

Review
(accepted July 13, 2013)

THE FESTIVALS AS A TOOL ON OHRID TOURISM DESTINATION BRANDING

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Abstract:

The main aim of the paper is about festivals in the southern west city in the Republic of Macedonia – Ohrid, empirical research of influence of the Ohrid summer festival on Ohrid tourism destination branding. Its strength to attract foreign tourist and the role of Ohrid municipality and tourism stockholders to use festival as a tool to attract more foreign tourist and branding Ohrid as a tourism destination.

Nowadays, many tourist organization develop strategy for creating or support festivals on their destination. The festivals have strong influence of the destination attracting many foreign tourist. Some cities are branding as a festival cities, attract over million visitors per year.

Ohrid summer festival as a member of European festival association, is the most important festival in Ohrid city but also in the country. The festival has the role to promote and present culture achievements from the country but also it is attractive factor for foreign tourist to visit Ohrid city and the region in the summer period. It is held from 12 of July until 20 of August each year.

Ohrid municipality should incorporate Ohrid summer festival and other festivals in general promotion on Ohrid city. It should support and create new festivals.

This paper presents an action research conducted on a sample of 150 foreign visitors on Ohrid summer festival during the festival from 12 July till 20 august 2010.

Keywords: Ohrid summer festival, foreign tourists, Ohrid municipality, destination, branding.

Jel Classification: L83

INTRODUCTION

Events as a specific social phenomena are intended primarily to satisfy certain specific cultural and social needs. Depending on how, they have their own specific character and content (cultural, sport, business, etc.). The term manifestation means massive public appearance with a public expression of feelings, relationships' (Avramoski 1996).

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Event (event) is spatial - temporal phenomenon and every event is unique because of place-people interaction – Systems Management (including concept and program). The attraction of the event is specific on the way that it is never the same and the person must be on the spot for fully enjoying the experience. (Getz 1997)

Cultural events are held in different forms but most of them are appear in the form of festivals, carnivals, exhibitions, concerts, performance...Festivals mostly giving authenticity and uniqueness of place and region are maintained. Festivals have a number of roles in the city or region and defined as attractiveness, image, animation and development. They contribute to extend the tourist season, extending the main season or producing a new season in the life of the region or resort (Yeoman et al. 2004).

Festivals with an attractive program of events may position the destination in the market and attract more tourists in the future, longer stay in the destination and exploring the tourist attractions (Getz 1997).

Nowadays, we have strong competition between destinations and we can see efforts that they made to establish their countries as a tourist destination. Through experience and notion they gain of the visit the festival, tourists create the image of the destination in general.

The festivals can be powerful in anchoring, even changing a destination image. Festival has firmly established the city's cultural credentials as one defining characteristic of the city's brand. Publicity of the festival can generate positive image of destination. Festivals can shape the image of the host community and its physical location in the mind of potential (Yeoman et al. 2004).

1. ANALYSIS OF INFLUENCE OF OHRID SUMMER FESTIVAL TO OHRID TOURISM DESTINATION BRENDING

Ohrid summer festival is the most important festival in Ohrid city but also in Macedonia. It is the festival of classic music, theatre, dance, exhibition... It is held from 12 of July until 20 of August each year in Ohrid. During 40 days festival realize around 50-60 events (concerts, theatre performances, dance shows, exhibitions...) at the outdoor stages in the city such as Samoil fortress, Antique theatre, Dolni Saraj, St.Sofia church, Museum on water.... It is finance by the Ministry of culture. The Festival is a member of European festival association. The festival has the role to promote and present culture achievements from the country but also to attract foreign tourist to visit Ohrid city and the region. (special edition, 50 year of Ohrid summer festival 2010)

Ohrid city located south-western part of the country is famous tourist place for domestic and foreign tourist during summer period. Cultural and lakeside tourism are most forms of tourism in Ohrid. There are many tourist objects – accommodation: 28 hotels with 1388 rooms and 2988 beds. There are 1851 categorized objects from small scale (apartments, rooms, villas...) with 10966 beds (Strategy for sustainable local economic development, Municipality of Ohrid 2007).

The research presented in this paper is conducted on the Ohrid summer festival in Ohrid.It includes survey by random choice on 150 foreign visitors of Ohrid summer festival in 2010. The survey was made from 12 July till 20 of August in 2010. Data for

this study were collected through a self-administrated questionnaire distributed to 150 foreign visitors. Respondents were approached face-to-face at the festivals evening of Ohrid summer festival.

The questionnaire consisted of 11 questions: 4 questions concerning the trip characteristics (first-time or repeat visit, number of visits, length of stay, source of information); 3 socio-demographic (nationality, gender, age); and 4 questions concerning the influence of the festival events for their decision to visit Ohrid as a tourist destination. The questions have positive, negative or neutral answers.

Foreign tourists have positive affinity for the Ohrid summer festival. Question that is addressed to the foreign tourist about affinity for the festival show that Ohrid summer festival has positive influence of the visitors. (81%). Only 11% of respondents answered that they have no affinity for the festival. The quality of the events, diversification and ambient of the old city where the events are realized are the main reasons of positive affinity of the visitors.

Table 1. Results from the variable: affinity of foreign tourist to Ohrid summer festival

Visitors	Frequency	YES	NO	PARTLY
FOREIGN	150	121/81%	17/11%	12/8%

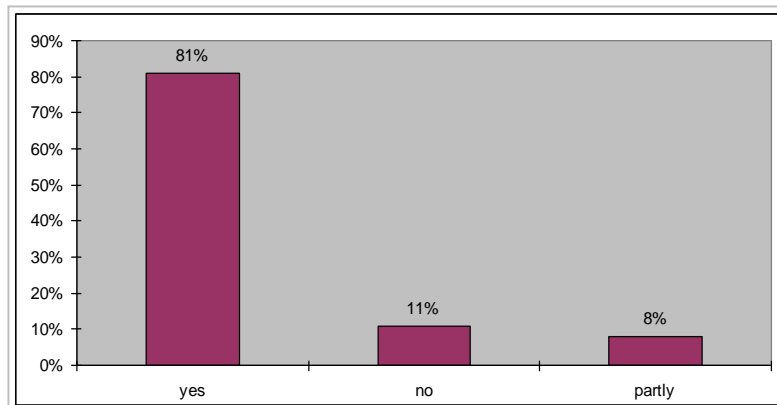


Figure 1. Affinity of foreign tourist for the Ohrid summer festival

Ohrid summer festival is attractive factor for the foreign tourist to visit Ohrid city. They will come in Ohrid if the festival has attractive events for target audience. The high percent of the respondents (81%) answered affirmatively. Only 11% of respondents answered that they will not come in Ohrid due to the festival. It is an indicator that shows that Ohrid summer festival has strong influence to attract foreign tourist.

Table 2. Results from the variable: Ohrid summer Festival is attractive factor for the foreign tourists

Visitors	Frequency	YES	NO	PARTLY
FOREIGN	150	93/62%	45/30%	12/8%

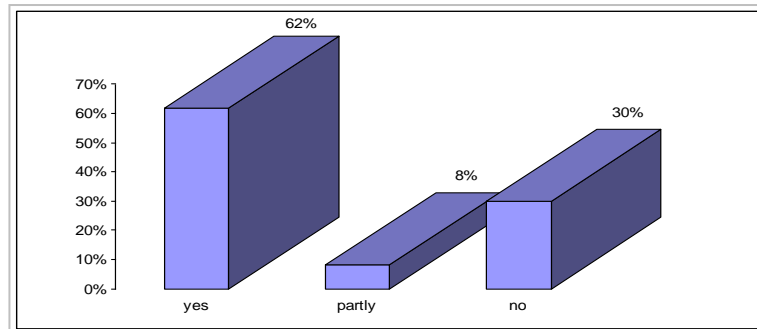


Figure 2. Ohrid summer Festival as an attractive factor for the foreign tourists

On the question Does Ohrid summer festival is main motive to visit Ohrid city?, yes answered high 66% of the respondents. It show that the festival is strong instrument of tourist organization in Ohrid to promote city as a festival destination. Also they can use festival to branding Ohrid as a tourist destination.

Table 3. Results from the variable: Ohrid summer Festival as a main motive foreign tourists to visit Ohrid city

Visitors	Frequency	YES	NO	PARTLY
FOREIGN	150	99/66%	37/25%	14/9%

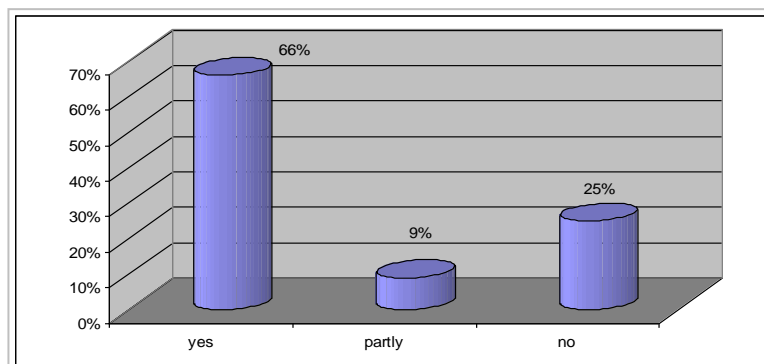


Figure 3. Ohrid summer Festival as a main motive foreign tourists to visit Ohrid city

Ohrid summer festival as a main motive to foreign tourist to visit Ohrid city is not used as a instrument to promote destination by Ohrid municipality which is responsible for general promotion of Ohrid city abroad. The respondents (71%) answered that travel agencies and municipality didn't promote the festival abroad. The festival is not a part of tourist product that tour operators had offered to the target markets. The foreign tourist are not satisfied of the ways that stakeholders and tourism organization promote the destination through the festival. Also, there is no connection between tourism organization of Ohrid city and the festival. Tourism organization has not use image of the festival to promote Ohrid as a festival tourism destination.

Table 4. Results from the variable: Ohrid summer Festival is include in general promotion of Ohrid city

Visitors	Frequency	YES	NO	PARTLY
FOREIGN	150	12/8%	106/71%	32/21%

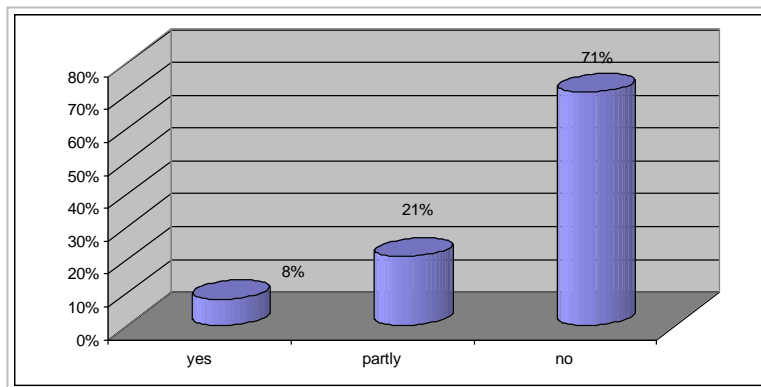


Figure 4. Ohrid summer Festival is include in general promotion of Ohrid city

The festival use marketing mix but only on domestic market. They create events but they don't follow the needs of the audience. The distribution of program and tickets of the festival is on domestic market mostly. The festival is not use promotion as a instrument of marketing mix combining propaganda, personal sales, promotion sales and PR on foreign target markets. There are activities mostly on the domestic markets (Annual report 2010, National institution Ohrid summer festival).

CONCLUSION

Ohrid summer festival is great instrument for Ohrid municipality and Tourism organization to attract more foreign tourist in destination. It has strong influence of the tourism destination branding.

The presented results indicate the following conclusions:

- Foreign tourist has strong affinity for Ohrid summer festival. Creating events which will satisfied needs of the target audience will generate more affinity for the festival.
- Ohrid summer festival is attractive factor for the foreign tourist to visit Ohrid city. They will come on destination - Ohrid if the festival has attractive events for target audience. Travel agencies should be aware of strength of the festival to attract foreign tourist. They should incorporate Ohrid summer festival in their tourist products and to sold in foreign markets.
- The festival is a main motive for a lot of tourist to visit destination or to stay longer in destination. The festival should be a part of general promotion of destination on target market abroad. The festival has strong influence on decision of foreign tourist to visit Ohrid as a tourist destination, but it is not used from tourism organization and Ohrid municipality. Strong cooperation between festival and tourism organization is recommended. Tourism organization from Ohrid city should use festival to promote destination and to create positive image of the destination. Marketing mix on the festival should be in coordination with destination brand and general marketing activities of destination.
- Tourist stockholders in Ohrid don't use festival program on their products to attract foreign tourist. Travel agencies and tour operators should create a tourist product where the festival will be attractive factor. The product they should sell on target audience on target markets abroad.
- Promotion of the festival should be made on target markets abroad especially on neighbor countries of the region. Ohrid municipality should invite journalist from target markets to visit festival program and to write about the events. The festival should participate on Tourism fairs abroad on sector Culture tourism where the program will be promoted.
- Municipalities should support and create new festivals on destination which purpose is longer stay in the destination.
However, It requires coordinate joint action of all subjects and stakeholders in tourism in Ohrid city, local municipality and national institution responsible for promoting Ohrid as a festival tourist destination abroad.

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