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Scuola di Scienze Sociali

BA TOURISM SCIENCES: BUSINESS, CULTURE AND TERRITORY

TOURISM PSYCHOLOGY

Teaching Unit No. 11

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PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE TOURIST OFFER

INVOLVEMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TOURIST OFFER

- Assessment of the location in terms of services and opportunities
- Monitoring the evolution of tourist types
- Identification of the type(s) that could consider the location and its services attractive
- Suggestions about the characteristics/services/opportunities to be implemented to reach more potential markets (i.e. more types of tourists)
- Preparation of the tourist information system on site [from signage to staff training].
- Definition of contents and presentation of the tourist offer
- Expectations, emotions, perception and memory are involved

THE PERCEPTION OF THE OFFER

- The psychological dimensions involved in the diffusion of the tourist offer are perceptive, cognitive and emotional.
- In order to convey the offer, it is necessary to take an external point of view, abandon tourist stereotypes and take the potential client's side.
- Two ways to get reliable information:
 - opinion surveys
 - perception surveys

OPINION SURVEYS

- Conducted mostly by means of questionnaires and/or telephone interviews concerning expectations or customer satisfaction for a stay carried out
- Prestige:
 - if conducted on a good number of people can provide useful information to define the offer and improve the services evaluated less positively
 - Limits:
 - representativeness of the answers [self-selected sample].
 - limited to a few topics due to the need to submit instruments whose compilation is not time-consuming

INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE PERCEPTION [OF A TRIP/ STAY] (1)

- Introduced more recently, they use rather sophisticated tools that allow, for example, the semantic analysis of thousands of "posts" published on social networks.
- A "post" is understood as an unstructured text
- For each "post" the software identifies the key concepts that compose it and evaluates the feeling [mood], evincible from reading, as positive, negative or neutral representing it on a scale with a range of 0–100.
- Since it is a recent technique, there are no well-defined measurement parameters yet, but by convention positive judgements are considered if they exceed the score of 60, negative when they are less than 30.

INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE PERCEPTION [OF A TRIP/ STAY] (2)

- This type of analysis makes it possible to identify the topics that tourists talk about, i.e. what engages their attention and provokes their emotions, and to provide a synthetic judgement of the sentiment expressed as well as the reasons on which the judgement is based.
- A recent semantic analysis of 570,000 "posts" in English written by people who stayed in our country between March and July 2014 reveals a perception that is partly different from the stereotypes to which we are accustomed (Preiti, 2014). The generally positive perception of Italy (77) seems to be mainly attributable to restaurants (82), squares and beaches (81), shopping and bars (80). The strong attractiveness of the cities of art (Rome, Florence and Venice) remains, but the greatest appreciation goes to famous but small realities [Taormina(82), Portofino(80), Santa Margherita /79)].
- From a psychological point of view, knowing how a location is perceived makes it possible to understand which characteristics of the location to emphasise on a communicative level.

OFFER DIVERSIFICATION

- Tourism is not only relaxation so the offer must be diversified.
- Landscaping is not enough, especially in a village with 7375 km of coastline, 2650 km of mountains and more than 1500 lakes.
- Some examples of diversification:
 - Garda Riviera
 - Adriatic Riviera
 - Spa
- In any case, diversification must pass through the analysis of possible users, available resources and margins of manoeuvre.

RELIGIOUS TOURISM: TYPES OF PILGRIMAGE

- Duty (e.g. Mecca for Islam)
- Voting (for request for grace or for grace received)
- Associations
- Cultural tourism

RELIGIOUS TOURISM: THE MOTIVATIONS (1)

- The pilgrimage imposed or warmly recommended responds to the need to adhere to the precepts of one's faith.
- The pilgrim who undertakes such a journey is motivated by the desire to fulfil a duty in order to be able to define himself as a good believer.
- In some religions (e.g. Islam, Hinduism) the phenomenon concerns millions of people who at least once in their lives face pilgrimage to sacred places.
- In the Catholic religion this impulse was particularly felt during the period of the Crusades and had as its object the Holy Land [devotional pilgrimage, to free oneself from earthly anxieties and tensions] and, later, Rome. In the Early Middle Ages the penitential pilgrimage [independently decided by the penitent] to redeem oneself from serious sins was widespread. The judicial pilgrimage was instead imposed on those who stained themselves with crimes.
- Nowadays the pilgrimage seems less tied to an obligation of faith than to an act of devotion and addressed to a plurality of places of veneration.

RELIGIOUS TOURISM: THE MOTIVATIONS (2)

- The pilgrimage to fulfill a vow [in response to a grace received or to obtain a grace].
- The devout pilgrim has developed a particular devotion to one or more figures that can be traced back to sanctuaries and holy places.
- The sacred figure or the saint/beate for whom he has developed such devotion becomes the main spiritual interlocutor, the one to whom he turns to ask to intercede or to beg for the benefit of a grace.
- The journey to the places of the apparition of a sacred figure or who have seen the saint/birth at work is the means to renew the pact of loyalty, to give thanks for the grace received or to ask more vigorously to receive one.

RELIGIOUS TOURISM: THE MOTIVATIONS (3)

- Pilgrims who belong to spiritual associations [brotherhoods, parishes, dioceses, etc.] undertake the pilgrimage route with relative frequency.
- The organisation of visits to sanctuaries and/or sacred places is an integral part of the aims of these associations, which bring together people involved, often on a daily basis, in activities in support of works of charity, evangelisation and the whole community.
- Confessional devotion is combined with motivation for affiliation, the desire to share with the other members of the association a witness of faith, the need to feel fully-fledged members of a group.

RELIGIOUS TOURISM: THE MOTIVATIONS (4)

- The main motivation of the tourist-cultural pilgrim is not the fulfilment of a vow or a precept. For this reason he is not considered a real pilgrim.
- He frequently "associates" with trips organised by the associations to which we referred to in the previous point. He joins some family members and/or friends who belong to those associations.
- Recently this type of "pilgrim" organizes real tours in search of places of worship inserted in minor circuits, niches, with the possibility to visit monuments and places of particular artistic and cultural interest.
- The main motivations are curiosity and the desire to combine the interest in the life of people significant for their faith with that for the expressions of culture.

RELIGIOUS TOURISM

- The Via Francigena from the Longobards to the present day
- Described in the tenth century by Sigeric Archbishop of Canterbury links Great Britain to Puglia
- Revitalised in recent years due to the increase in religious tourism
- Different types of religious tourists
- San Giovanni Rotondo is an example of a tourism boom followed by a crisis due to a lack of diversification.

EVALUATION OF THE TOURIST OFFER

- Provided by the user
 - customer satisfaction
 - methodological problems
 - reliability
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- Made by operators
 - on an economic basis plus customer satisfaction