

**ANALIZA CONCEPTULUI DE
VALOARE ÎN DOMENIUL
CULTURAL**

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Abstract

Consumul de cultură este în creștere, iar instituțiile culturale au nevoie mai mult decât oricând să se întoarcă la așteptările clienților lor și să poată propune introducerea pe piață a instrumentelor relevante pentru identificarea tendințelor în consumul de cultură. La început vom încerca să descriem obstacolele principale care afectează sectorul cultural, cererea și oferta și vom evidenția nevoile pentru instituțiile culturale, care trebuie să gândească în termeni de poziționare, dar mai ales pentru reînnoirea direcțiilor de gândire în acest domeniu. În al doilea rând, vom dezvolta o analiză a valorii, care formează baza teoretică a problemelor manageriale.

Cuvinte cheie: *marketing, instituții culturale, conceptul de valoare, consumul cultural, oferta culturală*

**THE ANALYSIS OF THE
CONCEPT OF VALUE IN THE
CULTURAL DOMAIN**

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Abstract

The culture consumption is increasing, and the cultural institutions need more than ever to turn to their customers' expectations and the marketing may propose relevant tools to identify trends in the consumption of culture. At first we will try to describe the main disturbances which affect the cultural sector on the demand and supply by highlighting the needs for the cultural institutions to think in terms of positioning but especially to renew the lines of thought in this area. Secondly we will develop an analysis of the value, which forms the theoretical basis of the managerial issues.

Key Words: *marketing, cultural establishments, value concept, cultural consumption, cultural offer*

Introduction

This article was born from a general finding on the cultural field.

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According to (Zecheru,2002), the result of internal process of a cultural establishment (concert, museum exhibition, show, etc.) objectified in cultural goods or services designed to satisfy necessities of spiritual, artistic, aesthetic order is called cultural product.

The cultural product stands for the finalisation of a cultural deed, it is thought, performed and made available to consumer as a unique product requiring high consumption of financial, human, material resources.

Evaluation of a cultural product is very difficult however at the same time necessary. Although terms are herewith used for value such as cultural product or cultural service, it is actually all about special values: artistic, moral, spiritual aesthetic, religious. In Toffler’s opinion (1997), the specific character of cultural values, their differentiation is determined by the specific kind of human deeds, of activities for generation of material goods or of ideas or ideal representations. Many a time value has been a significant benchmark but only inside the establishment having generated it.

Consumption of culture is on the increase however cultural establishments need more than ever to direct themselves towards their clients’ expectations.

The scope of this communication shall be to present those conversions and impact they have on the manner of thinking in the marketing of cultural establishments. We will propose then a review into two stages: managerial and theoretical.

In the first place we tempt to describe the main perturbations affecting the cultural line of business simultaneously at the level of offer and at that of demand. This review will allow us to highlight the

necessity for cultural establishments to think in terms of positioning and especially to renew their lines of thinking within the field.

In the second place we will develop a review on value. It shall stand for theoretical basis to the managerial topical problems. To articulate these two levels we are to first make the proof of the match between the issue of positioning and that concerning value. Then, after the main approaches have been presented around such concept, we will consider new track of thought that could help answering the managerial issues that might have occurred in the first part of these lines.

1. A converted Cultural Landscape

The objective of this first part is hence to expose various relevant conversions that have occurred in the cultural line of business for several years now. To retain the characteristics of such at the same time from demand and offer that is bewildering the marketing thinking of cultural establishments. Should this approach have already been object to a number of developments in cultural marketing, we will try, given disorders occurred in this sector, to have the problems of positioning see new perspectives.

1. 1. In what OFFER is concerned

The main element to highlight as concerning the changes in the Offer involve occurrence of a very strong competition in cultural line of business. Each cultural establishment shall fight within aggressive competition environment.

Such competition is due firstly to the period of leisure. In quantity free time is much more abundant than time designed to work on a life’s scale but from point of

view especially of the quality free time has got great significance.

Evolution of cultures regarding the manners how to spend free time in general led to an explosion of the Offer of products or services and particularly an increase of the budget weight for families dedicated to this kind of activities. This evolution reached expenditure dedicated to culture that have been raised. During leisure the various cultural activities are therefore in permanent competition with the other activities practised in free time. Choices shall be done concerning free time and budget.

Technological mutations play herewith a forefront role. Diversification of modalities to accede to cultural works and products occurs therefore as the major phenomenon of the last quarter of a century while ascension of audio-visual stands for the main dynamics of such process. So, massive and recent broadcast of cultural products by development of the new communication means has simultaneously altered rhythms and forms of using free time and therefore cultural practices. For instance the turnover in sale of video records has exceeded the cipher of cinema hall entries and sees a remarkable growth that is supported also by the audience attraction for DVD. These technological instruments allowed users to pass over classical mediators and especially over cultural establishments in order to establish an immediate connection to cultural work. A gradual destabilisation can therefore be noticed of traditional and historical places of broadcasting cultural works.

Moreover, mass-media amplifies a lot the access to cultural products. For an exemple, technological evolution has troubled cinema environment. Consumers

are then exposed to a greater diversity of movies and a much higher flexibility in selection of conditions how to watch movies. The permanent competition due to innovations invading the market may convert the manner of producing works, their distribution and especially their consumption. This “massification” of entertainment has had direct effect on people’s consumption strategies.

Some of these changes are provoked by cultural world by new orientation of cultural policy. One of orientations the most striking in recent years, refers to the desire to broadcast culture as close as possible to population (in perspective of culture democratisation). So, cultural policies in recent years have tried to conquer new types of audience (new social groups), to favour broadcasting of cultural contents bewly occurred (rock, rap, street theatre, etc.) and make use of “alternative” places (public space). The purpose was an alteration of relationship between audience and cultural works thus tempting to change the rules of access to work. However this policy has had as an effect to challenge the so-called traditional cultural establishments.

These perspectives allow us to foresee the breadth of reflection that may be borne around cultural and entertaining consumption. These few findings referring to cultural offer let foresee a resuming to debate of the so-called cultural establishments.

1. 2. In what DEMAND is concerned

We will insist herewith on some tendencies occurred in cultural consumption. The purpose is not to achieve a panorama of present-day trends in cultural consumption but rather to put into light certain trends that will allow us to

picture this oscillation of demand, phenomenon that has certainly consequences on cultural establishments. Particularization of behaviours is the first trend that we have identified. We find herewith especially consumption at home. It is the case particularly for private movies consumption that has for sure effects on cinema halls. This trend is within the attempt of personalizing individuals.

Search of collective emotion is the second trend in case of cultural consumption. Paradoxically faced with a development of forms of individual consumption we find out the occurrence of a second collective form, by which cultural consumption becomes means of emotion transmittal (Herpin and Verger, 2000). In this case, individuals look first of all for an affective experience that is depending on some group. It is the case especially of rock, rap music concerts where the audience feels like being together making joint body with the others, reuniting into some form of social communion around the artist. This trend of consumption is a picture of disorders occurred in relationship between audience and cultural object.

The active character of cultural consumption developed by individuals is also a trend worthy mentioning. The spectator addresses no more passively the cultural consumption but, on the contrary, actively. They become actually an actor of their own process of cultural consumption. This live dimension may come through in several ways. It is the case of concerts particularly the one of rock music where the audience becomes an actual actor within the show. Bromberger speaks about “participating show”. As for the previous trend, this one again pictures perfectly the new relationship between a cultural object

and the audience. These trends have consequences on “classical” cultural establishments that see themselves obliged to think of new modalities to develop connections between cultural subjects and the audience.

It can be said that the amplexness of cultural activity of an individual is measured better at the present by a review of their money and time budget than by some specific practice.

1. 3. Problems of Positioning

The elements we have tried to previously highlight have great repercussions on the prevailing cultural norms. We are so attending a reassessment of individual – cultural object relationship. Cultural establishments in their assembly are therefore reassessed as well as their role- the way it has been traditionally meant.

There are several elements to convince us that thinking in terms of positioning for cultural establishments could allow them to meet all such changes.

- firstly cultural line of business is a sector where logics of offer structures well demand. Or, it is known that should the offer not evaluate then demand is likeable to “slide” to another side;

- moreover, the new forms of competition previously described emphasise the fragility of establishments. They contribute in parallel to losing positions engaged by cultural establishments on the market;

- occurrence of these new competition forms finds a favourable echo at the level of demand by means of renewed cultural practices, of new manners of cultural consumptions of the new relationship between consumer and cultural object.

The issue of positioning for cultural establishments seems therefore pertinent. Conversions above described make us believe how necessary it is to propose new tracks of thinking referring to this notion of positioning the cultural establishments. This article proposes therefore to discover new tracks. And given ideas so far submitted we can find two possible axes in the issue of positioning.

In the first place, due to various inherent technological mutations within cultural line of business we assist the occurrence of new modes of access to culture. This abundance becomes source of questions to the extent consumers shall chose especially between public place (hall) – private place (domicile). Given that such choices take place ever more often detrimental to “traditional” cultural establishments it would be interesting to think over the new specificities that the latter may put into light in order to reposition within such competition.

It is also all about resuming to debate the cultural places. Occurrence of “alternative” places, technological conversions allowing for overreaching cultural places, transformations showed in consumer-cultural object relationship repose in discussion the role of cultural place as it was traditionally understood but also existence of such cultural places. Cultural establishments shall therefore ask themselves questions about their place and about the role of a place. They shall approach it as instrument available to them. That is especially proposed by Filser (2000) when mentioning a central way of positioning standing for the offer (in this case the cultural object) and a peripheral way standing for the offer of consumption place (in this case the cultural place).

2. Theoretical Reflection over the Concept of Value

Whether the central strategic issue coming out of such review is that of positioning of cultural establishment it is left to us to find a pertinent theoretical approach of such problems. Upon certain construing, the culture itself is an expression of the idea of value. From Platon up to nowadays- as G. Uscătescu remarks, any cultural reality has embodied the idea of value. It can be said that the Notion of value has come to engage the most significant place in ant definition of culture (Uscătescu G., 1998).

2. 1. Value, a Pertinent Concept for understanding the New Relationship with Cultural Object

For several years theoreticians have been paying increased attention to the value perceived by the client. (Aurier, Evrad and N’Goala, 1998). For Woodruff (1997) and Lai (1995), the organisation shall have a thorough understanding of the value attached by consumer to a new product in order to get a competitive advantage into a competition environment. Spiegelman (2000) extends this argument stating that it is necessary for an establishment that it should offer a consumer supplementary value in order that they become faithful and that a long term relationship should be established between the latter and the concerned establishment.

So, utilisation of a review grid around the concept of value ought to allow the establishment to improve particularly relation between the desired positioning and the one perceived by consumer (Pontier, 1986).

The study of value has seen in marketing for some years a renewed

interest. Several questions occurred repeatedly around this concept: the issue of its defining, its conceptualizing and its extent.

In marketing many definitions have been proposed for value. The majority of such definitions were submitted from consumer's point of view. (Woodruff, 1997), but also (Day and Crask, 2000) propose a literary magazine on the various definitions of the existing value. Thus value may be understood in turn as:

- a concept near enough to the perceived quality (Gale, 1994);
- an emotional connection between consumer and producer (Butz și Goldstein, 1996);
- an exchange perceived between negative and positive consequences of using a product (Woodruff și Gardial, 1996);
- a preference resulted from an experience of consumption of some subject in interaction with an object (Holbrook, 1999).

These numerous definitions make Day state (2002) that no definition of value is accepted on wide scale. Two distinctive theoretical trends could allow us to highlight the various definitions: an approach around the concept of utility value and an approach around the concept of utilisation value. The value of utility stands for an approach of economic type, where value results from cost-benefits comparison. By implementing this type of economic thinking in marketing, the value of utility can be understood as what results from a calculation between what is received and what is given. In this case, the value precedes consumption. For (Evrard and N'Goala, 1998), this approach of the value may be featured as cognitive and pre-purchase approach.

The scope of the second trend focuses on that value would derive from an experience of consumption or possession related to an object. In this case, value is no more result of a calculation but becomes product of an experience of consumption. (Filser, 2000). Value does not result straight from the product but from the experience of consumption arisen from it (Holbrook, 1999). In this case the objective is to understand how the individual evaluates his experience of consumption (Aurier and Passebois, 2002). This trend of research also focuses on subjectivity of the value of utilisation (compared to the value of exchange where benefits gotten are related to the object and are therefore almost universally appreciable by any consumer) which makes the value coming from a consumption experience to be different on inter-individual plane. In this theoretical trend we have chosen to approach value.

In what concerns conceptualization of value there is here also possible to emphasize two distinct tactics:

- a discrete approach of value in which authors strive to list all benefits perceived by consumer.
- a factorial approach of value, where this is defined starting from an aggregation of fundamental dimensions.

Eventually, this concept of value was developed in many ranges of application even if it is possible to be found especially within the field of culture (Evrard and Aurier, 1996, 1999; Kotler, 1999 ; Pulh, 2002; Passebois, 2003) or within the field of distribution (Filser, 2000; Mathwick, Malhotra and Rigdon, 2001, 2002; Filser, Plichon and Anteblian, 2003).

Several conclusions may be drawn out of this short review of literature on

evolution of the concept of value To remind:

- passage from a value of utility to a value of utilisation;
- passage from a discrete conception to a factorial conception of value;
- use of value concept mainly focused on the study of interactions and on relationship between consumer and product (goods or service);
- use of concept within various fields such as the one of culture and of distribution where we however find same typologies.

All such synthesis concerning the concept of value results hence from development of research and from theoretical evolution of the concept. However all such research stay insufficient to satisfy the previously risen problems. The objective of the next section will be hence to propose conceptual extensions of value, to reason them and to see towards what theoretical modelling are they likely to lead us.

2. 2. New Ways of Theoretical Exploration concerning the Concept of Value

The objective of this item is therefore to propose new ways of theoretical exploration concerning the concept of value. For that we will try to ground up utilisation of this concept of value within these extensions, to propose the relatively simple modelling of cultural experience and eventually to see in which more specific ranges of the cultural line of business it would be possible to put into practice such reflections.

2. 2. 1. Value in a Dynamic Perspective

The elements we have highlighted in the first part of this article determined us to ask ourselves questions about the new

forms of appropriating culture. We have shown that due to the various technological evolutions in the recent years people interested in culture have got the possibility to be allowed to make a selection among various cultural practices.

Starting since such various findings out the objective of this item would be considering the role and significance of public space versus private space for culture consumption. We could then subscribe our thinking to a dynamic perspective to try understanding the manner how interaction between various contexts of consumption is likely to lead to various methods of turning to profit the work or product considered.

It would be hence all about achieving a better understanding of selections carried out by consumers between various modes of consumption of a cultural product. We could ground up this way a review concerning value. Value is relative to the extent it is based on comparing different products or services and to the extent it varies among individuals and cases of utilisation or consumption. In other words, value reflects the assessment of a goods or service done by a consumer after they have consumed the cultural product and that has impact on their further decisions of consumption.

An approach by the value concept would allow then for starting an actual review of the experience of consumption per se and consequently a more correct understanding of the reasons for consumption.

To the extent our objective would be that of understanding the choices done by consumers, it would be interesting to assess the manner how value evolves for a single individual.

Consumption of culture is a dependent consumption. What happens the moment of consumption affects further consumptions. Each cultural experience is integrated in the visitor's personal route and current experiences are fed with passed experiences and influence the indirect experiences that affect next experiences (Evrard, 2001). (Bénavent, 2001) accounts for the fact that “experience generates further episodes of consumption within the same universe [...] The experiential consumption raises the value of marginal value of utility consumption that produce satiety “.

2.2.2. Value attached to the Place

As previously specified the concept of value is perfectly deep-rooted in the problems of positioning. And we could see that positioning of a whole cultural organisation may be declined around a cultural objective (central view of positioning) and of cultural place (peripheral view of positioning). Consequently the place may be reviewed by the concept of value, as it takes part in defining positioning and may thus allow for understanding for an individual. (Holbrook, 1994, 1999) also specifies that any object may be turned to profit by the individual. This way the goods, the service and also the person, the event, the place may be source of value.

Therefore this premise confirms possibility to review the cultural place by means of value.

Such adaptation of the concept of value seems to be pertinent to the extent it is subscribed equally within a theoretical dynamics concerning retaining of place. Actually if referring to works concerning place several theoretical conceptualisations may be distinctive:

The first theoretical track consists in approaching the place by own characteristics. Within the cultural field, (Bouder-Pailler's and Damak's, 2004) works are close to this theoretical track. These authors focus on the design of a space of representation within the live show field. More specific, they focus on the visual and aesthetic aspect. Also there can be found in their works colours, shape, space, light, materials, texture ... so that to understand the features of the cultural place design.

The second theoretical track consists in understanding of the place by physical behaviours they trigger. In this case place is understood as a framework where the individuals' behaviours would like to subscribe. Each behaviour displayed by an individual across a space reflects the relationship they have with such. In cultural line of business, (Bromberger's works 1998) within the sphere of musical concerts but also (Duhaime et al.'s, 1995) and (Delaney's, 1992) concerning museums, (Veron's and Levasseur 's, 1989) concerning an exhibition approach this relationship between space and individual physical behaviour.

Conclusion

Reflection done during this article has got double interest. Actually we have been tempted to propose a renewal of marketing reflection within the cultural field and at the same time at both managerial and theoretical levels.

At managerial level renewal is done related to the issue of positioning of cultural establishments. Consequently we made it possible for the following questions: how could they position or “reposition” particularly versus the new forms of competition? Which are the

instruments such cultural establishments dispose of in order to put in practice their positioning and especially which could be the role of the place in such positioning strategies?

At theoretical level, we have tried to enrich thinking (reflection) that develops around the concept of value, by proposing or not new typologies of value, but offering new utilisations of this concept. We also have developed a reflection concerning value from dynamic perspective where value is supposed to evolve with each consumption experience

On the other hand, we have studied consideration of value within reflection on the cultural place, value that will get into the overall assessment of a consumption experience by a consumer.

Such reflections are left however for this moment at a condition of research proposal. Need is now that pertinence could be acknowledged for these tracks by the attempt to validate them empirically. This is wished to be the next stage of this work.

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