TRANSYLVANIA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL – ANALYZING HOW A FILM FESTIVAL BECOMES THE BRAND OF A CITY

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Abstract: This work analyzesthroughtheTransylvania International Film Festival (TIFF) model, the conceptofcultural brandanditseffectiveness as an instrumentcreated to promote a new dimension of the term brand but also as a device created to encouragethedevelopment of a cultural event, like a film festival.
The hypothesis of this study is that in themodern context, Transylvania International Film Festival is a successful cultural brand of Cluj-Napoca city.Qualitative research is based on analyzing news documents about the festival, but we also applied somequestionnaires to consumers of cultural events in Cluj-Napoca.

Keywords: brand, culture, festival, city brand, cultural event.

What is a brand? To understand this concept quickly, it might be better to give a personal definition, which includes elements of several meanings. Thus, a brand is a symbol that helps us to identify a product or a service so that you can distinguish it on a crowded market, a brand being also a guarantee of quality.

What is essential for a brand is representativeness and also the emotional content – a brand is strong no for what it is, but for what it represents, and in this way it can express and compress simple, complex or subtle emotions. Brands can make these emotions accessible, in many cases exceeding barriers such as ethnicity, religion and language. They have an intense emotional content and inspire loyalty beyond reason (Dolea, 2009, 32).

From another perspective, the concept of brand defines the intangible side of a business. The logo or publicity and PR campaigns are undoubtedly the main contributors in defining a brand, but these get to fulfill their potential during a bigger and wider campaign.

A brand represents a lot of uncertain items such as ideas or feelings. The most difficult part is when you want to create a successful brand. There is no recipe through which this can be obtained, but experts indicate certain constants that it would be good for us to take into account. The power of a brand is formed of what it represents and the way its elements interact. The brand has become a very significant element in our times so that it is almost impossible to describe an idea or talk about someone without branding them (Olins, 2006, 23-24).

Regarding the cultural sphere, the brand describes a phenomenon which has exceeded its commercial origins, whose impact cannot be practically measured in social and cultural terms (Olins, 2006, 16).

In Romania, the concept of brand is still at the beginning. It is not a very well defined concept that acts in a specific niche. Romanians are considered to be more open to what is international than to what is local. But maybe this is the way every consumer actsin any place of the world: he becomes more knowledgeable and demanding with every day passing.

This paper is not focused on analyzing what represents a brand of a city, but rather on what a brand signifiesas a symbol of a city. Thus, we will try to prove the statement specified in many booksaccording to which a strong brand can shape the personality of a city. For

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example, a festival like Transylvania International Film Festival becomes to be an attribute in the city's struggle to gain notoriety. But winning is mutual. With a strong brand a place is able to bring more people and more companies to the city to increase the value everyone can gain from (Schoja, 2016, 4).

The city of Cluj-Napoca became an emblem for the festival, and the festival becamean image for the city, for its inhabitants, but also for visitors. Consequently, the city can demonstrate the quality of life through the existence of events of such magnitude. Branding activities is an application used for many years to distinguish product and services of an establishment from the products and services of other establishments (Bayraktar, 2017, 228).

Can we classify the Transylvania International Film Festival as a brand, a brand for the city of Cluj-Napoca? Firstly, we must see what the brand concept of a town means. One such brand represents anassociationof a city, a municipality and a product or service. This incorporation should produce a positive image of both parties to the public, and therefore each element attracts each other's supporters. In other words, the unionis expected to produce that positive mental imagewhich makes value of brand related aspects on one side, but also positive aspects regarding the city on the other side. The existence of such a brand in a town attracts a number of investors and visitors, transforming the city into a major economic actor on the market. If all these happen in a short term, in a long term, the city becomes richer and provides a better quality of life.

Transforming the Transylvania International Film Festival into a brand of Cluj-Napoca is an important step in transforming the city itself into a brand. In our case, analyzing the Transylvania International Film Festival like a brand of Cluj-Napoca, we must keep in mind that this festival has been developed as a brand among other festivals, but also as a symbol of Transylvania –visible from the chosen name – and an image of the city in which the first edition has taken place - Cluj-Napoca.

Transylvania International Film Festival (TIFF) is the first international feature film festival in Romania. The Festival was founded in 2002 by Romanian Film Promotion, one of the biggest Romanian film associations.This year, 2019, TIFF celebrates 18 years of existence. Transylvania International Film Festival is a complex festival which gained its appreciation in Romania and abroad, not only due to the outstanding films screened every year, but also for the effective organization, sparkling atmosphere and a variety of events, from seminars, workshops and panels to fabulous concerts and crazy all night long parties.

The goal of the Festival is to promote the cinematographic art by launching the most important films.TIFF has become the place for national releases of the most important domestic productions. This is the place where Romanian audiences first got to see the films that marked the boom of Romanian film production over the past years: *Occident* (dir. CristianMungiu), *The Death of Mister Lăzărescu* (dir. CristiPuiu), 12:08 *East of Bucharest* (dir. CorneliuPorumboiu), *The Way I Spent the End of The World* (dir. CătălinMitulescu), *The Paper Will Be Blue* (dir. RaduMuntean), *Love Sick* (dir. Tudor Giurgiu), *California Dreamin'* (endless) (dir. CristianNemescu), CristianMungiu's feature *4 months, 3 weeks and 2 days*, winner of the 2007 Palme d'Or, *Tales from the Golden Age* (dir. CristianMungiu, IoanaUricaru, ConstantinPopescuJr, RăzvanMărculescu and Hanno Hofer), *Police, adjective* (dir. CorneliuPorumboiu), *The Autobiography of NicolaeCeauşescu* (dir. Andrei Ujică), *Tuesday, afer Christmas* (dir. RaduMuntean), films presented at the 2010 edition of the Cannes Film Festival, *Principles of life* (d. ConstantinPopescu), *Loverboy* (d. CatalinMitulescu), *Morgen* (d. Marian Crisan), *Outbound* (d. Bogdan George Apetri)[1]. Besides lauching successful local productions, TIFF was honored to host important personalities of European and worldwide cinema offeringLifetime Achievement Awards to

[1]Transylvania International Film Festival, http://tiff.ro/en/about-festival, June 3, 2019.

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Julie Delpy, Michael Radford, Annie Girardot, Udo Kier, Vanessa Redgrave, Franco Nero, Nicolas Roeg, Catherine Deneuve, Claudia Cardinale and WimWenders, Jacqueline Bisset, Geraldine Chaplin.

Which is the successful recipe of a brand? There is probably none with clear indications, but a lot of specialists talk about a series of important elements used in creating and promoting a favorable brand. What we can assert, the Transylvania International Film Festival became a prosperous brand of Cluj-Napoca, and probably it is not too much to call this festival a successful brand for our country. TIFF consumer public appreciates the organizers effort to create such a dynamic festival and is surprised every time not only by valuable screenings – held in different places, like movie theatres and outdoor, but also with exhibitions, concerts, conference, debates. All those elements are contributing not only to transform the Festival into a flourishingbrand, they also determine the transformation of the city into a genuine cultural capital.

In the last editions, the organizers did not plan the screenings only in regular places for Transylvania International Film Festival –Florin Piersic Cinema, Victoria Cinema, Arta Cinema, or in open air spaces like Unirii Square, but have also tried to make the Festival known in almost all districts, mostly by events in open air.

In addition, we might even say that Romanian cinematography became the best ambassador of the country,the nomination of Romanian movies at some of the most important festivals of this kind in the world can support thisstatement. Many specialists said that the preference of strangers for Romanian movies is determinated by how hard and concrete the reality is presented.

TIFF enjoys a gradual evolution, maintained from year to year by increasing the number of projected films and successful guests. The Festival knows very well its goal and this why with every edition, it tries to present the best projects of the moment, chosen by criteria like originality and impact issues.

The hypothesis of this paper is in themodern context, Transylvania International Film Festival is a successful cultural brand of Cluj-Napoca city.The validity of this hypothesis can be determined on the basis of a research aimed at issues such as: how the Festival developed comparative with similar festivals, how the last three editions have taken place, which is the TIFF consumer public opinion regarding this aspect, how the Festival is presented in local and national media, how people within the organization perceive this statement?Research methods used were questionnaire, applied to consumers of cultural events, but also document analysis news about the Transylvania International Film Festival in general (films, actors, locations, competition, organizing details, budget etc.).

Transylvania International Film Festival shares its acronym with other two big names in this industry: Torino Film Festival and Tirana Film Festival.

First edition of Torino Film Festival was held in 1982. Right from its first edition, the festival decides to welcome the vast range of new expressive means represented by the electronic image. The festival also responds to the needs of young filmmakers and video makers, providing an established space in which they can screen their works and through which they may enjoy a direct and reactive relationship with the public[2].

Launched in 2003, the Tirana International Film Festival is the first and only international cinema festival of its kind in Albania. The programs of this festival combine features and short film of all formats and genres - fiction, documentary, animation and experimental.Open to any filmmaker from around the world, TIFF showcases new cinematic

[2] Torino Film Festival, http://www.torinofilmfest.org/?action=article&id=254&menu=1, June15, 2019.

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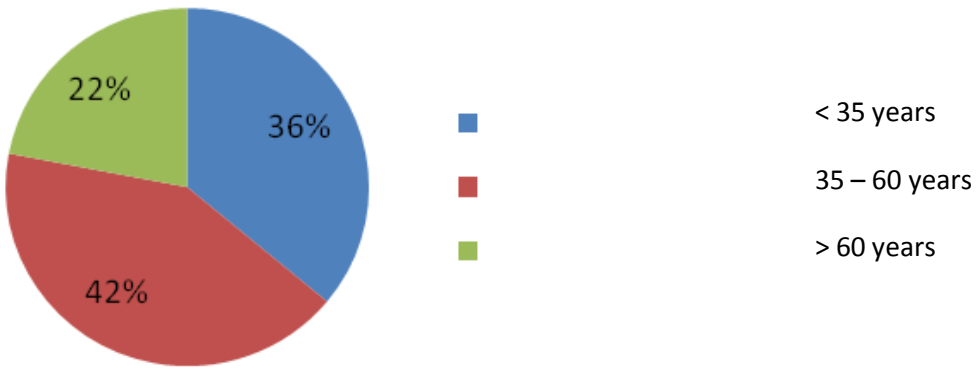
work by established directors with international reputations as well as work by talented students and young artists[3].

Since its first edition, TIFF has aimed to offerthe public a fresh image with which they can easily identify, but that image has to be connected to the Transylvanian specifics in the same time. Besides this, TIFF offered a spectacular range of films, determining a wide competition for filmmakers, whose creations are selected here.

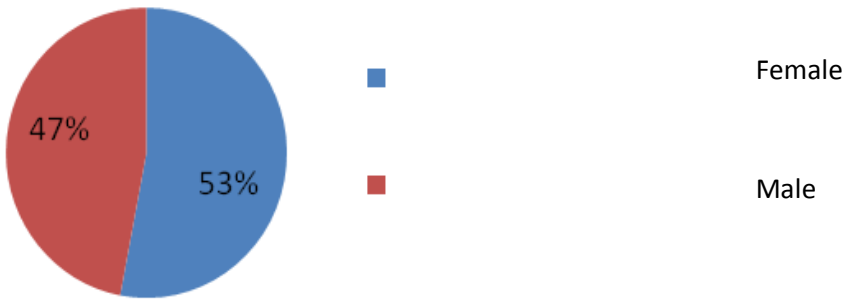
The questionnaire was applied to participants of the cultural events in Cluj-Napoca, but provided that they have heard of the Transylvania International Film Festival. They were questioned about cultural events in this city, but especially about the Transylvania International Film Festival knowing as the brand of the city.

For selecting the relevant sample for the topic questionnaire, we also applied a selecting questionnaire which included three closed questions.To be part of the sample, all the answers had to be *Yes*.

The questionnaire comprises three independent variables (age, sex, level of education) and a number of ten open questions that allows respondents to make their own additions and to have various responses. The surveyedsample has a relatively balanced distribution for most age groups. Young people under the age of 35 represent 36% of the sample, those included between 35 – 60 years represent 42%, and those over 60 years are 22%.



At the same time, the sample includes a relatively equal number of persons of different sex, so that 47% of the respondents were male and 53% were female. This fact demonstrates that both categories show interest for the society they live in, more specifically, in relation to the cultural life of their city.



As a result of analyzing the data collected from the questionnaire, we could notice that participants consider the Festival a cultural landmark for the cultural life of the city.When the respondents were questioned about the economic development of the city through cultural tourism, they responded that this type of tourism could represent an opportunity, and many of them consider TIFF a tourist attraction.

[3] Tirana Film Festival, http://tiranafilmfest.com/, June 15, 2019.

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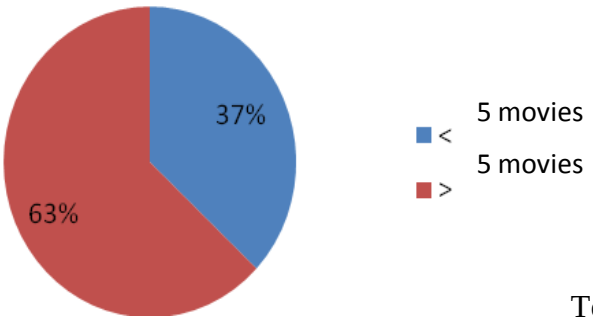
Transylvania International Film Festival is not only a cultural landmark for the town, but also the most chosen option to participate to a cultural event. Thus, a percentage of 31% of those questioned answered that Transylvania International Film Festival is the last cultural event which they attended to. If they were in a position to recommend the Transylvania International Film Festival, the respondents would describe it as "a great opportunity", "a perfect opportunity to see qualitative films", "a chance to meet great figures of cinematographic world". Most of those who complete the questionnaire declaredthemselves consumers of the Festival - a percentage of 63% of them went during an edition to more than 5 projections.



To the last question in the questionnaire, which should have been answered was whether TIFF is a brand of Cluj-Napoca and why, the answers were unanimously affirmative, thereby demonstrating that the Transylvania International Film Festival is recognized as a brand.

In the second part, where the statement should be justified, most of the respondents answered in this manner: "the quality of the presented programs", "excellent organization", "multitude of events", "the presence of numerous film personalities", "dissemination of local productions".

The data collected from the questionnaire, demonstrate that the Transylvania International Film Festival is recognized as a brand of Cluj-Napoca city. The answers have shown us that the inhabitants of Cluj-Napoca are interested in local cultural events, participating quite often and in a considerably number of them.

The research proves that TIFF knows very well the purpose of its creation – the promotion of cinematographic art, and that fact brings to it a multitude of followers and the brand name of the city of Cluj-Napoca.

Finally, we can say that the combination of a city and a successful event produce a positive image, and in this way each element attracts each other's supporters.To become a brand, any product or service needs promotion, recorded many times by press occurrences. Thus, in the second part of our study, we have tried to make a database that listsprobable almostall the articles written about the Festival during the last years.As a result, we could discover that the Festival holds attention, not only in the local press, but also at the national level. Another important aspect, although it could not be accounted for each item, is the number of views. The festival turns out to be a brand of Cluj-Napoca and a notorious festival, having articles with over 1000 views, an example being a post in June of 2011[4].

Articles bring into question all the areas of action of the International Film Festival, containing information about the films, about actors or stage directors, as well as locations, clothing, media partners or partners who support the organization. As a result of these databases, we could observe the active presence of the Festival in the press. We can notice that thefrequency of the articles is more visible in the months of May and June, but the bottom line is that the articles about our subject are very common.The most important aspect

[4]http://ziuadecj.realitatea.net/life--and--style/personalitati-prezente-la-deschiderea-tiff--67888.html, June 9, 2019.

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noticed in these articles is that most of them have a positive connotation to this Festival and everything related to it.

Whether it is about the Organization, the selection of films, guests, and other events, the news containmore positive than negative aspects, which make once again the International Film Festival a successful cultural brand.

In the future, TIFF has all the odds and potential required to become a progressing cultural brand not only of Cluj-Napoca, but of Romania. The impeccable organization, the selection of guests and films or the original locations are just a few reasons that foster the advance of this festival. As an example, this year, at the most recent edition, number 18, TIFF had more than 130.000 of participants[5]. This shows the capacity of the festival to attract more and participants each year.

In conclusion, branding is an important tool through which a new event could become a successful one, even if we are talking about cultural events, which are known as very hard to be promoted for a large number of people. On the other hand, branding is now a tendency of action for actors in different areas, and this is visible by trying to be the best leading to the desire to be chosen in a world of consumption and competition.

Ultimately, we can say that the hypothesis of the present study has been validated, the Transylvania International Film Festival is a successful cultural brand, and the research can be continued in a future work which would follow the trail of this event and eventually its transformation into a successful Romanian cultural brand.

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[5]https://www.zilesinopti.ro/articole/24701/bilantul-tiff18-zeci-de-evenimente-sold-out-si-peste-100000-de-participanti, July 4, 2019.

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