
CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT AND MOTIVATION IN ATTENDING SOCIALLY ORIENTED MARKETING EVENTS

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Abstract

The aim of the present paper is to search transdisciplinary functional interconnection of event marketing communication and social communication. Analysis of correlation of the terms involvement and motivation in the field of consumer behaviour forms the core of our theoretical paper. We more closely deal with identification of emotions connected with motivation in attending socially oriented events. Obtained knowledge will be subsequently applied to a specific type of socially oriented events, while we point out to their potential to build and develop social capital and connected specific social and cultural impacts.

Keywords: consumer involvement, motivation, socially oriented, marketing, events

1. Introduction

In the present paper we have chosen to use transdisciplinary approach in searching functional intrusions of a specific field of marketing communication and event marketing with the field of social communication. The aim of this paper is to point out to importance of the concept of involvement in the event marketing communication and also to draw attention to its connection with motivation of consumer behaviour as a psychological category. According to us the terms involvement and motivation are very closely linked and they play an important role in explanation of symptoms and dynamics of social behaviour of individuals. We also apply these starting-points to a more closely defined area of socially oriented events that have the potential to build social capital and connected positive and negative social and cultural consequences.

First, we would like to briefly explain the growing importance and interest in event marketing as a tool of marketing communication. Due to increased saturation and fragmentation of current markets accompanied by the increased intensity of competitive fight which is also reflected in the field of communication, effectiveness of using classical tools of marketing

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communication decreases. Similarly, it can be stated that there is a significant shift in the field of consumer behaviour, when besides adequate quality of provided goods and services a consumer expects a certain added value in the form of original and unforgettable adventures and experiences arising from this consumption. The term event and connected experience and adventure can be associated with forms of art of action (event, performance, happening, body art), while the event as a marketing and communication tool can be also used in publishing environment [1]. Nowadays, event marketing represents a still more and more popular alternative for marketers who are trying to cope with continuously changing marketing environment and behaviour of target markets. Classical marketing communication based on a strategy of pressure, it means forcing of messages of brands to the attention of consumers by media, results in negative responses of consumers to this information surplus [2]. Therefore, new marketing strategies start to be developed within communication structure, and they differ from the established strategies particularly by a tendency to offer interactive dialogue instead of monologue.

2. Importance of involvement concept in the event marketing communication

During the last 30 years, the importance of consumer involvement in connection with product, free-time interests, or event increased [3]. As far as the motivation of a consumer to be involved in free-time activities is determined by his/her personal interests and desires [4], the voluntary involvement of a consumer in marketing event is significantly influenced by his/her personal involvement - engagement. When defining the term involvement, we base our definition on marketing literature and research which was in the past particularly focused on personal relevance of products [5-7] or advertising messages [8-10] for consumers which form their justified purchase decisions. Krugman was one of the first authors who applied the theory of involvement into the research of consumer behaviour. He defined involvement as the “amount of conscious mutually connected experiences, connections or personal references which an observer carries out within one minute with regard to his/her life and incoming stimuli” [11]. Mitchell offers alternative view of involvement, while he adopts a component of personal significance from Krugman’s theory, but he puts different emphasis on it. He considers involvement to be “an individual level, a variable determining internal status which indicates a level of excitement, interest or deployment evoked by a special stimulus or situation” [12].

According to Park and McClung the involvement was initially understood solely as a feature naturally connected with a certain product category rather than as an individual characteristic of a consumer which has significant impact on his/her motivation to be involved in a certain activity [9]. It was often assumed that involvement of a consumer within a specific product is determined by physical attributes and characteristics of products. In other words, TV, car, or luxury products were considered as products of high interest because of their

high value and high risk in case of bad purchase [6]. But in fact a person who is not interested in cars or even who is not a holder of driving license can be only very rarely involved in these “products of high involvement”, while other people like certain collectors spend more time for example by selection of the right tea, so called “a product of low involvement” [13]. It means that involvement should not be understood as a sign naturally connected with a certain product category, but as a personal feature of individual customers significantly affecting their motivation to deal with certain behaviour [14]. It means that individual involvement within a product is exclusively dependent on personal relevance of this product for an individual.

Involvement is currently understood as a hypothetical construct reflecting “cognitive involvement of a consumer and subsequent effort, willingness or activation to deal with certain themes or activity” [15]. More the consumers are involved into activities or problem, the stronger is their tendency and willingness to deal with these activities or problem and to process relevant information [7].

According to Mitchell the involvement consists of two dimensions, intensity (level of excitement or involvement) and direction (against stimulus evoked by an object or situation) [12]. From the perspective of time frame of this personal cognitive attitude, the involvement construct can be divided into situation and pre-disposition involvement [16, 17]. Situation involvement occurs if a specific object captures attention of an individual for a limited time period [14]. It happens when a specific need occurs in consciousness or if an individual comes into contact with an object randomly. If the need was fulfilled or the contact was finished, situation involvement is again reduced or it ceases to exist [17]. An example of situation involvement is purchase of a car. On the other side, predisposition involvement applies to long-term interest to be a part of the subject which is based on the personal values and desires [14] and it is often connected with permanent involvement within a product [17]. It evokes interest and motivation to achieve specific targets even without immediate need or direct contact with an object. Besides its relative consistency, it can change after some time as a consequence of changed personal values and desires [16]. As an example we can mention the interest of a person in motoring, when the person buys magazines, visits exhibitions or watches programs dealing with this topic without interest to buy a car.

While situation involvement is relevant for processing of messages of a brand presented in media or by sales representatives [10, 16], motivation of a consumer to deal with an object, content or media is particularly conditioned by his/her predisposition involvement. It means that effectiveness of classical marketing strategy (advertisement, sales support or PR) depends particularly on the situation involvement of a consumer within the respective brand or media content, as far as the consumer does not actively search for the object and comes into contact with the object only randomly. On the other side, event marketing is used as a pull strategy, when consumers try to participate in the marketing event depending on their predisposition involvement, however situation involvement still plays a certain role here [18]. Therefore it is possible to state that the event

marketing uses both constructs of involvement simultaneously - short-time (situation) and long-time (predisposition).

As far as the target group does not usually come to the event primarily in order to obtain information about a brand or about categories of products being promoted by the event, we think that they are rather interested in the promoted field, event itself or involved people, whether it is a sport or cultural event. In this connection Dregner [16] created a conceptual model of predisposition determinants of consumers' motivation to be involved in the marketing event, where he determines three dimensions of predisposition involvement (content, object and event marketing as such), while Wohlfeil and Whelan [18] added the fourth dimension to this involvement (social interaction within the event). The dimensions characterize main reasons of participation of visitors in the marketing event, while their motivation can be given by a predisposition involvement in at least one of them. There is another factor which enters into the process - an ability to be involved in the event, which includes subjective reasons preventing involvement, e.g. distance from the place of event, health condition, financial situation, etc.

It results from the above mentioned that marketing events should be designed with the aim to attract a specific target audience by its specific content, or program, activities (1), presenting of the object (brand, product) in adequate or expected way (2), by inspiring or encouraging both amateur and professional public (3) and enabling the desired social interaction (4). It is also necessary to ensure connection to free-time activities and experience needs of the target group, what will ensure its high personal involvement. A way how to attract our target group, and so the way of identification of specific interests and experience needs of future visitors of the event, can be carried out within a marketing research (survey). In order to achieve desired communication and economic effects, a preliminary research should form an integral part of planning the event marketing strategy [19].

Within the term socially oriented event which is in the centre of focus of this paper, we can speak for example about religious and cultural events, scientific meetings, sightseeing tours, visits, opening ceremonies, and many other events. The abovementioned types of events assume involvement of both specific selected target groups of visitors and general public depending on a strategy of the respective event selected in advance. However, in general it can be assumed that the aim of the organizer organizing socially oriented event is not to achieve just short-time economic targets (e.g. to increase incomes or market share), but long-time communication targets (for example establishment or spreading of awareness, creation, strengthening, change or transfer of image to the level of community, influencing of attitudes, establishment of positive emotional inclination, establishment of more attractive associations, establishment of relations within the local community on the basis of common experiences, strengthening of loyalty of internal and external target groups).

3. Motivation of involvement in socially oriented marketing event

To fulfil the psychological aims of the event marketing in relation to the event and its organizer particularly assumes selection of attractive concept attracting attention of the target group and subsequently drawing of sufficient attention and long-time motivation to participate on this event. Motivation to active involvement forms the first and the most important step in the process of planning the event determining success of the following steps.

In general, the motivation is understood as a tendency to be active in selective and organized manner [20], what enables to divide behaviour into motivated and unmotivated. Motivation refers to “a set of processes which participate on intensity, direction and way of realization of the way of acting” [21], but also on its ‘stability’ [22]. In the most general level, “motivation refers to a process which manages our personal choices between different forms of voluntary activities. This term includes concepts such as desire, need, motive, benefit, support or formulation of a target which start and support voluntary activity in order to achieve personal targets.” [22] From the perspective of event marketing (in contrast to classical marketing communication) it is possible to highlight particularly the aspect of voluntariness of selection of activities which a future visitor of the event will carry out. We deduce the following definition of motivation in event marketing from the above mentioned assumptions:

"A process managing personal selection of a specific type of event in which we are voluntary active with a certain intensity, way and duration in order to achieve our personal targets." [19, p. 76]

Motivation is conditioned by a presence of certain sources (needs, habits, interests, ideals, values and emotions) [23]. They should be examined in advance by creators of social event strategy and subsequently adjust the event to prevailing motives of behaviour in respective target group. The following part of the paper describes mainly emotions as a significant source of motivation in attending socially oriented marketing event.

4. Emotions as a source of motivation in attending socially oriented marketing event

Sistenich [24] defines event marketing as a performance the aim of which is to present contents to the recipients by organizing extraordinary experiences, or to create emotional and psychical moments activating process leading to understanding. We deduce from this definition that emotions will represent an important source of motivation to attend the event. Most psychologists have divided the emotions to lower and higher emotions depending on their complexity, content and orientation. We mention the most common groups of higher emotions, the stimulation of which can be seen in the event marketing.

4.1. Social emotions

Social emotions have their basis in specific relations of a man to man built on different forms of cooperation within working activity. They include humaneness, solidarity, sympathy, love, self-esteem, sensitivity to offence, rebuke, and praise to be a special kind of social emotions.

4.2. Moral emotions

Moral emotions express relation of a person to his/her own behaviour and activity, as well as to behaviour and activity of others. They reflect ethical norms and principles adopted by a society, expressed in character features, such as humanism, sense of cooperation, altruism, love for a country, etc.

These emotions are particularly encouraged by religious and social events in the context of non-profit events (charities, political and purpose-oriented events), in the context of civil events (civil and state celebrations, festivals and exhibitions).

4.3. Aesthetic emotions

Aesthetic emotions incur when fulfilling, satisfying or non-satisfying aesthetic needs of a man. A source of these emotions can be works of artists, natural phenomena, human acts, or everything that meets requirements of beauty. Feelings of beauty, ugliness, generosity, meanness, tragedy, and comicality are affected by congenital dispositions to certain extent, but their development is mostly affected by education. Aesthetic emotions enrich and cult a personality of a man. These feelings can be stimulated by cultural and entertainment type of events, such as theatrical, musical and artistic events, sport and media events and different types of entertainment shows.

4.4. Intellectual emotions

Intellectual emotions are conditioned by intellectual activity; they are generated in the process of thinking, cognition, in connection with creative train of thoughts focused on problem solving. They are expressed by deep interest in any professional or research area and by effort to acquire as much knowledge as possible. These emotions can be stimulated by accompanying events within scientific or company events, such as training, conferences, congresses and symposia, but also by events with economic focus, such as business presentations, motivation meetings and events at the fairs and exhibitions.

4.5. Ethical emotions

Ethical emotions occur in connection with execution of social needs and interests which are contained in the moral principles, rules and acts considered

as essential assumptions of social existence. A basis of these emotions is a social life and activity of people. Positive ethical emotions include for example love and reverence to parents, conscience, etc. A subgroup of the ethical feelings includes legal emotions which express the way how a person experiences his/her relation to activities and conduct. These emotions can be stimulated similarly as social and moral feelings by different social, non-profit and civil events, as well as by events with political and social focus.

4.6. World-view emotions

World-view emotions can occur in connection with a specific case, but they mostly express general world-view attitudes of a person. They form an extension of these emotions. Abstract thinking is their essential presumption. Some authors classify for example a sense of humour, irony, noble and tragic into this group of emotions. These emotions can be stimulated by events with natural or social focus.

5. Particularities of socially oriented marketing events

A key role within the event marketing strategy is to choose the correct type of event among the many options, whether from the offer of event marketing agency or organized according to the own concept; it means by inventing of a new format requiring a creative approach [25]. Typology of events presents a wide range of options from which the organizer can choose, such as type of event, or several types of events which are optimal in terms of fulfilment of specific marketing targets, addressing of selected target group and overall direction of the strategy. Choice of the event type is also affected by amount of financial resources allocated in the marketing budget for realization of this tool, as well as past experiences with organizing of such events and knowledge in this field.

We often meet with two approaches to typology of event marketing communication activities in the literature: American approach which is based on division according to content and concept [26], and European approach which is based on division according to accompanying experience [27].

Typology of events widely used in the USA defines six basic categories of event marketing activities - company, civil, social, entertaining, non-profit events and congresses and exhibitions. Each of these categories includes specific types of events. In this paper we focus our attention on a category designated as *social events*. As far as its definition is quite narrow (religious and social events), we would like to outline specific types of events included within the social events. Besides traditional and annually repeated religious festivals connected with celebrating of a liturgical year, this category also includes events such as festivals, different days (days of young people, family, spiritual occupations, etc.), pilgrimage tours, concerts, national meetings or processions, camps, spiritual exercises and renewals, courses, Bible schools, reverent

memories, lectures and conferences, seminars, symposiums, days of recollection etc. Social events can include for example meetings and friendly discussions, charity balls, anniversary parties or celebrations of important events, special occasions, banquets and receptions, ceremonies, garden parties, etc. However, a purpose of any typology of events cannot be exhaustive listing of specific types of events within respective category due to diversity and creative nature of this part of communication.

Typology of events used in the Europe environment allocates events into the environment of culture, sport, economy, society/politics or nature. Within the culture, this typology distinguishes musical, theatrical, artistic, media, scientific, religious and technical events or activities promoting traditions and folkways. Within the category of sport, it identifies events such as Olympic Games, championships, tournaments and free-time sport activities. The most widely used events are events allocated to the field of economy which include different types of meetings (motivation, work, business, ceremonial), but also congresses, press conferences, seminars, fairs, exhibitions, expositions, road shows, incentive trips, events at the points of sale, open days, anniversary celebrations or General Assemblies. Political and social events include political and scientific meetings, visit of sights, excursions, parties, ceremonial openings, etc. And finally, the events with natural context include natural phenomena and disasters. The abovementioned typology classifies events into categories at the general level, with a hint of application of separate types of events in the marketing communication. Within this typology socially oriented events can be identified in the category society and politics. However, if we would like to find out functional relation between both typologies with respect to the field of socially oriented events defined by us, it can be stated that these events are put into context with religion in American classification of events, while European classification of events put the events into context with politics. This finding is quite interesting. However, in this paper we will continue with inclination to American approach; it means that we will understand religious and social events as socially oriented events. It is necessary to point out here that existing definitions and assumptions mostly derived from marketing sphere are based on knowledge from the field of social communication, where the terms involvement and motivation are closely interconnected and play an equally important role in explaining the symptoms and dynamics of social behaviour of individuals.

It is also possible to deduce from the above mentioned cornerstones that the purpose of socially oriented events is to focus on supporting or creating of added value in the form of social enrichment, when closer relationship between an organizer and visitors, rather than between visitors of the event is created [28]. Possible social effects of such events are described in the following part of this paper.

6. Social capital as added value of socially oriented marketing events

We can find out in the literature a research about effect of festivals on establishment of so called social capital in connection with effects of socially oriented events on the hosting organization and a society as such [29]. In conclusion of this wide research there is a statement that festivals play a key role in different societies and cultures to greater or smaller extent, while a role of festivals regarding their importance can differ with regard to social and cultural environment; a common factor is probably a celebration of community. Together with celebration, festivals can also offer the hosting community new opportunities connected with development of tourism, such as development of infrastructure and new job opportunities. Of course, together with positive aspects of festivals, there are also many negative social and cultural impacts for the respective community, such as disruption of values and traditions as a consequence of excessive commercialization, isolation of community, taking of addictive substances, increased criminality, damage of cultural heritage or social dislocation [30, 31]. However, event management can affect, whether these consequences on social life and structure of community will be emphasized or reduced in the respective social environment. McDonnell, Allen and O'Toole [31] state that many negative impacts can be also solved by intervention and increasing of awareness. Therefore, it is essential that organizers of festivals and events cooperate with respective community and consult issues together before, during and after the event or festival to create positive and repeating celebration of this community [32]. And despite the fact that also negative phenomena can occur, there is greater potential to experience positive effects of the festivals [29]. For example, a necessity to use sources of the community for development and organization of festivals not only facilitates to increase awareness about professional knowledge within the community, but it also supports cooperation between groups which would not have a possibility to interact in commercial and/or social environment of the community.

7. Conclusions

The aim of the presented paper was an effort for functional interconnection of a specific field of marketing communication (event marketing) with the field of social communication, where the terms involvement and motivation are closely linked together and play important role in explanation of symptoms and dynamics of the social behaviour of individuals. As we indicated at the beginning of this paper, changes in the social (and at the same time market) environment followed by changes in the social (consumer) behaviour caused emphasis of importance of event marketing, which thanks to its innovative focus and functions enabling interactive communication represents a suitable alternative against classical tools of marketing communication or social communication within different small and large social groups (here we also include religious and social organizations of different type). By their nature,

socially oriented events mostly concentrate on fulfilment of communication targets towards these social groups. Effective communication of the main message of the event is beside other things determined by using of promotional tools (for example sponsoring, PR, advertisement etc.) drawing attention to the event, as well as the event itself [28], which helps to establish and strengthen relationships, to form attitudes, sympathies, positive associations, to form, stabilize or change the image of these organizations in the eyes of not only specific primary target groups, but also of general public, which perceives the respective communication activities only secondarily - vicariously. Socially oriented events have a high potential to enable formation and development of social capital in the form of various social and cultural benefits, such as development of awareness, cooperation and relationships (business and social) within the respective community, development of infrastructure and tourism, support of employment in the respective region, enrichment and creation of community spirit and general good will which is supported by organization of different events to celebrate the community. To use these opportunities effectively, it is necessary to arouse personal involvement, participation of the target groups of visitors to the dimensions of the events as such, its content, object or social interaction, and subsequently to arouse strong and long-time motivation to participate on this event voluntarily. If the organizers are able to meet these assumptions adequately, a probability of processing the communicated messages increases, what can subsequently lead to fulfilment of communication targets of the whole event. The aim of socially oriented events should primarily be establishment of a social capital in the aforementioned forms. Also according to our opinions, economic indicators should not represent a dominant sphere of interest of organizers when evaluating effectiveness of the events, despite their complete neglecting is not real and effective due to quite high costs connected with this communication tool. Finally, we would like to express our wish which is at the same time also a recommendation to perceive and use the events as social communication tools primarily as means for improvement of social welfare and social interaction at all levels of community.

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