

MUSIC FESTIVALS TOURISTS' PROFILE: THE CASE OF THE «PIRINEOS SUR» INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF CULTURES' AUDIENCE

María José Barlés Arizón,
Silvia Abella Garcés
Melania Mur Sangrá
Universidad de Zaragoza
mjbarles@unizar.es

Events Tourism is seen as a way to achieve economic and social benefits, specially for mature destinations or with scarce natural resources (Gertz, 1997; Herrero, 2004; Perles, 2004), as it contributes to social development and quality of life of the places where they are promoted (specially if they are developed in faraway locations or those which are out of the touristic routes).

Due to this importance, the interest showed by the Public Administration, private sponsors and cultural managers for knowing the profile of the public of the different cultural activities programmed has increased during the last years.

One of these events which take part in Spain is «The International Festival of Cultures «Pirineos Sur», celebrated in Sallent de Gállego. It is a successful and consolidated festival which objective is, on the one hand, «to try to become as a meeting point for the different cultures of the World, to build tolerance and mutual respect bridges through the music» (http://www.pirineos-sur.es/el_festival/) and, on the other hand «to boost cultural tourism in the Pyrenees Valles de Tena and Serrablo, in a season different to the snow one».

For its 18th edition (2009), the organizer, Diputación Provincial de Huesca (DPH), needed to get to know in detail the profile of the audience, its loyalty and in what extent the Festival is a tourism resource for the territory. The reason for this was to try to adjust the products and services of the demand generated by the Festival and/or the Valle in order to try to convert this kind of events in a differentiated element in the tourism offer in the Pyrenees and attract tourists not only in the winter time but also during the rest of the year.

Taking this into account, the objective of this article is to show the profile of the visitors to the Festival, observing in which extent this event has been the cause of the arrival of tourists to the Valle de Tena or not, as well as the degree of fidelity to the Festival.

In order to achieve those objectives, an *in situ* survey to 664 people was undertaken. The sample was composed by the people who attended the different events organized during the duration period of the Festival, as well as by those who where in the area during

that period. This enabled us to know whether people were there due to the Festival or just on holidays, although in the end those on holidays could participate in some of the activities of the Festival.

The data analysis was done on a descriptive basis, as well as from those obtained from the relationship between different variables and their statistical significance. In order to see if there exists a relationship between the variables we used the Chi-squared test, which is a usual analysis in the literature which aims to know the profile of the public of Events Tourism (Tkaczynski and Rundle-Thiele, 2011).

Results show that it is not possible to make a single profile, but different ones which are segmented by activities attended and by age, which condition the kind of accommodation used, the length of stay and the expenditure.

Most of the visitors (59.9%) say that the Festival is the main reason why they are in Sallent de Gállego, although some of them (20.24%) take advantage of this event in order to spend some holidays there. Even more, most of them (57%) have already attended the Festival in previous editions, so that the level of loyalty is high.

According to the analysis, it is possible to say that the Festival is a key element for attraction of tourists to the Valle, so we can confirm that the Festival is clearly a tourism resource of great importance for the Valle de Tena, where the event takes place.

The Diputación Provincial de Huesca has made use of the results of the study in order to achieve cooperation projects with private institutions. This is an aspect of great importance taking into account the economic crisis we are involved in at the moment, to which is specially sensible the cultural sector. On the other hand, the importance, quality and path of «Pirineos Sur» has had an important impact on the media and have had a bearing on the image of the territory. To obtain the fidelity of the youngest, to increase the tourist's expenditure and the number of stays overnight, may be medium term objectives, as well as to resist the impact of the economic crisis.