The Most Promoted Cities From Romania Through Mass Media. Impacts on the Economy, Society and Culture

Sorin Terchila*

ABSTRACT

In this paper, I present the most important advantages of communication, through mass media. I will focus especially on the romanian mass media and also on the promotion strategies of the romanian cities.

The data are gathered through qualitative research tools, particularly interviews. The findings are analyzed taking into account the relationship between local media and impacts on the citizens and tourists. For this paper, I will obtain the information from the romanian citizens and also from the tourists.

Following this idea, I will answer to the following research questions: (1) Which communication strategy is more effective in terms of feedback received by the citizens / tourists? (2) What are the media channels that are commonly used in promoting the cities? (3) What are the effects of promoting on the economy, society and culture of these cities?

The aim of this paper is to optimize the promotion strategies for the cities of Romania, and also to present the most important channels that must be used in the promotion process and how to use them.

KEYWORDS

Mass Media ; Communication ; Impacts

Mass media has always been a baseline for economy, society and politics at a worldwide standard and European as well. Since ancient times communication networks have given opportunities for development and innovation, delivering new forms for the economic and social system. Starting with the networks of roads and aqueducts of the Roman Empire to continental railway system in the 19th century, until the satellite networks and telecommunications of the 20th and 21st century, communication networks have allowed mankind to overcome the barriers of space and time, to access and open new frontiers for human intercommunication and ingenuity. (Iancu Stefan, 2006).

* PhD Student, Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, Romania
Starting from Lippmann's theory, cultivation and addiction theory, the agenda setting theory, the spiral of silence theory etc.- all these reveal how the mass media influences behaviours, either directly or indirectly, for a long term or medium. E. Noelle-Neumann appreciates that there is a rate of about 20% of individuals who express their beliefs firmly, even though they are contrary to the preponderant opinion. (Gabriel A. Almond, Sidney Verba, 1996).

The most important internal or external events, of which most of us have extremely strong opinions, were brought to our attention by the media. From here the ease with which media can influence the value judgments and therefore the choices or the decisions that people make after all. According to the events described in the newscasts, in print media, on the air and so on, people set up their lives. People stand on the media to be informed and those who know how to take advantage of this acquire a large audience. First, all these modern forms and mass communication models generally react on the human mind, television being probably the most used form of mass communication, because the „audience” is being adjusted to an extreme high number. Theoreticians agree that the press and other media technologies have an effect on individuals, groups, institutions and the masses, shaping human personality emotionally, affecting the cognitive processes and the behaviour. A model called the spiral of silence, created by German scientist Elisabeth Noelle Neuman, imagines the effects of communication on the individual over time by pushing the little and poorly informed individual towards the edge of a spiral, according to the communication that the subject has access to. Another simpler model is the two step flow which takes into account the role of opinion leaders acting as mediators between the media and the individual. The first step is the impact of mass media on the leader, the second step representing his influence upon other individuals (Gabriel A. Almond, Sidney Verb, 2004).

Strategies for promoting events is a new concept in Romania, presented recently in very few cities. In 2007 Sibiu was becoming Cultural Capital of Europe. It was the year when Sibiu was under a duty to prepare a medium and long term promotional strategy. It was the year when Sibiu was provided with a lot of promotion at a local, national and international level. All the important events that have occurred then have been promoted by mass media. After 2007, the promotion strategy of the city has grown even more thereby the year 2007 and its events remained as a calling card of the city. Sibiu is just one example, there are other cities in the country which in recent years had a positive development regarding their promotion.

In this research, I am going to analyse the reactions and opinions of the interviewed people on the subject of effective promotion strategies of the cities in Romania via mass media and at the same time the impact of promotion campaigns on citizens and tourists as well, economically, socially and culturally.

Therefore, I'll use the interview as a method of qualitative research in order to confirm or to rescind the assumptions of this research:

a) The media has a great impact on society, economy and culture in any city
b) Very few cities in Romania have elaborated a promotion strategy through the mass media.

c) Promotion campaigns have a strong impact on citizens and tourists.

The topic of the interview is: Strategies used to promote cities in Romania through the Mass Media.

The main goal of the research consists in presenting the reactions of the interviewed people regarding both effective promotion strategies through the media and the impact of promotion campaigns on citizens and tourists, in terms of economy, society and culture.

The interview has targeted individuals who live in Europe, over the age of 20, with higher education, who work in public or private companies and have visited a large number of cities in Europe and beyond. For certain, this category consists of people who use mass media very often and who have established very clear terms of comparison regarding the mass media activity at an european and local level. The interview was addressed to a number of 22 people.

The average time for the interview is 15 minutes, including detailed answers to all questions.


After processing, interpretation and analysis of the answers, I'll answer those three main research questions:

- What are the effects of promoting cities in Romania economically, socially and culturally?
- Through what channels does media promotes most often the cities in Romania?
- What is the impact of promotion campaigns on citizens and tourists?

The configuration of the interview is: 10 questions that are built to measure the reactions of the interviewees regarding both the effective strategies to promote the cities of Romania through the media and the impact of promotion campaigns on citizens and tourists- economically, socially and culturally.

At the same time the research aims at presenting some comparisons between media channels used in promotion campaigns, in terms of impact.

At the end of the interview, after the 10 questions that follow the above objectives, we asked two more questions that intend to acknowledge the age of the respondents and the city they live in. I opted for a structured interview, in order to keep the same number of questions and the same order for all the interviewed persons for a good aproach of the topic.

I'll do the analysis of responses for each question in the interview guide.
1. Economically, socially and culturally what do you think is the impact of promoting cities in Romania on citizens and tourists?

   After asking the first question of the interview guide, the results show the following percentages, in terms of the confidence of people in the impact generated by the promotion campaigns in society, economy and culture.
   - about 77% of the interviewees consider that these promotion campaigns have a great impact on society, economy and culture in the cities of Romania.
   - about 23% of the interviewees consider that these promotion campaigns have a low impact on society, economy and culture in the cities of Romania.

2. What do you think are the budgets allocated for the promotion of the cities in Romania?

   After asking the second question of the interview guide the results show the following percentages, in terms of the budgets allocated for promotion campaigns:
   - approximately 80% of the respondents consider that the budgets allocated for the promotion of the cities is very low from the public institutions.
   - approximately 20% of the respondents consider that a great budget is being allocated for promotion of the cities from public institutions.

3. To what extent is the image of a city influenced by a promotion strategy through mass media?

   After asking the third question of the interview guide the results show the following percentages, in terms of the impact of a promotion strategy on the image of a city, at a local and national level:
   - approximately 85% of the respondents consider that the image of a city is greatly influenced by a local or national promotion strategy
   - approximately 15% of the respondents consider that the image of a city is influenced on a small scale by a local or national promotion strategy.

4. What are the events that have the greatest impact on citizens and tourists?

   After asking the 4th question of the interview guide the results show the following percentages, in terms of the impact on tourists and citizens of organized events in the cities of Romania:
   - about 65% of the respondents consider that cultural events have the greatest impact on citizens and tourists
   - about 20% of the respondents consider that sporting events have the greatest impact on citizens and tourists
   - about 8% of the respondents consider that economic events have the greatest impact on citizens and tourists
   - about 65% of the respondents consider that social events have the greatest impact on citizens and tourists
5. How much does media matter in promoting cultural, sporting, economic or social events?

After questioning the 5th question of the interview guide the results show the following percentages, in terms of the importance of mass media in promoting these events:
- about 95 % of the respondents consider that promoting various events organized in the cities of Romania depends very much on local an national media institutions
- about 5 % of the respondents consider that promoting various events organized in the cities of Romania depends a little on local an national media institutions.

6. How did you hear of the events taking place in your town?

After questioning the 6th question of the interview guide the results show the following percentages, in terms of effective media channels and their audience:
- about 30 % of the respondents said that they had heard of the events organized in their city on the RADIO
- about 30 % of the respondents said that they had heard of the events organized in their city on the INTERNET
- about 25 % of the respondents said that they had heard of the events organized in their city on the boards, posters, banners and other outdoor media channels
- about 15 % of the respondents said that they had heard of the events organized in their city on TV.

7. What are the effects of an aggressive promotion strategy through the media on the cities in Romania?

After asking the 7th question in the interview guide the results reveal the following percentages, in terms of efficiency of an aggressive promotion strategy via the mass media:
- a campaign done properly will have positive effects on the number of tourists and on the period allocated to a city tour as well. Thus, effects on general income are generated : direct incomes( like hotels) and indirect incomes ( gift shops). In addition, the development of tourism will generate effects socially (employment of labor force). Moreover, it is also influenced or rather developed the perception and mentality of the inhabitants regarding what's new ( new style, trends etc.).
- Mass media influences individuals, groups, institutions and even the whole society. Cities can get promotion through mass media.
- Can attract tourists from other cities/countries if it gets promoted at a national/international level
- Negative effects
- Positive effects – increasing the number of tourists
- Positive effects
- Positive
- More tourists
- Attracting tourists and increasing the level of local fees and consumption, attracting investors and generating new jobs and generally lower unemployment, generally increasing the welfare of the citizens as a result of the above-mentioned.
- Greater involvement of decision-making factors responsible for materialization in proper conditions of projects promoted.
- The increasing number of tourists
- More tourists
- Increasing the number of tourists, the increase in prices as a consequence of the increasing number of tourists
- Positive
- Opening of new local business, increasing consumption
- Interest in that city...while the campaign takes place...after that...sometimes things change...or not.
- Funds allocated, the discovery of beautiful/ugly parts of the area
- Increasing the number of tourists
- Positive, notoriety

The main objective of the 7th question of the interview guide, is to present a range of possible advantages or disadvantages regarding the working out of a new strategy of aggressive promotion via media.

The following result is very important: almost 99% of the interviewees think that the existence of an aggressive promotion strategy in the cities of Romania generally has a positive impact and will definitely lead to the increasing number of tourists, attracting investors, creating new jobs, lower unemployment, increasing the welfare of citizens in general, opening new local or national business, allocation of funds for the development of particular areas and many others.

8. What do you think would be the best slogan for your city?

After asking the 8th question of the interview guide the results show the following answers that include city slogans:
- Best city for living
- European Cultural Capital
- Sibiu, different from others
- Bucharest, the capital is growing green
- A clean and cultural city
- Sibiu, culture is home!
- The first Occidental city in Romania
- Alba Iulia- Romania’s fortress!
- Brasov - the city of nature
- Cluj Napoca, city of diversity!
- Sighisoara – medieval city
- The sea breeze is in Constanta!

9. From your viewpoint, which is the most promoted city in Romania?

Question number 9 is intended to present the image of cities in Romania, and at the same time the result of promotion strategies via media. The results are as follows:
- about 40% of the respondents consider that the most promoted city in Romania is Sibiu
- about 30% of the respondents consider that the most promoted city in Romania is Bucharest
- about 10% of the respondents consider that the most promoted city in Romania is Brasov.
- about 10% of the respondents consider that the most promoted city in Romania is Alba Iulia.
- about 10% of the respondents consider that the most promoted city in Romania is Constanta.

The majority of interviewed persons appreciated the fact that Sibiu had the most aggressive promotion at a local, national and international level. The great advantage was the year 2007 when Sibiu was designated as European Capital of Culture, and from there the certainty of being on view in the local, national and international media.

10. List at least 5 Romanian cities that you have visited.

I've used this question on order to present a detailed view of the people who answered all the questions and to emphasize the fact that the answers come from people who have had and still have a direct or indirect connection with local and national media. The main objective is to make a list of the cities visited by the respondents, of what I mention the following: Sibiu, Cluj, Brasov, Bucharest, Alba Iulia, Arad, Oradea, Sighisoara, Bacau, Buzau, Vaslui, Craiova, Deva, Rm Valcea, Slatina, Pitesti, Galati, Constanta, Iasi, Baia Mare, Fagaras, Ploiesti, Timisoara, Targu Mures, Targu Jiu, Miercurea Ciuc.

Basically, I have addressed the above questions to the people who got in touch with the media in the 25 cities mentioned.

11. What is your age?

The questions have been addressed to individuals who are at least 20 years old, as follows:
- 70% of the respondents are aged between 20 – 30
- 25% of the respondents are aged between 31-40
- 5% of the respondents are aged between 41-50
12. Where do you live at present?
Questions were addressed to people who live in Romania. The cities where the interviewed persons live are as follows: Sibiu, Bucuresti, Deva, Alba Iulia, RM Valcea, Targu Mures, Zalau, Arad, Bacau, Oradea, Iasi.

RESULTS and CONCLUSIONS

Most of the people interviewed consider that generally the promotion campaigns have a great impact on society, economy and culture in the cities of Romania.

Most of the people interviewed consider that small budgets are allocated from public institutions for promotion of the cities.

Most of the people interviewed consider that the image of a city is highly affected by the existence of a local and national promotion strategy.

Most of the people interviewed consider that cultural events have the greatest impact on citizens and tourists.

Most of the people interviewed consider that promoting various events that take place in the cities of Romania depends very much on institutions, local and national media.

Most of the people interviewed said that they had learned of the events in their city on the radio and on the internet.

Almost 99% of the respondents said that the existence of an aggressive promotion strategy of the cities in Romania has a positive impact in general, and will definitely lead to the increasing number of tourists, attracting investors, creating new jobs, lower unemployment, growth of welfare of citizens in general, opening new local or national business, allocation of funds for the development of particular areas and many others.

The majority of interviewees consider that Sibiu is the most advanced city in Romania, followed by Bucharest.

This research has made a new departure for a much extensive research in terms of strategies to promote events in Romania. Generally speaking, public institutions have so far allocated small or very small budgets to promote social, cultural, sporting or economic events at a local level. In recent years, large cities have become increasingly noticeable through media, following the lead of Western cities. It has been shown in many cities in Western countries that a good strategy and the allocation of funds for the promotion of the cities has resulted in increasing the welfare of the citizens and in the increasing number of tourists as well. These two aspects lead to permanent development of cities and the environment in general.

Acknowledgment:
This work was supported by the strategic grant POSDRU/159/1.5/S/133255, Project ID 133255 (2014), co-financed by the European Social Fund within the Sectorial Operational Program Human Resources Development 2007-2013.
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