Chapter 68

Cultural Tourism and Museum Marketing:
Contributing to the Development of Alba Iulia's Image

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ABSTRACT

The present article was written in order to provide an overview of the importance that cultural tourism and museum marketing has in developing a city's image. This topic was chosen because, in the present context, museums play a key-role in generating urban competition and attracting resources for contributing to the economic development of a community or a specific region. The present paper aims at providing to readers the opportunity of facilitating their understanding regarding the role that a museum plays in the development of a city's image due to the dimensions of its cultural value.

INTRODUCTION

Being perceived as important factors that contribute to a city's image development, museums have become key-elements in urban competition due to their huge potential for developing local economies. More than that, playing an important role in the tourism industry –and, thus, in economic stimulation, museums can be perceived as key-factors in urban development strategies (Popescu and Corbos, 2011). Considering the dimensions of the cultural value (the historical, aesthetical, spiritual, social, symbolic and authentic ones), the mission of the cultural organizations –generally speaking- and of museum –in particularly- is "[…] to enhance the broad spectrum of value of the cultural objects they preserve, communicating all these dimensions to different sectors of the public and focusing on their specific features" (Cerquetti, 2011), mainly on those characteristics that makes them distinctive and unique.

The implementation of cultural policies as tools for the development of cities could be expanded in various economic sectors, such us tourism, sports, leisure, arts and the mass media (Bianchini, 1993),

creating a strong cultural industry which would include a variety of activities, such as fashion and design, architecture, cultural heritage, local history, entertainment, and generally the identity and image of the city in the external environment (Kong, 2000). In most cases, "culture has been widely used in various initiatives concerning the reconstruction/ revitalization of cities and especially their development through the use of specific strategies and methods, as Deffner et al. state in their paper *Museums, marketing and tourism development: The case of the Tobacco Museum of Kavala*.

In the present chapter this subject was approached in order to emphasize the important role that a museum has in building a city's image; due to the approached concepts, the author tried to highlight the fact that the relation between museums and cities may became symbiotic - while museums contribute to the city's cultural and economic life, by creating new jobs and reducing unemployment rate, cities must offer them the possibility to achieve prosperity (Popescu and Corbos, 2011). Regarding this entire process as a whole, becomes a sure fact that the existence of a museum in a specific city can be translated into an important factor that contribute to the development of that particular city's image.

CITY'S IMAGE AND THE ROLE OF NATIONAL MUSEUM OF UNIFICATION IN ALBA IULIA'S URBAN MARKETING PROCESS

In general, the creation/perception of a city's image is a time consuming/complex process involving a set of different images/perceptions, namely "a priori" perception (a "mental construction in the space of knowledge" of an individual, without having to visit the "physical" place), a perception "in situ" (on arrival at that destination, when "experiencing" that place) and a "posteriori" perception - after "consuming the experience" of the specific elements of the visited region (Di Marino, 2008).

The central objective of the effort to promote Alba Iulia as a cultural city is to create a favorable image on both internationally and domestically areas, indicating a shift to national and local audiences. This effort comes from the recent stagnation of urban tourism development and the need to produce and deliver new forms of the tourism' values. The specific character of Alba Iulia Fortress arises from its value as an element of historical and cultural heritage. This value must be kept and made as widely known as possible and, therefore, should be promoted through cultural tourism. The cultural tourism aims to visit those places and activities that define the history and people, both in the past and in the present. This includes the cultural resources, the historical and natural ones.

The programs from the cultural heritage domain that enjoy success make several connections between tourism activity, historical heritage, museums, arts, natural resources and other items of interest in order to create strong partnerships for preservation purposes, for improving, promoting and managing these resources that cannot be replaced. In this context, we should mention the fact that the National Union Museum belongs to the sights visited by about 90% of all people with tourist interests in Alba Iulia; thus, it has a vital importance in the formation and finalization of this city's image among Romanian and foreign tourists. Through its permanent exhibitions and through its periodical ones, the National Museum of Alba Iulia represents a very interesting tourist attraction for all those interested in the history of Romania. Considering this, the primary purpose of the Alba Iulia museum is to preserve and keep the patrimony that is increasing year by year and to enrich public education, to provide specialists' access to various documents or pieces of heritage etc.

Annually in Alba Iulia there are several cultural festivals and events organized - some of them became internationally-known, considering the number of foreign participants and events' attractiveness, while

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