale process) from their websites;
- *affiliated marketing*, a process in which a product or service developed by an entity (a form of e-commerce, private person or a combination of the two that can supply a marketing material – sales letter, affiliated link, or follow-up facility) is sold by other active sellers for a share of the profit;

- *local marketing on the Internet*, through which a small company uses the Internet to find or to develop relationships using specific instruments (the marketing of social media, the listing of local directories, the promotion of oriented online sales);
- *black chat marketing*, that uses deceiving, abusive, or false methods (spam materials, sending pages with results of search engines, orienting users towards pages they did not ask for) to guide the web traffic towards a website or towards an affiliated marketing offer.

E-marketing has, as expected, advantages and disadvantages:

- *advantages of e-marketing*:
  - it is relatively cheap if we take into account the cost:volume:profit ratio;
  - it offers the opportunity of making statistics (pay per printed document, pay per click, pay per game, pay per action) easily and cheaply;
  - it is highly reliable for advertisers;
  - it supplies the opportunity of returning the item in case the customer is dissatisfied.
- *disadvantages of e-marketing*:
  - it is impossible to touch, smell, taste, or try the goods;
  - lack of safety of information on:
    - goods private character;
    - conformation degree of the items purchased by a certain order.

Tourism destination is "the geographical space in which there is rather an ensemble [an accumulation of resources and attractions, of infrastructures, equipments, suppliers of tourism services and other sectors of support and administrative organisms whose integrated and coordinated activities supply customers with the experiences they await from the destination they have chosen to visit] of tourism resources than a political border". In this context, the synonyms of "ensemble" are *area*, *recreational business sector*, *peripheral tourism area*, *tourism destination area*, *enclave*, *resort*, *tourism shopping village*, and *village district*.

From the point of view of the demand on the tourism market, **destinations** are places that attract visitors temporarily and that vary depending on continent, country, city, town, village, resort, or uninhabited

island. The World Tourism Organisation defines a local tourism attraction as "a physical space in which a visitor spends at least one night". It includes tourism such tourism products as services and attractions as tourism resources of a day's travel. It has physical and administrative borders that define its management, and images and perceptions that define its competitiveness on the market (3, 8).

From another perspective, destinations are communities delimited by governmental borders. Theoretically, the higher the inner homogeneity of a community, the lower the destination community is. In practice, the diversity of natural features and the tourism facilities are a challenge for many small size tourism destinations.

The **tourism market** is the field on which are confronted two forces – **demand** (represented by the tourists in search of tourism products and services that meet certain of their needs) and **offer** (represented by the tourism industry that tries to enhance the demand of tourism products and services). In this context, **marketing** is the process regulating the exchange between the two forces or, as Kotler *et al*. (5) said, "a social and managerial process through individuals and groups of individuals get what they need by developing and exchanging products and services".

Experts have suggested that tourism also should make the same steps towards marketing orientation as any other industry and become:

- *production-oriented*, characterised by the lack of available goods and services (a seller's market);
- *sale-oriented*, characterised by mass production and, therefore, by increased competition, low prices and more goods and services than demanded (a consumer's market);
- *marketing-oriented*, characterised by the need of identifying consumers' needs to achieve optimal consumer's satisfaction with proper profit for the producer and/or supplier of tourism products and services;
- *societal marketing-oriented*, characterised by an orientation of the market meant to take into account the welfare of society and of environment.

Mitchell (6) shows that **destination marketing** needs both a sustained effort of managing destination resources and of generating incomes from tourism business, and taking into account all social issues that have no relationship whatsoever with tourism market – the latter as part of

the corporatist strategy of sustainable development. This new concept resulted in a paradigmatic change of the objectives of tourism business, objectives that no longer consist in **maximising the owners' value** but in **maximising the value of everybody involved in tourism business** (employees, customers, creditors, directors, clerks in the state administration, owners, suppliers, members of the local community, trade unions) – which points to the involvement of social responsibility factors.

In this context, **tourism leadership** becomes more and more aware of the benefits of instrumental strategies that derive from the social responsibility of its corporation seen as determining directly a business strategy supported by proper business resources and, as such, an important support of marketing strategies from the point of view of the initiative, of the market leadership, of the response to the initiatives of the competitors on the tourism market, on the response to state regulations, etc. Tourism companies are thus challenged to adjust their objectives to keep a relationship of legitimacy with the other social partners.

We can see that religious tourism in Europe is prosperous because it is facilitated by the following:

- a better marketing ;
- an increase of the interest in spiritual issues;
- the easy access to religious monuments.

The destinations visited are more and more diversified as a result of the increase of the percentage of European Union inhabitants that are not Christians. The Hindu, the Muslim, and the Buddhist are still a small share of the visitors attracted by Christian shrines, churches, and cathedrals.

Unfortunately, because of the inaccurate proofs on the number and quality of visitors, cannot document properly the levels of religious tourism. We cannot establish either with accuracy the religious affiliation of most member countries of the European Union. What we can ascertain for sure is that **most tourists visiting European religious sites are not religiously motivated, but are rather cultural or historical tourists**. Though Christian European religious sites, the main Christian inheritance of the European Union, continue to attract an ever larger number of visitors, the number of believers from different Christian congregations is falling. This is the main paradox of European religious tourism.

CONCLUSIONS

In practices, **crisis management** involves taking one or more measures among which the following: *preventing the crisis*, i.e. devising proactive anticipation of negative impacts both mentally and from the point of view of preparation through: *taking precautionary decisions against the crisis* to diminish the span of damage; *avoiding the crisis* though measures that hinder the evolution of the crisis (timely detection of events and estimation of seriousness to identify proper countermeasures); *solving the crisis situation*, starting with identifying the crisis situation; *limiting the crisis consequences* and removing it.

From this perspective, it is important to underline that the main challenges in case of crisis in the tourism industry come from two directions: the ***tourism system***, made up of *tourist* (subject of tourism) and *tourism destination* (object of tourism) dealt with by local administration, commercial companies, tourism companies, inhabitants, travel offices and (tourism) police, fields that are also under the pressure of ecologic, economic, politic, social, and technologic environments: *the tourism product*.

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