

Marketing Activities in the Early Existence of Mamaia Touristic Resort

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Abstract

The Romanian seaside represents the area with the highest concentration of accommodation units in Romania. Of all the 17 Sea side touristic resorts and localities, the most famous is Mamaia, considered by many as being the "Pearl of the Romanian seaside". In August 2016, the resort made 110 years of existence. The purpose of this study is that, through a desk research, on some qualitative information on the economic and social activity of Constanta city, between the end of the XIXth century and beginning of the XXth century, to present some marketing activities that had a great impact on the creation and development of Mamaia resort and Mamaia brand.

Our approach seeks to emphasize that, in a period during which, marketing was only appearing as a science in the economic developed countries, various documents recorded that in Constanta and Mamaia, there were carried out practical marketing activities.

Key words: marketing activities, tourism, Mamaia resort, Romania

J.E.L. classification: M31 N73, N93, Z32

1. Introduction

As each human settlement has a story about the beginning of its existence, every resort should be presented to the visitors/tourists not only with its touristic offer, but also with a marketing "story" behind it. We believe that we can create a better image, a stronger brand of a resort, with a "marketing story" that is carefully written. Tourists visiting Mamaia (and not only them) might be pleasantly surprised to find that, more than 110 years ago, concerns to find a place and to set up a new beach for Constanta, appeared (given that the the most important beach, called "Baile la Vii", was to be closed, due to the extension works of the port). After controversial debates and the involvement of several personalities (especially from the local government, political and economic environment, culture, media and others), it was decided that, on the beach strip from the North of Constanta, with sand dunes, to be set out a new beach. Even if the great potential offered by this place was discovered, no one anticipated then, that the new beach would become a new touristic resort, called over the years, the "Pearl of the Romanian seaside of the Black Sea".

2. Theoretical background

It is considered that the modern period of development of Dobrogea Region and of Constanta County, in particular, began in the mid nineteenth century. By building the railway (during 1858-1864) and the bridge over the Danube, in Cernavoda (during 1890-1895), Dobrogea region and Constanta, in particular, came to realize the connection between West and East (Duployen, 1933; Păuleanu, 2006). The result of these investments was reflected primarily in the economic growth of the area, of the country, but also regarding the social life of the romanian people. Before the construction of the bridge, the road from Bucharest to Constanta was made by train on the route Bucharest-Calarasi, continued by boat, from Calarasi to Cernavoda and then by train to Constanta. The direct connection, on rail, between Bucharest and Constanta led to the development of domestic and international trade, and the increase of number of people travelling to spend the

holidays at the „baths at the sea" (which, in marketing terms, represents the growth of the touristic demand).

The history of the appearance of Mamaia is linked to the evolution of the port activity and the touristic activity of Constanta. In 1889, began the works for the extension of Constanta port, ran by the famous engineer Anghel Saligny. In this project, one of the most frequented beaches in Constanta, known as "Baile de la Vii", located in the Southeast area of the city, was to be closed. Local authorities and various personalities involved in Constanta city life, began to be concerned about finding another place to set up a new beach. Still since the late nineteenth century, about Constanta it was mentioned that: „Able to reach through its port, the real gate of the european trade for the East, the city is still perceived, in 1899, as a balneary resort of first order; however, the new industrial design begin to disturb the traditional approach"(Tomis Magazine, 1899, p. 2: in Pauleanu, 2006) and, in a report sent to the king in 1903, Constanta was mentioned as ... „foremost seaport of the country and most important balneary resort". (Constanta newspaper, 1903, p.1, in Pauleanu, 2006).

On what is concerning the touristic activity, it is recorded that, still during the Turkish occupation, in Constanta (Kustendje) people made sea baths, on the coast, in the city, under the open sky and in shacks, on the Southeast coast (Păuleanu. 2006).

The writer Barbu Stefanescu Delavrancea, mentioned for „Românul" newspaper, from August 14th, 1887 that many residents of Bucharest, from upper socio-professional categories, preferred to go to Constanta „... to end there the holiday season. After the air of the mountains, the salty air of the sea." (Stefanescu Delavrancea, 1972, pp.113-121, in Păuleanu, 2006). The writer's records contain important marketing information. We note that an important segment of tourists was formed (since 1887), who preferred Constanta („many residents of Bucharest, from upper socio-professional categories") and also, that some changes in tourists' behavior appeared: after a period spent at the mountains, their holiday continued at the seaside. Also, these records reflected the development of touristic activity and the growth of tourists attraction for Constanta balneary resort. In these circumstances, the issue of finding a new beach, that would have compensate the closing of the beach „de la Vii", becomes an important concern for the city ... „to develop as a summer resort for sea baths". In the publication „Aurora", from May 18th 1895, it is stated that, for the development of the balneary activity, Constanta would need .. „certain expenses and to be chosen a beautiful beach", that is also close to the city. (Aurora newspaper, 1895 p.3, in Păuleanu, 2006). The famous engineer Anghel Saligny, involved in the construction of the bridge over the Danube, but also in the works to extend the port, believed, in 1904, that: „For the area to flourish as a balneary resort, Constanta needs to have a beach close to the city, where the visitors of the baths can spend all day and even to live in summer homes, near the sea, which is required most for children and as it is the case of popular beaches from abroad like Ostende, Scheveningen and others".(Constanța de odinioară, blogspot).

Analyzing now engineer's Saligny opinion, we can say that this is a true marketing strategy for the development of the beach and the Mamaia resort.(Juganaru, I. D., 2007) Not only the content of the strategy is surprising, but also the moment in which it was expressed, in 1904, when no one heard, certainly, about the science of marketing.

Also, it can be observed, from these points of view, that, in marketing terms, the characteristics that the new product (a new beach, which was to become a new resort) should have had, were already set up: to be „splendid" .. „nearby" (the city, the accommodation units), to provide a variety of services so that tourists „... can spend all day", and accommodation „...right ... near the sea". For the development of the beach and of Mamaia resort, these characteristics were achieved different from one period to another, being approached/understood as components of tourism demand and supply. (Minciu, R., 2005)

3. Research methodology

This study brings into attention the fact that the qualitative marketing research can be considered an appropriate method, when the purpose is to obtain an objective knowledge about a situation or about the reality. It is appreciated that the qualitative research uses four main working methods: the observation, the analysis of texts and documents, interviews, recording and

transcription of data. These may be used individually or in combinations (Silverman, 2004). In the content of the current study, we included the analysis of some texts and documents from the period of the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century and the research conducted shows that the information (which, at a first glance, it seems to represent just simple descriptions of aspects and events), can be worked out in the purpose that we pursue, which is to give evidence of the presence of some marketing activities that had a strong impact on the creation and development of Mamaia resort.

4. Data, results and discussion

Because in the South part of city the development project of the beach was not possible (both due to the extension of the port and the natural conditions, that were less proper), the attention of several people was headed to the Northern part of the city. Back then, the area was just a strip of desert seaside, with sand dunes with a height that reached 5-7m and at the end of this strip there was a modest settlement of fishermen, with a few houses and a water mill, at the end of Lake Siutghiol. We shall mention that, still since the late nineteenth century, this settlement, modest and desert, was preferred by the aristocracy of that period for spending the summer holidays (www.turismistoric.ro).

To understand why this area of North of Constanta attracted a certain segment of tourists, we present some aspects of a series of articles, published under the title "The waters of the sea", from 1896, in which Petre Grigorescu expressed his particular admiration for this place (Constanta, 1896, p. 3, in Păuleanu, 2006). We considered interesting, to present the aspects that we selected for this paper, in a SWOT analysis.

Strengths:

- „splendid beach with huge deposits of sand, very large (5 km), without waves”;
- it is located close to the city .. „26 km North of Constanta”;
- „the bottom of the sea is clean and has only sand, the water depth starts at a very far distance from shore”;
- „waves are not strong, although they are frequent”;
- „the nature did so, that brought together, in this place, all the conditions for a proper beach”;

Weaknesses:

- the lack of transport means to bring tourists from Constanta to the beach in Mamaia;
- the lack of accommodation units.

Opportunities:

- „on an area of several hectares, it can be set up a beach for...” „...cold and warm baths, showers, and floating boxes for children...”;
- „This perfect and beautiful establishment would attract not only romanian people, but also foreigners” ... and the city „would flourish and gain a lot from visitors”;
- „connecting this beach with the city, through a park, could offer tourists the opportunity for walks and fun”;
- „the construction of a railway line, to connect the beach with the city or the introduction of trams”;
- „the swamp (Lake Siutghiol), which is not far away...” could be used for parties; „...several boats covered with canvas and curtains, to avoid the heat of the sun, could bring enjoyment to tourists and gains to investors”.

Threats:

- the interests of some businessmen who disagreed with moving the beach to Mamaia (Constanta, 1896, p. 3, in Păuleanu, 2006)

At the end of the published articles, the author conclude that: „In these circumstances, we should feel proud that we knew how to take advantage, as civilized people, of the natural assets and we can have a balneary maritime establishment" (Păuleanu, 2006, p.192). We shall notice that the author was able to achieve, on the one hand, a marketing analysis on the characteristics and the touristic potential, and on the other hand, to anticipate the development possibility of this place, yet in 1896, more clearly: 10 years before the inauguration of Mamaia beach (in August 1906).

Professor Ion Banescu, the mayor of Constanta during 1905-1907, had a decisive role in moving the beach in Mamaia (Constanța de odinioară, blogspot). Thus, in 1905, the mayor believed that: „the city of today, rather narrow and crowded, will remain the city of the port, of noise and movement and Mamaia will build up, in the future, as a meeting place, for relaxation and health” (Păuleanu, 2006, p. 196). In the press of that period, it was noted that several proposals have been formulated, regarding choosing the location where to be set up a new beach and each has generated extensive debates. A proposal (of engineer Saligny) was: „...behind the Greek church, where the beach can be enlarged easily by building a small dig” (Steaua Constantei Newspaper, 1905, p. 1, in Păuleanu, 2006). The proponents of this proposal felt that, if the new beach would have been in the city, the tourists could have reach it easily, without needing any means of transport, not being dependent on their schedule and the access to the beach would have been free. Another proposal was to move the beach in "Tabacaria noua" (probably in the today area Tabacariei Lake – North Cliff). The decision to move the beach arouse a series of controversies, reported in the press, „a decision that will change the face of the city and that will have the most adverse effects” ... or „Moving the baths at the beach from the North-East of the city (in Mamaia, A/N) is a misfortune ... No one will gain from this move, there will be no improvement and on the contrary, everyone will lose” (referring to owners of accommodation units in Constanta, residents of the city who rented their homes, tourists who were to lose time traveling to Mamaia, A/N) (Steaua Constantei Newspaper, 1905, p.1, in Păuleanu, 2006). Other opinions were also expressed, which reflected, still since that period of time, the marketing thinking. Thus, in the newspaper Steaua Constantei Newspaper from 8th of May 1905, they were presented and debated the proposals for setting up the new beach, with their advantages and disadvantages. It was thought necessary/important that, in arriving to a decision, to take into account the preferences of tourists (knowing the demand) and the economic potential of each proposal (knowing the offer). „...Thus, it will be expected the decision of the visitors (tourists, A/N) which, after all, are the most interested and who have not been asked before” and „The registers of the entrepreneur will decide, with the eloquence of the figures, which is the people’s favourite place and after the winter, the advantages and disadvantages of each work will be seen” (Steaua Constantei Newspaper, 1905, p. 2, in Pauleanu, 2006). We notice the marketing thinking of that moment (year) 1905: in order to take the correct decisions, both demand and supply had to be considered.

Despite the criticism, the entire effort of the mayor Banescu enjoyed the appreciation coming from the residents of Constanta, but also from the tourists. Thus, in the Newspaper „Dimineata”, from Bucharest, from August 21st, 1905, it was said that: „The peak of Constanta baths season was reached also due to the initiative of the mayor Banescu, to move the baths to the splendid Mamaia beach”.(Constanța de odinioară, bogspot).

The project of setting up the beach in Mamaia was drawn by architect Petre Antonescu. The first works were made in 1906 (vladimirrosulescu-istorie.blogspot.com/; www.academia.edu). The construction, which represented the setting of „baths” (the beach), was made of wood and had, at the same time, the role of station (because access to the resort was made mostly on the railways, but carriages were also used). On the northern and southern sides of the construction there were set up 56 cabins.(Constanța de odinioară, bogspot).

Mamaia beach was officially inaugurated on August 28th, 1906. On this occasion, two trains crossed the road from Constanta to Baile Mamaia, in one hour and a half (Constanța de odinioară, blogspot). Regarding the development of the resort, the period between 1906 and until the First World War it is considered to have less significance, more specifically: several small villas and fishing restaurants appeared, and it began the setting up, in 1913, of a park, but the work was interrupted by the outbreak of the war. Regarding recreational investments, it is remembered about the setting up of a pony rides game, near the halt of the baths and a gamble (Constanța de odinioară, blogspot).

Even if the development of the material basis was modest, tourists attraction for the beach located in Mamaia was increasing. A confirmation of these tendencies is offered to us by the well-known writer Cella Serghi, who described, in 1914, the atmosphere of the summer holidays, hereby: „Mamaia was reached by train: a lot of congestion, brightly coloured people that spoke French and German, lots of children, governesses, comfortable railcars, heat, many halts to take people on the road.”(Constanța de odinioară, blogspot). More than this, the writer stated that in

those days, only the gentlefolk went on vacation at the seaside and very interesting is the mention that most went to Mamaia, on weekends.

The interpretation of the issues captured by the well-known writer, leads us to the following marketing conclusions: Mamaia was an attractive destination for the summer vacation („very crowded” ... „many halts to take people on the road”), preferred by segments of tourists with a high income („only the gentlefolk went on vacation at the seaside”), belonging to a higher social class and with a higher level of education („people ... speaking French and German”), belonging to different age groups („brightly coloured people”...”many children”).

We shall also notice that, still since the beginning of its activity, Mamaia has created for itself the image of an exclusive, expensive beach/resort, accessible to certain segments of tourists, especially preferred for spending time on weekends. We recall, in this regard, also other appreciations, written in the press of that period. It was considered that the beach from Mamaia „... it is fairly beautiful and has a considerable extent, so from this point of view, it could not be found a better solution.” „...Under these circumstances, the beach from Mamaia can only be considered a luxury beach and so we believe it will remain ...” (Dacia Newspaper, XV, no. 152, July 1928, p. 1, in DP, p.185). We believe that, at this positioning of the resort, a multitude of factors contributed (economic, social, cultural, political), which acted both on the demand and on the offer, in different circumstances (Juganaru, I. D., 2007).

The resort starts to develop after the First World War, along with the setting up of the summer residence of the royal family. Following 1920, when the royal family received from the mayor, a land of 4 hectares, between Lake Siutghiol and the sea, the construction of a small palace in Romanian style, as a summer residence, started (vladimirrosulescu-istorie.blogspot.com/). This act of the mayor should be seen as a marketing action, because the existence of a royal residence in Mamaia is an evidence of interest and appreciation from the royal family, which helped to increase the prestige and attractiveness of this resort. At the same time, it was achieved the approach between local administration and the royal house (it was stated that its members were sea fans and obtaining, thus, support for the local development).

The Castle from Mamaia (the current „Castel Club”) was designed by the Italian architect Mario Stoppa, following Queen’s Mary ideas. It was the third royal residence in Constanta, besides the official one (the current headquarters of the Court) and the Queen's Nest, located in the port. But, around the same period of time, the Queen also discovers the Balchik town, for which she felt more attracted to, which is why it began another building there (Dragomir.A.-2012; Hagi C., 2017). We believe that few tourists and locals know, nowadays, these issues. We have no explanations regarding the sad history of the Castle of Mamaia, why it didn’t reached the celebrity like the castle from Balchik and, moreover, why there were no concerns, marketing strategies of authorities/investors after 1990, to bring/put this building to its deserved place in the history and image of the resort.

5. Conclusions

Still since 1892, Constanta was considered a "balneary resort" and worked under a „Regulation” drafted by the mayor and approved by the Ministry of Interior (County Directorate of National Archives 1892, in Păuleanu, 2006). The touristic activity of the city experienced a continuous growth between the late nineteenth century and the early beginning of the twentieth century, but the beaches located in the city became, at some point, insufficient. It is decided to be set up a new beach for Constanta, in the North of the city, due to the touristic development potential offered by the strip of sand between the Black Sea and Lake Siutghiol. On August 28th, 1906, the new beach located in Mamaia, was inaugurated. In December 1927, the Ministry of Health and Social Care, informs that „the city of Constanta, with the beach in Mamaia, Constanta county, declared itself as a balneary-climatic resort and enjoys the rights and duties that are set.” (County Directorate of National Archives, 1939, in Păuleanu, 2006).

Currently, Mamaia is the most famous of the 17 resorts and touristic localities from the coastline architecture, namely: Navodari, Mamaia Village, Mamaia, Constanta, Eforie Nord, Techirghiol, Eforie Sud, Costinesti, Olimp, Neptun, Cap Aurora, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, Mangalia, 2 Mai and Vama Veche. Today, after 110 years of existence, Mamaia resort, mostly keeps the

characteristics (indicated by different personalities) that it had at the moment of its establishment, as the new beach of Constanta. Thus, Mamaia offers accommodation units near the sea, it is a splendid beach, more expensive than others, preferred especially for weekends by particular tourists with high incomes and who want to spend the time here all day and night. Mamaia's brand was built, in these 110 years of existence, also thanks to marketing activities. We noticed the presence of marketing activities in moments when no one had heard (in our country) about this economic science, but we noticed their unexplained absence, in more recent periods of time, in which the marketing activity already became a way of thinking and action. We consider that now is the moment when the business community, the local administration, the political and academic environment, the civil society, to come together and to shape a new marketing strategy of the resort, adequate to the current conjuncture and able to promote better the brand of Mamaia.

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