

# The Impact of Marketing Mix Theories in the Culture Heritage in Albania

Elenita Roshi, (PhD candidate)  
University of Tirana/ Albania  
Rezart Dibra, PhD

## Abstract

In the last decades, the marketing theory has undergone impressive changes. Marketing is an evolving concept, same as the broadening concept of the culture heritage. The appropriate marketing mix for marketing of culture heritage can enhance the role culture heritage has for tourism development and moreover the sustainable use of culture heritage. The implementation of the marketing mix strategies in the Albanian cultural heritage market is improved by focusing in an extended model of 'Ps' in order to get a better view of the market. The main idea of the paper is that the focus should be not only in the 'product', 'price', 'place' and 'promotion' but also on the 'people', 'programming', 'passion', 'purpose', 'performance', 'potential', 'transmission of information', 'position', 'practice' and 'benefit'. Thus the marketing mix of cultural heritage in the market in development such as Albania consists in a model '14Ps'.

**Keywords:** Cultural Heritage, Marketing Mix, Albania, Market, Tourism.

## Introduction:

In the last decades, the marketing theory has undergone impressive changes. Marketing is an evolving concept, same as the broadening concept of the culture heritage. On the other hand the marketing mix concept is one of the core concepts of marketing theory, which has evolved also from the first core concepts of the McCarthy 4Ps version. The 4Ps version (product, price, promotion and place) has increasingly come under attack with the result that different marketing mixes have been put forward for different marketing contexts. While numerous modifications to the 4Ps framework have been proposed the most concerted criticism has come from the services marketing area. (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1995:4). A literature review of culture heritage can put in doubt many concept of the traditional marketing (Chhabra, 2010:1). This is due to the very concept of cultural heritage which is interconnected with many other disciplines such as sociology, economics, geography, psychology, social psychology, history and philosophy. As it is explained by different researchers, these different disciplines have different objects and field study in terms of tourism and cultural heritage. For example psychology and social psychology are more focused on the impact of tourism on people and their behavior; political sciences have on their targets the institutions and organizations and people; history wants to study all systems that have existed and are still in place; economics focuses on two levels: macro level is focused on the system while the micro level is more interested in market-related processes; geography is interested in studying the relationship between civilizations and environment etc. (Veal, 2006:21). By referring to the UNESCO definition "cultural heritage" includes several categories of material, non-material and natural things or objects. Material cultural heritage includes the movable heritage objects such as paintings, sculptures, coins, manuscripts; immovable cultural heritage includes monuments, archaeological sites, etc.; while underwater heritage includes (waste ships, underwater ruins and underwater cities); Intangible cultural heritage includes: oral traditions, performing arts and rituals. Natural heritage includes natural areas (UNESCO, 2016).

Various studies have shown that rapid growth of the tourism industry of cultural heritage can generate economic benefits. Thus, numerous studies have targeted the studying of the economic impact of cultural tourism on host communities and its interest groups and they have shown positive impacts and economic benefits for them. It has also been shown there are benefits that can come from the monetary contribution of residents and visitors to the government in form of taxes. The government uses some of these funds to subsidize tourist events, promotion activities or other economic facilities to attract tourists to spend money within their community. This approach generates income and employment for local residents. Thus, the hospitalization community benefits through new jobs and increased per capita income. To summarize, it can be stated that the main elements of cultural heritage tourism are the economics, emotions/ motivation, heritage, past, the idea to find common grounds, the authenticity and participation (Chhabra, 2010:4).

This paper will deal with two main issues. First it sheds light on the theoretical relations between marketing mix strategies and culture heritage and secondly it will give a short overview of the Albanian experience regarding the practice of these two concepts.

## 2. Marketing mix of the culture heritage

In Albania, the marketing of cultural heritage is mostly an activity that is managed by public institutions and agencies. It is for this reason that is important to study how these institutions and government agencies develop

their marketing to provide and purchase services in the field of cultural heritage. First, as highlighted by Philip Kotler, although the market is the same for all players that participate in it, and governmental organizations differ from non-governmental organizations on the goals, needs, and their methods, which are present in the formulation of marketing strategies (Kotler, 2002:108). Governmental institutions themselves can constitute a different market for businesses that want to derive benefits from cultural heritage institutions. Among the specialized state institutions for cultural heritage in Albania are the Institute of Cultural Monuments, Institute of Archaeology, Institute of Folk Culture, the General Directorate of State Archives, the National Centre of the Cultural Property Inventory, the Movie Archive and the National Centre of Culture and Folk Activities, the Agency of Archaeological Service, the Regional Directorates of National Culture, the National Art Gallery etc. (Law No.9048, date 07.04.2003 "On the Cultural Heritage", p.2). Kotler in a general theoretical discussion described the state market as consisting of schools, hospitals, social homes, prisons, and other institutions that provide goods and services to people. Many of these institutions have small budgets and a regular clientele (Kotler, 2002:111). On the other hand, the government itself can be an important buyer in the market of goods and services. Governmental organizations seek from the business firms to submit their bids. Usually, the contract is won by those businesses that have provided the lowest price, though the government takes into account the quality of service or the good image of the firm. In this market, successful companies are those that take part during the specification of the product, get detailed information about the products offered, and produce a strong marketing to enhance the reputation of their companies (Kotler, 2002:113).

Then again it is important to give a description of what we mean by cultural good, despite the definition of cultural heritage. This general definition of cultural goods will help to see culture as a product that has a certain value and is perceived as such and by individuals. The main idea is that cultural goods usually have an impact to the public and this impact is proportional to the quality and quantity of this offering; and thereby creates a rational impact to the individual. The new theories on marketing contain many classifications regarding the qualities that shall own a product. The most common definition for it is that 'product is everything that can be offered to fulfil a need or a desire. The merchandized products include the physical goods, services, experiences, persons, places, qualities, organizations, information and ideas (Kotler & Keller, 2006: 373). Products can be classified based on different features. Every product has a different strategy of marketing mix (Ibid). Goods or products can be classified based also on the tastes of customers or their buying habits.

Many of the most recent studies on cultural heritage are focused on topics such as: market segments, consumer behaviour, communication and promotion (mainly advertising), and partnerships (Chhabra, 2010:11). By referring to Kotler & Keller the new competition is no longer between what companies produce in their factories but between what these factories add to the products they produce, in the form of packaging, services, advertising, consulting client, financing, delivery to customers, manner of storage, and other things that people value (Kotler & Keller, 2006:373). Thus, the issue is how an object/ service/ product that belongs to the cultural heritage can be transformed into a product that can bring benefits in the tourism market, without removing the essence of it or adding other commercial byproducts that are not necessarily related to cultural heritage. Before analyzing the type of marketing more convenient for cultural heritage object/ service/ product that are part of this study, it is necessary to give an initial general description of cultural institutions. Cultural heritage is a complex motivating force which is focused on the distribution of the cultural capital. Thus, in the context of tourism, cultural heritage has become a commodity that is intended to meet the needs and demands of modern tourists (Chhabra, 2010:2). The review of the literature related to cultural heritage and tourism shows that terms of 'cultural heritage' and 'cultural tourism' are used to describe not only the consumption of art, visiting of monuments, folklore but also to describe the perceived experiences and motivations of visitors or tourists to these destinations. But the specific nature of cultural heritage makes it difficult to study it as special field of study, because it is interconnected with many other research fields. Among many definitions of the tourism of cultural heritage I choose to focus on that defines it as the movement of people towards cultural attractions away from their living areas, in order to get information and new experiences to fulfil their cultural needs (Richards, G. (1996).

It is important to focus also on the economic aspects of the cultural heritage, and its economic meaning helps us to build a common base to discuss about different perspectives of offer and demand. Cultural heritage is important to tourism because first of all it secures monetary benefits (Chhabra, 2010:4). Yet, prior to cultural heritage tourism generates income, the cultural attractions should be well-managed (Roshi & Abazi, 2011). One of the main assumptions of the cultural heritage is that it is an industry, which needs to be controlled and planned in a rational way with the goal of producing a marketable product. This explains why the cultural heritage has not only the offer connotations but also of the demand (Chhabra, 2010:5). It is important to mention that there is not only one segment of cultural heritage because people have different interests and they try to explore different aspects of cultural heritage by trying to combine those aspects with other aspects of the destination such as with the beautiful nature (Tourism Development International: 2010, 4).

The studies show that the demand for the sites of cultural heritage has increased in the last decades.

This trend is true also for Albania. Although a law for the cultural heritage has been approved very late (only in 2003) the Albanian Constitution in the article 3 mentions the cultural heritage as one of the most important values for the national identity in the same rank as the state independence and its territorial entirety; person dignity, the rights and freedoms, the social justice, constitutional order, pluralism, national identity and national heritage, religious coexistence, and the coexistence and understanding of Albanians with the minorities are the basis of this state, which has the duty to respect and protect (Albanian Constitution, Art.3). It is important to mention that in the last years the Ministry of Culture is preparing a new law on the cultural heritage which is going to make a difference in the relations between the public and private and a new considerations is going to be set regarding the oldness of objects to be included in the cultural heritage such as paintings, graphics and sculptures which are going to be more than 50 years old. The same age was determined for the used everyday items as well as manufactured items aged over 75 years (Panorama Newspaper, 2016). Nowadays, the marketing of cultural heritage is based on promotions and external communication focused more on the informative messages about the importance of an object as well its historical memory. This is more for the consolidated markets, which allow themselves to be repetitive in their publications. While the Albanian market of cultural heritage belongs to an emerging marketing and as such, has promoted in various aspects and in different ways the same event or cultural heritage object. This has not given immediate effects economically although different marketing campaigns have been used during these years in Albania.

Various researchers have noted that the printed materials are those that are more used to promote tourism and cultural heritage (Chhabra, 2010:12). It is for this reason that many studies have been focused on the brochures, promotions made in the newspapers, in the radio or television in order to understand the images impact and the meaning of these messages. Despite the selection of marketing strategy, the main focus of marketing have been the study of different groups and how they are going to be impacted in their consumer behavior by the marketing messages. Messages designed for these groups have been designed in such a way to increase profits from the cultural heritage objects, sites etc. But still, there are no specific studies that have measured not only the economic profits but also the authenticity of these cultural heritage sites, the kind of culture that they transmit, their commodification and how to preserve them for the future generations. Most studies on tourism mainly involve a statistical analysis or a simple presentation of them such as the number of tourists visiting a country during a holiday season or during one year. Often this information can be qualitative but it can presented in a quantitative form – for example, the estimated level of satisfaction received by tourists, customers or visitors regarding the services provided in a cultural heritage site. The answers of customers are provided with a ranking from 1 ‘very pleased’ to 5 ‘very unhappy’ (Veal, 2006:40).

The different methods of doing marketing today have had their impact in the strategies used for the promotion of objects, sites, facilities and cultural heritage events. Referring again to Kotler et al. (2010) a new marketing has emerged, where people are treated not just as consumers but as human beings with mind, heart and spirit. Nowadays individuals are not seeking only emotional fulfilment but they try to find their human spirit. (Kotler et al., 2010). To understand the new marketing or marketing 3.0 (as Kotler calls it), it is important to understand three major forces that have had their impact on the general outlook of businesses: the era of participation, the era of paradoxes of globalization and the new era of creative society. All these three forces have transformed the customers to become more collaborative, more cultured and more disposed to the human spirit (Kotler et al., 2010). Even the field of cultural heritage has had their own transformations such as new trends in the demands for the sites of cultural heritage, increase in the competition, the emergence of ‘gazinta’ philosophy that means the effective usage of time; the increase of demands that are focused on the authenticity or originality of cultural heritage products; the emergence of ethical consumption and volunteering; the continuous relationship with the politics because the cultural heritage is considered as a very contested phenomenon; the new economy is based on the experience because the consumers are asking product that fulfil their existence and experience; resistances from marketing have produced movements against brands; multiculturalism is a growing trend; the economic prospects of cultural heritage tourism is very big and is not yet fully exploited (Chhabra, 2010:16). Although the above mentioned features can give an idea of a number of difficulties that needs to be surpassed in the future for the culture heritage, they also show a range of options that are eager to be developed in the field of cultural heritage for both consumers and for those that are offering this kind of service (Chhabra, 2010). The main idea is that cultural heritage is a very complex concept that requires similarly a complex marketing strategy. Below I will rank some of the weaknesses and strength of the main strategies of the marketing mix of cultural heritage.

### **3. Main marketing mix strategies of the cultural heritage**

The activities of the marketing are materialized in many forms. One of the most traditional definitions of the marketing mix is that sees is as a set of marketing tools used by the company to achieve its marketing goals (Kotler & Keller, 2006:19). McCarthy classified these marketing tools in four main groups that are widely recognized as the 4Ps of the marketing: product, price, place and promotion. In the marketing mix the decision

are made to influence not only the market channels but also consumers. According to Kotler & Keller the marketing mix as a strategy can be offered only in the long term planning of the companies, agencies or different businesses. In the short term a company can change the price, the quantity of sales and the expenditures for the advertisement. But the decision to produce a new product and to modify the channels of distribution can be taken only in the long run. The marketing mix of the 4Ps represents the outlook of sellers and the marketing tools they have in their disposition to influence buyers. From a buyer's perspective, every marketing tool is designed to give a consumer benefit. This was the conclusion made by Robert Lauterborn who suggested that the sellers 4Ps must have their corresponding consumers 4Cs such as solutions for the consumer, cost to the consumer, commodity and communication. The winning companies or firms will be those that are going to fulfil not only the economic needs of the consumers but also the commodities and through an effective communication (Kotler & Keller, 2006). In other words, the design and implementation of any marketing activity is done by bearing in mind all other activities.

The marketing mix of cultural heritage has its own specifics, and it belongs more to the service industry than the production one. According to Wilson et al (2008) the marketing mix in the cases of the services industry can be extended from 4Ps to 7Ps, by adding three other components: people, physical evidences and processes (McCabe, 2009:184). The main elements of the 4Ps model are generally considered as variables that can be controlled by the company, while the variables that cannot be controlled have more to do with the environmental and competition factors (Cenderello, 2015:2). Certainly, the cultural heritage as a genuine marketing product is a highly contested concept. Misiura (2006) describes the product as something physical, functional and symbolic. Cultural heritage belongs more to the service industry, but there are also elements of the production of goods, which is often represented by souvenir shops or the local traditional markets. As developed firstly by Kotler & Keller and then adjusted and used to analyse the impact on cultural heritage by Chhabra, the marketing of the product of cultural heritage can be developed in four different levels: as a core element, in the level of the facilitator, in the supporting level and in the zooming level.

### **3.1. Recommended marketing mix for cultural heritage**

What makes different the marketing mix of cultural heritage from the common marketing has to do with the fact that all different definitions and interpretations of cultural heritage have in their heart the services to the tourists, visitors or customers. And when it comes to the marketing mix, the first change should be to the conceptual transfer from the model of 4Ps to the model of 7 Ps or more. Besides, product, price, distribution and promotion are also important the 'people', 'physical evidence' and the 'process'. The last three allow us to focus on services and investment orientation and facilities provided to the customers. Nevertheless, the cultural heritage is still very complex concept as is best understood by the practical experience. My main idea that in emerging markets of cultural heritage such as Albania is better to study both on the market perspective and also from the consumer viewpoints. The implementation of the marketing mix strategies in the Albanian cultural heritage market is better by focusing in an extended model of 'Ps' in order to get a better view of the market. The focus should be not only in the product, price, place and promotion but also on the people, programming, passion, purpose, performance, potential, transmission of information, position, practice and benefit. Thus the marketing mix of cultural heritage in the market in development such as Albania consists in a model '14Ps'. I chose to focus on an expanded model of 'Ps' because studies in this field in Albania are very few and the market is an unexplored terrain empirically. On the other hand, it is good to focus also on the service providers where the visitors of the cultural heritage objects need to be seen as consumers of these services and products and as such they need to be studied by analysing the type of companies that offer this kind of services, if they are public or private, the type of customers and their kind of demands, estimated cost, channels, communication and the circumstances in which these customers base their demands today, especially after the global economic crisis started in 1998. All these factors need to be taken in consideration and applied in empirical studies in the new emerging markets of cultural heritage and cases that are common with Albania, especially in Eastern Europe and former communist countries.

#### **Conclusion:**

The implementation of the marketing mix strategies in the Albanian cultural heritage market is made better by focusing in an extended model of 'Ps' in order to get a better view of the market. The focus should be not only in the product, price, place and promotion but also on the people, programming, passion, purpose, performance, potential, transmission of information, position, practice and benefit. Thus the marketing mix of cultural heritage in the market in development such as Albania consists in a model '14Ps'.

#### **Bibliography**

Cenderello, Andrea. (2015). H.I.S.A. Study Marketing of heritage sites. Retrieved from: [http://www.interpret-europe.net/fileadmin/Documents/projects/HISA/HISA\\_Marketing\\_Heritage\\_sites.pdf](http://www.interpret-europe.net/fileadmin/Documents/projects/HISA/HISA_Marketing_Heritage_sites.pdf)

- Chhabra, Deepak. (2010). Sustainable marketing of cultural and heritage tourism. London: Routledge.
- Kotler, P. , Kartajaya, H., Setiawan, I. (2010). Marketing 3.0 – From products to consumers to the human spirit. New Jersey: Wiley.
- Kotler, P. & Keller, L.K. (2006). Marketing Management. New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Kotler, Philip.(2002). Marketing Management, Millenium Edition. New Jersey: Pearson Custom Publishing.
- Law No.9048, “On the Cultural Heritage” date 07.04.2003
- McCabe, Scott. (2009). Marketing Communications in Tourism and Hospitality. Oxford: Elsevier.
- Official page of UNESCO: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/illicit-trafficking-of-cultural-property/unesco-database-of-national-cultural-heritage-laws/frequently-asked-questions/definition-of-the-cultural-heritage/> Checked for the last time December 8, 2016
- Panorama Newspaper. Ligji i ri, cdo objekt 50 – 75 vjecar eshte trashegimi kulturore (The new law, every object more than 50-75 years old belongs to the cultural heritage). 25 November 2016.
- Rafiq, M. & Ahmed, P. (1995). Using the 7Ps as a generic marketing mix: An exploratory survey of UK and European marketing academics. Marketing Intelligence & Planning. Vol. 13 (9). pp. 4- 15.
- Roshi, E. & Abazi, A. (2011 ). The role of the World Heritage Sites in Albania in the Albanian culture heritage tourism; the need for public private partnerships in offering better tourism services.
- Veal, J. L.( 2006). Research methods for leisure and tourism a practical guide. Essex: Pearson Education Limit.
- Tourism Development International. (2010). Albania Culture Marketing Strategy. UNDP. July 2010.