

Tourism Marketing and Projection Mapping

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is considered a multi- sector of activities that combines the offer of services and goods. It creates great chances for economic and social development in the touristic destinations. Main characteristics of modern tourism are the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and the appearance of new forms of tourism like cultural tourism and city breaks. Concepts like cultural heritage and sustainability have started being important factors for the destination decision making by modern tourists. Light festivals are a new touristic product that combines cultural tourism and urban tourism. Its main component is projection mapping. Projection mapping is a special technique of usage of video projectors which uses non-ordinary surfaces for display. Projection mapping in essence is a combination of art (through light) and technology (through video). It is a mean of creation of cultural products and it has the potential to become a mean of creation of touristic products. Projection mapping can promote the cultural heritage of a place through an easy and impressive manner in accordance with the current tourism marketing trends that focus in touristic packages that provide many strong experiences in a few days. The integration of projection mapping inside the frame of a completed tourism marketing planning could offer a competitive advantage in places which seeks to enrich their touristic product and achieve sustainable development by offering authentic experiences to modern tourist.

Key Words: Tourism marketing, projection mapping, cultural tourism, light festival

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is considered one of the biggest sectors of global economy. It has presented exceptional growth during 20th century and forth. The 25 million of tourists worldwide in 1950 rose to 278 million in 1980, 674 million in 2000 and 1,186 million in 2015. The arrivals of tourists internationally are expected to be increased by an average of 3.3% per year the period 2010- 2030 and this conducts that we estimate 1.4 billion tourists in 2020 and 1.8 billion in 2030 (WTO, 2015).

Projection mapping is a modern application that combines projection of an audio-visual content in several alternative surfaces. It is considered an artistic creation and consists the main application in most light festivals worldwide. The last twenty years have been developed over 100 light festivals in several cities around the world. These events attract thousands of people who visit the host cities and usually combine the participation in a light festival with urban tourism.

Thus, projection mapping is a cultural product which can be transformed into a touristic product either inside the frame of light festivals or outside of them if a proper tourism marketing policy is designed and implemented. The methodological approach of the present work will be the bibliographic research in international bibliography, in hard copy and electronic version. The aim is to examine the possibilities of the usage of projection mapping inside the frame of touristic marketing as an alternative touristic product in order to: (i) enrich the touristic content of a destination, (ii) to promote the cultural heritage of touristic destinations and (iii) to enhance touristic development.

TOURISM AND CULTURE: COMMUNICATING VESSELS

Tourism is a complex, global, social, cultural and economic phenomenon and on the same time it is a multi- level field where several versions of economic development are interconnected each other (Panagiotopoulos et al. 2016). Tourism industry is a big group of several other industries that directly can provide goods or services to facilitate business, pleasure and leisure activities for people who are temporarily away from their home environment. It is defined as the sum of organizations of private and public sector that contribute in the development, production, promotion and forwarding of products and services that cover the needs of tourists (Gee et al, 1997). Tourism industry includes several parts like: i) tourist accommodation, ii) food and beverage sector, iii) transportation companies, iv) recreation facilities, v) places of unique natural beauty, vi) intermediate tourism businesses, vii) travel agencies, viii) tour operators and ix) public support services (Vasilakakis, 2014).

A significant key factor for a success story in tourism is considered the existence of a variety of touristic products for the same destination. As touristic product is considered every tangible or intangible product created in order to satisfy needs or wishes of modern global citizens (Lagos, 2005).

The most important trends and evolutions in tourism are below (Kokkossis, 2016):

- Globalization and expansion of touristic markets
- Globalization and increased competition
- Technology and Information
- Personalized need and special interests- Lifestyle

- Demand for new diversified products- Segmentation of the market
- Pursuit of authentic experiences in touristic destinations
- More trips of shorter duration
- Special and alternative forms of tourism

Authenticity is a stable trend in tourism the last decades and it is described as willingness for gaining new experiences, for acquiring new products and for enjoying new services that are all connected with the destination as much as possible. Authenticity means pureness that conducts less commercialization, less massive culture and less globalized influences. Consumerism has dominated modern people's life and a part of them seeks for new meaning in life as a step forward to self-actualization (Wilmott and Nelson, 2003). The answer to the satiation of consumerism is authenticity and vacation is the chance for people to discover a new world. Brass (2006) connects authenticity with the preservation of locality and finally with sustainability and describes it as human's inner potential to know better himself though meeting another culture and obtaining real experiences.

The above notices direct the specialists in tourism in certain targets which are the i) the qualitative upgrade of touristic product and ii) its expansion and enrichment. This seems to be the case for all touristic destinations worldwide. For example, Mediterranean countries like Greece, seek to escape from the classical concept of "Sun and Sea" in order to i) face the international competition, ii) increase the annual touristic period, iii) satisfy modern tourist's needs, iv) attract tourism of high income. Therefore, activities that are not seasonal and special forms of tourism have come in the spotlight like spa tourism, cultural tourism, religious tourism, sports tourism, gastronomic tourism, urban tourism, cruise, etc. (Kokkossis, 2016). Most of them are characterized by a theme and are strongly connected with the culture of the destination.

The concept of culture is complicated and multifarious and has met several and different interpretations over time (Uscatescu, 1973). Culture as a general and wide concept includes the sum of activities and materials made by human kind in social, economic, spiritual, mental, and emotional level (Georgitsogianni, 2011: 11). Furthermore, as cultural products are defined those which keep a significant archaeological, historical, scientific and aesthetic value and they have been categorized and counted with accuracy (Grammatikaki- Alexiou, et al., 2001: 35). The characteristics that should be present in such products are authenticity, quality, historicity and symbolism (Government Newspaper of Greece, 2002).

Cultural heritage is considered an asset closely connected with touristic growth for a place (Mitoula, 2003). Proper designed cultural policies and activities could contribute in the development of cultural tourism and consequently in the development of local communities. Cultural tourism can be the lever for economic, social and cultural progress in a community, especially now that is well known that concepts like "Sun and Sea" and "Massive Tourism" are considered old fashioned and against the principles of sustainable development.

The main components that constitute cultural tourism are: i) places of heritage, ii) art places like theatres, iii) visual art places like galleries, iv) special events like light festivals, v) places with significant religious value, vi) local communities, vii) customs and traditions, viii) arts and crafts, ix) language and dialects, x) gastronomy, xi) industry and trade, xii) modern folk culture, xiii) activities of special interest like weaving and xiv) places of natural beauty (Defner, 2016).

However, the interconnection between tourism and culture is not a new idea. A lot of researches indicate that cultural heritage is a powerful motivation for a big group of tourists. For example, 80% of American tourists, 90% of tourists from Latin America and 93% of Japanese tourists mentioned that they have selected Europe because of its cultural heritage. Indicatively, the tourists that make a choice of a destination based on its cultural heritage are from Japan (92%), America (55%), Spain (50%) and Great Britain (49.7%) (Koussounis, 2004).

PROJECTION MAPPING AND LIGHT FESTIVALS

Projection mapping in essence is a combination of art (through light) and technology (through video). Projection mapping is a special technique of usage of video projectors that presents artistic content on several non-compatible surfaces. The projection does not use special flat surfaces made for this purpose but several natural objects. This fact has as a result the possibility of selection among a variety of choices with whatever shape and outline that can be used as a display. Through this technique, objects of real world are transformed into intangible forms and this changes the way we consider them. Projection mapping could be categorized based on the content or the kind of the surface used or on the purpose of the projection. Its content is rich and varies from historic topics up to visual effects and illusions made by taking advantage from the special characteristics of the projection surfaces (Panos, 2016).

The possible usages are a lot and they depend on the place of the projection, the selected objects for the display, the target-group, the content and the purpose of the projection. All these factors should be taken into consideration for the organization of a projection mapping event. Furthermore, projection mapping is present in arts like in theatre and dancing, and in advertisements and commercial events. Projection mapping is used in marketing and promotions policies by using as surface products like a car or a mannequin (Panos, 2016).

The buildings that are usually used for projection mapping are public buildings with unique architecture that belong in city's cultural heritage. The highlighting of cultural heritage of a city through events with projection mapping can contribute to public's information for its value, its preservation and exploitation in accordance with sustainability principles.

An important cornerstone of projection mapping is its widely-spread use in cultural events and mainly in light festivals. Projection mapping consists the main activity and application in light festivals worldwide. Projection mapping events are impressive and can create pleasant memories to an attendant. On parallel projection mapping experiences could have the strong and valuable characteristic of authenticity of their content if they match it with the selected projection surface. Authenticity is a crucial factor for the touristic product of a place since it can distinguish it among other competitors.

Events with projection mapping are organized either as a single event or as part of a bigger group of events that form a festival. The development and the spread of such festivals is impressive since there are already worldwide more than 100 light festivals which are even organized in international networks (Giordano and Ong, 2017). Light festival is considered as an innovative new product with artistic value and one of the most successful of them is "Fête des Lumières" in Lyon in France. The experience accumulated year by year allowed to its organizers to establish an international network of cities and lighting professionals who organize a series of light festivals called Lighting Urban

Community International – LUCI (LUCI Association, xx). Another example is the light festival of Eindhoven in Holland which created an organization called International Light Organization – ILO and operates as a community of artists who organize light festivals all over the world (ILO, xx).

In the everyday activity of such organizations is included communication with light designers, artists, committees of conferences, municipalities, etc. in order to continue to innovate and expand light festivals in more places. The organization of light festivals should be adopted in the special characteristics of each city and its design should take into consideration local authorities and businessmen. The biggest advantages of these organizations are: i) their accumulated experience, ii) the know-how, and iii) the connections with artists and light designers internationally. The preparation of a light festival demands the cooperation of a lot of people with several specializations. Projection mapping that is the heart of such events demands interdisciplinary cooperation including artists, architects, graphics designers, managers specialized in areas like marketing, finance, tourism and cultural management especially in case that this festival uses the history and the cultural heritage of the venue (Panos, 2016).

A common practice regarding the organization of light festivals is the copy- paste method of a festival in several cities based on the linear absorption without adjustments due to different local characteristics. This fact has resulted in the application of an innovative product in a new place without the element of authenticity (Giordano and Ong, 2017). Common choices regarding the content of projection mapping are historical subjects but also artistic, fuzzy and abstract creations of contemporary art. A video is kind of story telling with linear or not structure. The usage of mapping projection could expand the possibilities of this narration by selecting different surfaces from the projection. When there is absence of narrative techniques, the use of artistic, abstract content could give very impressive results and feelings of satisfaction and happiness to the attendants.

CONCLUSIONS- SUGGESTIONS

Extremely important parameters of modern tourism are communication and information because tourism by definition is a way of communication between human and the rest of the world. It consists an experiential process of collecting information, experiences and memories. Suwanto (2001) emphasizes that the trip for a tourist starts from the moment he left his home in order to travel to the selected destination and ends upon his return at home. This is an important element for the understanding of tourism industry. However, nowadays, the first contact of a tourist with his destination and the decision making about it, starts probably much earlier through Information and Communication Technologies (ITC) and not anymore through word of mouth (Panagiotopoulos et al. 2016). The modern tourist searches for new destinations to explore through internet by using tablets, mobiles phones and personal computers and by visiting websites like Pinterest. Furthermore, word of mouth has been replaced by the photos that friends upload in Instagram and Facebook when they are on their trip (on real time).

Tourism could be an effective power for growth but it is easily its prospects to be wasted. It is very common, tourism destinations to copy ideas without adjusting them in their needs and characteristics like in the case of light festivals and finally to copy each other. This makes tourists to fail to escape from their routine since they did not discover real prototype experiences. A destination should protect and promote strongly its culture, its customs, its gastronomy and its natural beauty and even its human

capital. Authenticity does not drive directly to sustainability but without the honor of local distinctiveness a destination looks like the previous one (Yeoman, 2008: 174, Yeoman et al., 2007)

Projection mapping could easily be part of a cultural tourism policy because it is related with historical resources (ancient monuments, etc.), cultural, anthropogenic and recreational resources (light festivals, etc.). Projection mapping integrated in a well-organized cultural production inside the frame of a total touristic marketing planning could obtain characteristics of a communication experience, exchange of cultures, authenticity and sense and feeling of the place. It is a cultural good that could be easily used as touristic good. It is suitable for those types of tourists that are interested for cultural experiences and city breaks and put high priority in the cultural criterion for their destination decision making. On the same time, it's use can be in accordance with the global trend which pushes people to make more trips of shorter duration than in the past and to pursuit many experiences in a short time.

The production of videos for projection mapping could be included in marketing strategies for the promotion of a place as a touristic destination. The content of such videos could be renewed in periodic basis in order to diversify its messages every time there are changes in the relevant marketing policy. The duration of these projections is small and this characteristic makes them suitable for touristic use since modern tourists look for a lot of fast experiences instead of fewer experience of bigger time in accordance with the optimal effective use of "Gazinta Philosophy" (Burns, 1993).

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