

Synergy of Culture and Tourism: Cultural Events as a Part of Cultural Tourism in Less-favoured Rural Regions. Case study: Vojvodina Province (Serbia)

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Festivals are considered to contribute significantly to cultural and economic development. The Vojvodina province is a multi-ethnic area with traditional folklore and a variety of cuisines, from which numerous and various events of economic and entertainment content have emerged. The main subject of this paper is an assessment of how event tourism can affect rural development. How much does a rural event affect host communities? Can a small-scale event that takes place to a rural environment play a significant role to the socio-economic development of the region? The authors of this research have highlighted the 10 most significant cultural events. The research objective is to determine the attitudes of the local population with regard to the organization, realization and economic importance of cultural events.

Keywords: synergy, cultural events, local population, attitudes, rural region, Vojvodina province.

Introduction

Research of the local population's attitudes was conducted on the territory of the province of Vojvodina,

which is located in the south of the Pannonian plain and the northeast of the territory of the Republic of Serbia. It is bordered by Hungary on the north, on

the east by Romania, by the Sava and Danube Rivers on the south and on the west by Croatia. The area of Vojvodina covers 21,000 km², accounting for 21.97% of the territory of the Republic of Serbia (Tomić et al., 2002). The population of Vojvodina is 1,931,809 (2011), and there are 451 settlements (Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 2012).

There are 24 nationalities inhabiting the area among, the most numerous of which are Serbs, Hungarians, Croats, Montenegrins, Ruthenians, Ukrainians, Poles, Germans, Albanians, Turkish, Czechs, and Slovaks; this makes the entire region a multiethnic one (Tomić et al., 2002).

Ten different events with long traditions from the Vojvodina province have been included in the research: Bodrog fest (Bački Monoštor), Guitar open festival (Subotica), Jazztronic-International jazz & blues festival (Vršac), Sombor theatre marathon, Dužijanica - harvest festival (Subotica), Beer fest (Zrenjanin), Karlovačka berba grožđa-grape picking festivities (Sremski Karlovci), Dani ludaje-Days of pumpkins (Kikinda), Baconfest (Kačarevo), Festival of music associations of Vojvodina (Ruma). All these events represent the culture, tradition, folklore and gastronomy of the nations that inhabit this region. Moreover, all the events take place in small settlements.

According to Getz, events are seen as an important motivator of tourism and a critical factor in the development and marketing plans of many tourism destinations (Getz, 2008). They also have the potential to generate a vast amount of tourism when they cater to visitors from other income-generating zones plus the potential for grants, or sponsorships (Getz, 1997), either directly or indirectly. The events, in turn, are seen as an important tool for attracting visitors and building the touristic image within different communities. This paper reports on research related to festivals' contribution in the development of cultural tourism. Festivals attract culture tourists to local community events in order to promote enriching exchanges between tourists and residents. This study will focus on the residents of the Vojvodina province and measure their perceptions of festivals. The reason for studying residents but not other stakeholders (e.g. businesses, politicians, pressure groups) in this study is rooted in the fact that residents are widely considered to play a vital role in overall tourism de-

velopment in the area and, in particular, in the acceptance or rejection of an event based on their perceptions and attitudes towards it.

Literature Review

Tourism has a multidimensional effect on the host destination: it improves the local economy (Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004), standard of living (Milman & Pizam, 1988) and creates investment opportunities (Dyer et al., 2007). Moreover, tourism produces social benefits for the region (i.e. development of small and medium enterprises, creation of new jobs, improvement of infrastructure, etc.). Tourism is an economic sector that is able to offer a significant contribution to the economic growth of a region and to the labour market, and produces employment directly and indirectly through the supply of goods and the necessary services for tourist activities (Pivac et al., 2011; Blešić et al., 2013). Regarding culture, cultural tourism is considered to be an element of community enrichment, due to the meeting of different cultures (Skoultzos & Tsartas, 2009) and recently has become recognized as one of the most important forms of tourist traffic in the world, particularly in Europe, including both heritage tourism and arts tourism. The forecast of UNWTO is that by 2020 cultural tourism will become one of tourism's chief forms of focus (e.g. Boyd, 2002; Frangialli, 2002; Light & Prentice, 1994). The definition of cultural tourism, therefore, covers not only the consumption of a cultural past, i.e. a historical product, but also aspects that include the contemporary, cultural ways of life of the people and/or region (Richards, 2001, p.7). Cultural events, social environment, regional specifics, the image of the region, environmental quality and cultural landscape can create, via their broader reflection, the opportunity for and one of the factors and premises of further development of the territory. The presence of these amenities can be a deciding factor regarding where people want to live and spend their leisure time and where they establish their entrepreneurial activities (Rumpel et al., 2008).

Cultural heritage, cultural and creative industries, sustainable cultural tourism, and cultural infrastructure can serve as strategic tools for revenue generation, particularly in developing countries, given their often-rich cultural heritage and substantial labour force. Today, many cities use cultural heritage

and cultural events and institutions to improve their image, stimulate urban development, and attract visitors as well as investments (UNESCO, 2012).

One of the fastest growing forms of visitor and community activity is the festival (Getz, 1997). Festivals typically create tourism service at a specific time and place and are unique, since they are often organized without explicit tourism-related goals but are used as image makers and attractions of the region (Andersson & Getz, 2009). In the current economic climate, festivals play an important role for towns, cities and whole regions. They have significant impacts on the development of cultural tourism to the host communities (Raj & Vignali, 2010). In less-developed countries afflicted by debilitating rural poverty, tourism is perceived to be one of the few feasible options for development. The hosting of events is often developed because of the tourism and economic opportunities additional to social and cultural benefits. In a study conducted by Clarke & Jepson (2011), the importance of opening up the issue in the management of festivals and events was explored. Properly managed festivals can be used by the organizers to express the relationship between identity and place and play a crucial role in raising civic consciousness. They are also an important expression of human activity and contribute significantly to the social and cultural life of their host communities (Raj & Vignali, 2010). Local festivals are increasingly being used as instruments for promoting tourism and boosting the regional economy (Felsenstein & Fleischer, 2003). Getz (1993) and Formica & Uysal (1998) showed that the economic gains from festivals can be substantial because festivals provide enjoyable activities and spending venues for both local people and tourists. To date, a significant amount research has been done on assessing the economic impact of festivals and events (Crompton, Lee, & Shuster, 2001; Dwyer, Mellor, Mistilis, & Mules, 2000; Tyrrell & Johnston, 2001; Jackson, Houghton, Russell & Triandos, 2005; Chhabra, Sills, & Cabbage, 2003; Brennan-Horley, Connell, & Gibson, 2007). Since 2010, researchers in Serbia have been investigating the problem of visitor satisfaction and motivation (Stamenkovic et al., 2011; Pivac et al., 2011; Gagić et al., 2013; Blešić et al., 2013; Stamenkovic et al., 2013; Blešić et al., 2014). The abovementioned works engaged in researching the largest and the most popular events

in Serbia: the EXIT festival and the Brass Band Music Festival in Guča. These festivals, which initially were of local interest, grew into internationally famous festivals, of which the local community benefits greatly. The main subject of this paper is the assessment of how cultural event tourism can affect rural development in seven municipalities in the Vojvodina province.

The Implications of the Research on Rural Development and Local Community

Based on the available literature (Roche, 1994; Bramwell, 1997; Hiller, 1998; Ritchie, 2000; Getz, 2001; Delamere, 2001; Pivac et al., 2011), research, as well personal observations and experiences, the authors deduced that the development of festival tourism can have an impact on, and benefit a destination in a) positive and b) negative way, but also a) directly and b) indirectly. Impacts are classified as follows:

- Social impact: celebration and relaxation for everyone involved, cross-cultural studies (Small et al., 2005; Small, 2007); social issues revealed during a festival, e.g. improved or inadequate communication between the stakeholders of the private and public sectors; reactions stemming from contacts and communication between tourists and local residents; improved demographics; closer involvement of young and middle-aged persons in festival organization;
- Cultural impacts: in addition to the impact that different cultures have on the local community, there is also impact on the cultural and architectural heritage; increased media reporting on the destination and other cultural contents, etc.;
- Psychological impacts: improved image, motives for visiting the festivals, needs satisfaction, etc.;
- Economic impact: direct or indirect economic impacts can be divided into two sub-groups: a) impact stemming from tourism and hospitality industry, and b) impact stemming from service industry; increase in the competitiveness of other events; creation of an appropriate destination with more money and more investments; increase in tourist traffic; increase in the number of commercial events; engagement of the local com-

- munity; increased benefits; and technical support used in the preparation phase of the event, etc.;
- Ecological impact, i.e. physical (including the sub-group pertaining to the impact on the physical infrastructure). Physical infrastructure is often cited as a key benefit of large events, including transport infrastructure, stadiums, sports halls, sporting fields, other residential buildings, hotels, improved scenery, launch of new ecological and green festivals (environmentally-friendly) and the creation of sustainable codes and criteria;
 - Political impact: can also be regarded as a sub-group of social impacts, since it is crucial in reconciling opponents and those who do not communicate between themselves; debunking and demystifying prejudices and stereotypes, with a special sub-group of impacts regarding the safety and achievement of political goals;
 - Legal and administrative impact: observance of copyrights and intellectual property rights, trademarks, names and designs; or encouragement to adopt special clauses pertaining to environmental protection, employment, consumer protection, health and safety of visitors, impact on the exchange rate and income tax, incorporations or charitable statuses; increased engagement of women in decision-making processes, etc.;
 - Programme and managerial impacts: increasing the transparency; presenting works of art and other products; education through festivals, e.g. lifelong learning and distance learning; honing necessary skills; establishing the sector for organizational management; destination management; hospitality management, etc.;
 - Technological impact: increase in the use of the Internet; improved computer literacy; increased role of media broadcasts from the scene and after the event; technologically and technically savvy consumers; increased number of automated services available 24/7/365; complete system integration, electronic surveillance of visitors through names of buyers and tickets scanned at the entrance; various applications that improve exchange of experiences, etc.;
 - Urban revival of the destination and the region: events and festivals are associated with urban revivals since they affect the image of the destination and heritage.

Methodology

The questionnaire used in this research was based on the Delamere scale (Delamere et al., 2001) and the scale used in the research that the authors carried out on the 50th anniversary of Brass Band Music Festival in Guca (Republic of Serbia) in August 2010 (Pivac et al., 2011). Eight attributes for measuring social benefits of a community festival were taken from the model used by Delamere et al. (2001), while seven attributes pertaining to the location, contents and quality of the programme and ancillary services were taken from the research conducted by Pivac et al. (2011). The questionnaire included six new questions pertaining to the organization and promotion of the festival. The questionnaire used in this research consists of two parts; the first part included respondent demographic information, while the second part consisted of 21 questions that refer to the attitudes of the local population towards events in the Vojvodina province. Attributes were measured a five-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (least important) to 5 (most important) in the Importance part, and from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) in the Performance part. The questioning was conducted in seven municipalities in Vojvodina (Novi Sad, Sombor, Subotica, Zrenjanin, Kikinda, Vršac, Ruma) between April and November 2012. Seven interviewers took part in the interviews (three co-authors of this paper and four master's students).

Before the research in the field, there were two meetings and the researchers familiarized themselves with the methodology and rules of communication with respondents. The researchers were advised to indicate to respondents that the survey is anonymous and to seek approval for the survey. In total, 500 questionnaires were distributed, and 278 (55.6%) usable questionnaires were obtained. Researchers in the field each conducted research in one of the selected municipalities, each distributing 70 questionnaires on average.

Results

Characteristics of Respondents

The sample included 127 (45.7%) males and 151 (54.3%) females among the respondents. The primary age group was 31–40 and represented 26.3% of the total group of respondents. The next biggest group was 41–50, and represented 22.3% of the respondents. Most of the respondents (44.2%) had completed secondary education. Regarding their occupation, the majority of respondents are employed (75.2%). The sample is dominated by the respondents from Novi Sad (23.7%) and Sombor (16.9%). The majority of respondents are of Serbian ethnicity (75.2%), followed by respondents of Croatian ethnicity (13.3%).

Table 1 Demographic information of respondents (n = 278)

Variables	Sample size	Percentage
Age		
≤ 20	58	20.9
21–30	36	12.9
31–40	73	26.3
41–50	62	22.3
51–60	39	14.0
61 ≥	10	3.6
Gender		
Male	127	45.7
Female	151	54.3
Education		
primary education	15	5.4
secondary education	123	44.2
bachelor's degree	24	8.6
master's degree	10	3.6
Occupation		
pupil/student	62	22.3
employed	209	75.2
retired	2	0.7

Variables	Sample size	Percentage
unemployed	5	1.8
Place of residence		
Novi Sad	66	23.7
Sombor	47	16.9
Subotica	36	12.9
Zrenjanin	37	13.3
Vršac	38	13.7
Kikinda	32	11.5
Ruma	22	7.9
Nationality		
Serbian	210	75.5
Croatian	37	13.3
Hungarian	12	4.3
Romanian	2	0.7
Roma	12	4.3
Montenegrin	4	1.4
Slovak	1	0.4

Factor Analysis

The data were factor analysed using the principal component method and varimax rotation procedure in order to extract the sub-dimensions of those attributes. In this study, all factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 and with factor loadings greater than 0.5 were retained. The results of the factor analysis, which suggested a five-factor solution, included 21 attributes and explained 66.45% of the variance. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) overall measure of sampling adequacy was 0.817 (Kaiser, 1974) and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($p = 0.00$). Values of the Cronbach alpha coefficient for the first, second and fifth factors are in the domain of high reliability while the values of the Cronbach alpha coefficient for the third and fourth factors in the domain of acceptable reliability (Lehman et al., 2005). This demonstrates that the scales of the formal questionnaire have considerable reliability (Nunnally, 1978). Table 2 shows the results of the factor analysis.

Table 2 Results of Factor Analysis

Extra- cted factors	Items	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	Variance explained	Cronba- ch's α
F1	Event should be held on a suitable location with secured parking space.	0.775	8.574	22.325	0.886
	Events contribute to the feeling of belonging.	0.676			
	Events make the number of tourists grow.	0.759			
	Events enable exchange of ideas among ethnic groups in the community.	0.723			
	Events positively influence cooperation between people.	0.752			
	Events enable local community to make extra income.	0.570			
	Events have a positive cultural and economic influence.	0.630			
	Events help improve the quality of life in the area.	0.549			
F2	Event should be organized by professional societies.	0.562	2.641	11.497	0.756
	Event should also have accompanying programs (education, competitions, workshops).	0.564			
	Event should be organized by local authority (place of the organization of event).	0.536			
	Event should be organized by stakeholders who are interested in profit making.	0.796			
F3	Events should be entertaining.	0.668	1.634	11.167	0.649
	Performance of famous musicians/singers is necessary.	0.754			
	Events have versatile programme.	0.514			
F4	Brochures promoting the exhibitors should be handed out at the event.	0.746	1.415	10.762	0.670
	Event should be promoted in neighbouring countries.	0.624			
	Events have huge significance for promoting the local community.	0.746			
F5	Safety of visitors during the event is on a high level.	0.570	1.018	10.697	0.803
	Prices of product and services are affordable (food, beverages, souvenirs).	0.930			
	Quality of products and services is exceptional (food, beverages, souvenirs).	0.926			

The first factor was labelled “Social-economic impact”. This factor explained 22.325% of the total variance with a reliability coefficient of 0.886. The second

factor was “Organization” and explained 11.497% of the total variance with a reliability coefficient of 0.756. The third factor was “Entertainment” and ex-

plained 11.167% of the variance with a reliability coefficient of 0.649. The fourth factor, labelled “Promotion”, accounted for 10.762% of the variance with a reliability coefficient of 0.670. The fifth, “Services” explained 10.697% of the total variance, indicating a reliability coefficient of 0.803.

Table 3 Mean Ratings of Factors and Items

Selected factors and items	Mean	Std. Dev.
F1 - Social-economic impact	4.3305	0.72225
Events should be held on a suitable location with secured parking space.	4.1547	1.05164
Events contribute to the feeling of belonging.	4.3094	0.91792
Events make the number of tourists grow.	4.4317	0.90765
Events enable exchange of ideas among ethnic groups in the community.	4.5108	0.84432
Events positively influence cooperation between people.	4.4353	0.84617
Events enable local community to make extra income.	4.1799	0.92889
Events have a positive cultural and economic influence.	4.5000	0.97162
Events help improve the quality of life in the area.	4.1223	0.97965
F2 – Organization	4.1322	0.83055
Event should be organized by professional societies.	4.0180	1.08968
Event should also have accompanying programs (education, competitions, workshops).	4.2698	0.98503
Event should be organized by local authority (place of the organization of event).	4.1511	1.17688
Event should be organized by stakeholders who are interested in profit making.	4.0899	1.11237
F3 – Entertainment	3.8573	0.90239
Events should be entertaining.	4.3022	1.17529

Selected factors and items	Mean	Std. Dev.
Performance of famous musicians/singers is necessary.	3.3165	1.34640
Events have versatile programmes.	3.9532	0.98067
F4 – Promotion	3.5947	0.92543
Brochures promoting the exhibitors should be handed out at the Event.	3.9281	1.05543
Event should be promoted in neighbouring countries.	3.7374	1.29402
Events have huge significance for promoting the local community.	3.1187	1.21525
F5 - Services	3.6055	0.94401
Safety of visitors during the event is on a high level.	3.7050	1.13972
Prices of product and services are affordable (food, beverages, souvenirs).	3.4460	1.13158
Quality of products and services is exceptional (food, beverages, souvenirs).	3.6655	1.07127

From the results shown in Table 3, we can conclude that the respondents find the “Social-economic impact” factor to be the most important one, especially emphasizing the importance of exchanges of ideas between ethnic groups within the community, i.e. positive cultural and economic impacts of the event on the local community. It is followed by the second factor, “Organization”, which highlights the importance of event organization by professional associations. The local population accentuates the importance of workshops and educational seminars as segments of events. The least important to the respondents are those questions connected to the factor “Promotion”, followed by questions referring to the factors of “Services” and “Entertainment”. However, the results of the analysis of ANOVA variance indicate that the third factor, which refers to the content of entertainment programme of the event, is more important for younger population (up to 20) as well as for the age group of 61 years and higher. Such results are expected considering the fact that respondents were the local population members who

do not belong to the working group (students and retired). Furthermore, the aforementioned age groups gave statistically significant higher marks to the fifth factor, which refers to quality and services prices as well as to safety of visitors at the event. The youngest (up to 30) and the oldest respondents (61 and above) gave significantly lower marks to the importance of promotion with regard to other age groups.

Statistically significant differences in responses were also observed in a similar study conducted in the municipality of Lučani (Serbia), which showed that younger respondents gave significantly higher ratings factor related to socialization than older respondents did (Blešić et al., 2013).

Table 4 The Results of ANOVA

Factor	Mean values						F-value	LSD test
	age group 1 ≤ 20	age group 2 21-30	age group 3 31-40	age group 4 41-50	age group 5 51-60	age group 6 61 ≥		
F3	4.2011	3.3056	3.7671	3.8978	3.8376	4.3333	5.524*	1. 6 > 2. 3. 4. 5
F4	3.1494	2.8519	4.0137	4.0538	3.4957	3.3333	17.730 *	1. 2. 6 < 3. 4. 5
F5	4.1379	3.0833	3.5388	3.3602	3.7094	4.0000	8.187*	1. 6 > 2. 3. 4. 5

*p < 0.01

Conclusions

The rural areas in the Vojvodina have been neglected in recent decades; especially with regard to the development of sustainable tourism (which refers to any tourism type). Moreover, the development of rural tourism in multi-ethnic regions of Vojvodina province, to date, has been carried out by individuals (local enthusiasts) whose main weakness was a lack of adequate training in various aspects of the tourism and hospitality industry, specifically training on booking systems, training on how to correspond with clients and other stakeholders, how to analyse the motivation of the visitors and guests, and how to define potential market segments. Apparently, respondents consider economic factors to be critical in the less developed areas where severe adverse impacts of living conditions from the previous twenty years remain present.

The respondents are of the opinion that the good organization of one event increases the number of visitors, provides extra income for the local community, has a positive economic influence in general, and improves the quality of life in the local area.

A sense of empathy for other people and awareness of the importance of environmental protection may be considered to be personal features of the population in this region. In general, people from this area like to socialize, cooperate and collaborate

among themselves and with others from outside this area. Furthermore, they hold the opinion that events are to be places where people can relax and escape from everyday stress. Moreover, events enable making business connections, enable the exchange of ideas among ethnic groups in the community and contribute to the feeling of belonging. Finally, the events have a tremendous impact on the improvement of human relationships in the local community and influence cooperation between people in a positive manner.

Based on this, it can be concluded that the primary task is to introduce such activities within educational processes, in order to raise awareness of the local population about the importance of promoting and developing cultural services and events, and the cultural heritage of the region.

Considering the importance of cultural events for the development of tourism in rural areas, future research should be directed towards implementing benchmarking analysis to developed rural tourism destinations in order to appropriately adapt marketing strategies and their implementation in Vojvodina. Furthermore, it is necessary to conduct interviews with the responsible organizations for the development of tourism in Vojvodina, as well as other economic entities (Tourism Organization of Vo-

jvodina Province, and tourist organizations of municipalities and cities, as well as travel agencies).

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