

Study on Spectators' Perception on Theatre Consumption as Competitive Advantage at Urban Level

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Abstract: *Culture and cultural infrastructure of a city represent in the current economic climate one of the vectors that can contribute to the success of urban development programs, regional, and in many cases, national. Experience shows that the synergy effect acquired by the urban management as a result of encouraging urban competitiveness by supporting cultural competitiveness helps create competition between organizations working in this field. Therefore, studies on resources of generating competitive advantages for cultural organizations have become increasingly interesting and useful. In this context, the study we propose presents the most relevant findings of a questionnaire applied to a representative sample of Odeon Theatre viewers, in Bucharest, one of the most "attended" theatres of the Romanian capital. Using this approach, we tried to update the information regarding the target audience of this theatre, to study the preferences and expectations of the audience related to the shows and programs, and to identify the motivation for choosing the services of the Odeon Theatre. The conclusions provide a consistent informational basis, so that the management of this cultural institution can formulate recommendations for creating and strengthening sustainable competitive advantages.*

Keywords: *urban and regional development, urban competition, culture, cultural organizations, theatrical sector, competitive advantages, audience, Theatre consumption.*

JEL: L32, L82, R00, R58, Z10.

Introduction

Culture is so complex that it is difficult to define (Barbu, 2011, p. 105). However, we can say that culture is a key area of a city's capabilities. A long-term cultural vision can be a crucial link in the city's plans for economic and social development. Therefore, cultural institutions and activities should be part of an integrated approach of the city's planning and urban regeneration (Popescu, 2007, p. 123).

The cultural sector of a City (1) consists of the physical characteristics of the city and the culture heritage (2), as well as of the cultural facilities in the

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broadest sense, including events, exhibitions, institutions and infrastructure, such as Theatres, museums, galleries, libraries, recreational facilities and art trade (De Brabander & Gijsbrechts, 1994).

Culture is important for all cities, but especially for changing the image of a deteriorated city. Cultural facilities are an important key element of the city's attractiveness. In particular, a diverse and vibrant culture is an important location factor in order to attract specialized labor and creative industries. In addition, local pride, identity and the image that the city presents to the world are largely determined by the quality of the local cultural scene (Popescu, 2007, p. 123). Also, cultural resources determine the tourist interest towards a certain city (Popescu, 2004, p. 84). Moreover, investment in cultural facilities have a direct impact on the economy and induce an improvement in living standards, while the status of the city as urban cultural center is a factor that determines the value of the urban area, which adds up to other local factors (accessibility, tax climate, human capital, stability) and determines the city's competitiveness on the global economy (Van den Berg et al., 1995).

Starting from these aspects, local authorities from more cities around the world have begun to employ the promotion of cultural organizations as part of a strategy to improve urban image, to foster development and to attract tourists and investors (Richards & Wilson, 2004; Tesu (Păsculescu), 2011, p. 196). This happens because, over time, cultural organizations have become a key element in the urban competition due to their potential to bring significant revenue, thus boosting the economies of cities. Also, in economically developed countries, the measurement of the quality of life in big cities can't be achieved without taking into account the opportunities for culture, art, creative activities and education (Burlacu, 2011). Therefore, cities with a strong cultural infrastructure are necessary elements for urban and regional development programs.

The evolution of the Theatre sector in Romania and its place in Europe

According to studies conducted in 2007 by the Center for Research and Consultancy on Culture (CRCC), the situation in Europe, in general, and in Romania, in particular, in the Theatre sector was as follows:

1. Regarding the number of Theatres:

- This was relatively even in European countries, the values being between 0.1 - 0.9 theatrical institutions per 100,000 inhabitants (see figure 1);
- Most Theatres were in Finland (0.9 / 100,000) and the fewest in Albania (0.1 Theatres / 100,000 inhabitants) (CRCC, 2007a, p 15);
- Romania occupies a middle position, similar to Latvia, Lithuania and Bulgaria (see figure 1).

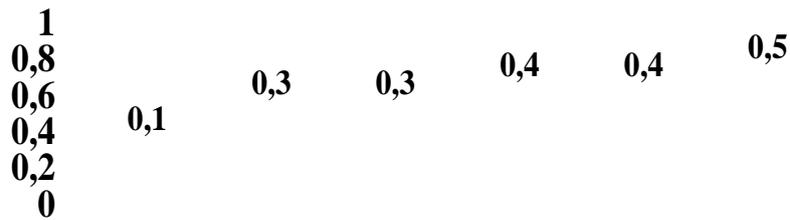


Figure 1. Theatrical institutions in 2007 (no. of Theatres / 100,000 inhabitants)

Source: CRCC, 2007a, p. 15

2. In terms of *Theatre performances*, Romania surpassed only Macedonia and Albania (see figure 2) (CRCC, 2007a, p 16):



Figure 2. Theatre performances in 2007 (no. of performances / 1,000 inhabitants)

Source: CRCC, 2007a, p. 16

3. Regarding the number of *Theatre performances*:

- Theatres are the most popular show institutions, the number of viewers ranges from 9 to 738 viewers per 1,000 inhabitants. On the first positions were: Austria (738 viewers per 1,000 people), Iceland (599 viewers) and Finland (419 viewers) (see figure 3) (CRCC, 2007a, p 17);

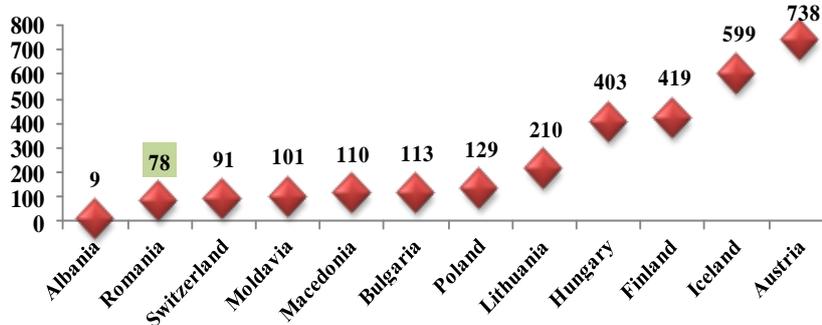


Figure 3. Theatre viewers in 2007 (no. of viewers / 1,000 inhabitants)

Source: CRCC, 2007a, p. 17

- Romania is on the penultimate place (see figure 3 and figure 4), with 78 viewers per 1,000 inhabitants, before Albania.

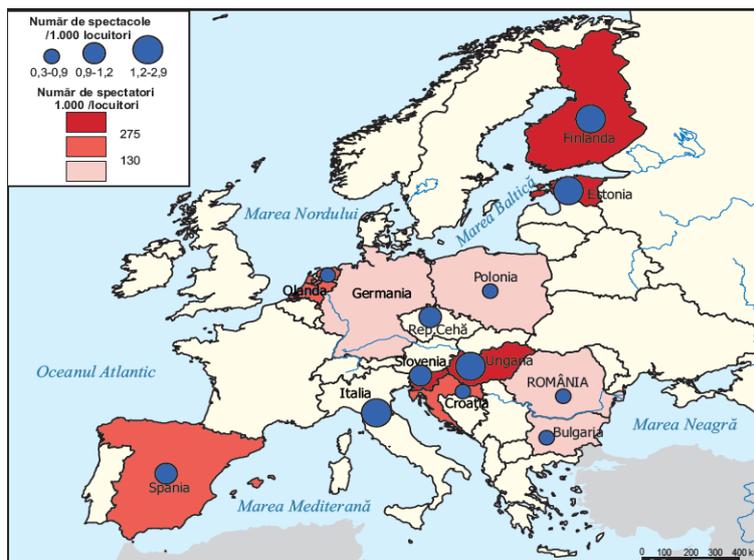


Figure 4. Theatres in European countries - performance and viewers

Source: CRCC, 2007b, p. 15

Recent data (2010), provided by the National Institute of Statistics (NIS), presents the number of show institutions (Theatres, philharmonic and similar institutions)³ (see figure 5), which have recorded a decline of 1.9% compared to 2007.

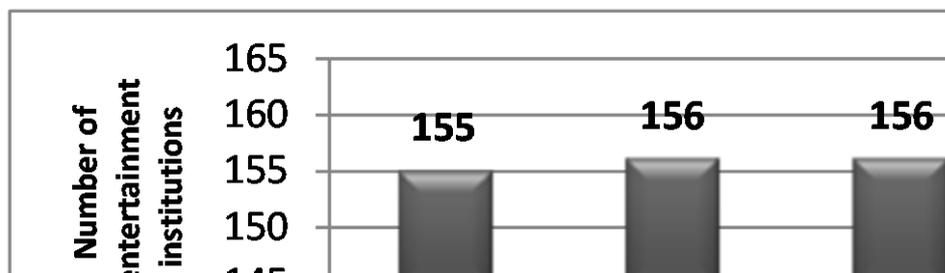


Figure 5. Evolution of the number of entertainment institutions in Romania (2006-2010)

Source: NIS, 2010, p. 40 and NIS, 2011, p. 40

³ According to the Government Ordinance no. 21/2007 “belonging to the performing arts are: theatre, contemporary dance, classic dance, opera and operetta”.

In 2010, the number of performances and concerts was about 19,000, an increased number compared to 2007 (with 5%), while the number of viewers increased by two million (see figure 6).

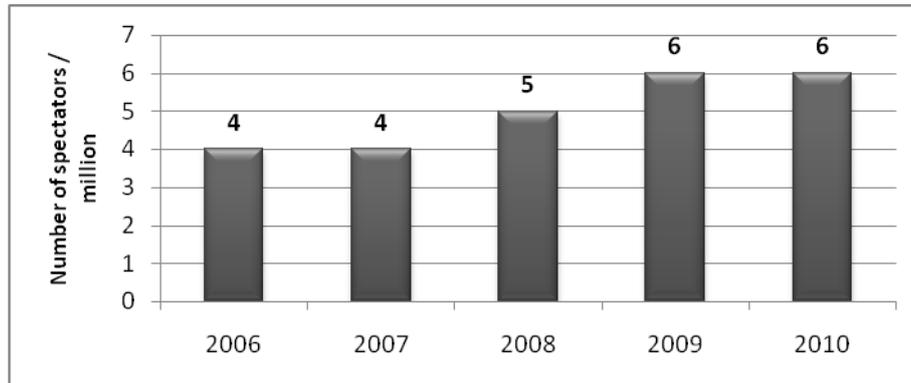


Figure 6. Evolution of the number of spectators (2006-2010)

Source: NIS, 2010, p. 40 and NIS, 2011, p. 40

Regarding only theatrical institutions, next are presented a series of relevant statistics:

- The Romanian theatre functions according to the rules before '89: the only shareholder is the state; the grants come either from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (National Theatre), or from the municipalities; the salaries are fixed and are granted based on seniority and category. Thus, a debutant actor has an average salary of 1.000 lei⁴ (about 250 Euros) (this amount can double under contracts that the actor can get in the independent theatre segment), while an experienced actor has a salary of 2.000 lei / per month (about 500 Euros);

- There are 41 repertory theatres (of which 15 are located in the capital), plus other 9 independent / private theatre companies, all with headquarters in Bucharest (an inferior number compared to Budapest, for example, which has 36 private theatres);

- Approximately 500 graduates receive an actor diploma every year, but only few of them get employed, while in recent years the state system no longer employs actors;

- The average cost to produce a repertory theatre play is about 30.000 Euros (while for a play staged by a small independent theatre, the cost varies between 250 and 1.000 Euros). 60% of the cost of a play is covered by the ticket sales. According to experts, in order to cushion entirely the costs to produce a play there are two options: (1) the performance must play sold out for at least 30 representations, or (2) the ticket price should be increased to 90 – 100 Ron (20 – 25 Euros), this approach is excluded by authorities because it is said to reduce the

⁴ In August 2011.

occupancy rate by more than half;

- The ticket price varies between 10 Ron (about 2.5 Euros) and 50 Ron (about 12 Euros);
- Because the ticket price is more than affordable (the Romanian theatre is considered to be the cheapest in Europe), viewers have become more interested, and this has triggered a bigger number of plays and more international awards have been obtained.

1. Odeon Theatre....

A. Mission and objectives

With a tradition of over 60 years in the cultural landscape of Bucharest, Odeon Theatre has the mission to provide Theatre performances and a research framework locally and nationally, in order to help improve the Theatre environment artistically and professionally, and also to increase the level of cultural development of the local community. At the same time, Odeon Theatre takes care of creating performances that reflect the multicultural context in which we find ourselves, promoting the cultural act, educating and encouraging the “sense for beautiful” of the audience in Bucharest.

The Theatre's specific and functional activity is, mainly, to pursuit the following objectives, directly related to the specific of the dramatic / lyric Theatre institution:

- Optimally use the artistic potential of the artists within the institution;
- Continue the artistic tradition of the national Theatre movement;
- Take advantage of the national and universal, classic and contemporary dramaturgical resources;
- Stimulate innovation and creativity;
- To support artistic personalities and promote national theatrical values in the international environment;
- Diversify the cultural supply and increase the access and degree of participation of citizens in cultural life.

B. The Odeon Theatre's characteristics

Odeon Theatre is part of the repertory performance institutions, according to G.O. no. 21/2007 regarding institutions, concert and performance companies, artistic management activities, which was approved with amendments by Law no. 353/2007.

The characteristic of Odeon Theatre derives from nonconformity and the modern style of plays. Also, the organization of various major projects within the organization emphasizes its degree of uniqueness among other repertory performance institutions.

C. Theatre's heritage

Odeon Theatre (see figure 7) provides viewers two performance halls: Majestic Hall and Studio Hall.



Figure 7. Odeon Theatre in 1911 and now; Theatre's logo

Source: <http://www.teatrul-odeon.ro/>

- *Majestic Hall* is a classical performance hall that has an “l'italienne” stage show set (see figure 8), which keeps the distance between the audience and the show itself. This hall has 300 seats which are completely taken at every premiere. The hall has been modernized, and is the only one in Europe to have a sliding ceiling (Odeon Theatre, 2011a).

- *The Studio hall* reopened on September 23, 2010, after 62 years (Odeon Theatre, 2011b). In July 2006 a competition of architectural projects was launched for rearranging the hall, the reconstruction has started in 2008. The entire investment was supported by the Bucharest City Hall and the General Council of PMB. Odeon Studio features a flexible and versatile Theatre space (see figure 8), consisting of platforms that allow multiple ways of organizing the performance space and public location. Also, the hall is designed as a performance space, as well as a space opened to several artistic areas: photography, installations, film, music etc. (Odeon Theatre, 2011b).



Figure 8. Majestic Hall and Odeon Hall

Source: <http://www.teatrul-odeon.ro/>

The Odeon Theatre team consists of 32 actors, 2 directors and 2 scenographers (Odeon Theatre, 2011).

D. The cultural product

Regarding Theatre, the cultural product is a live performance act (Theatre plays), and includes a unique achievement, unrepeatable (Zecheru, 2002, p. 150).

Odeon Theatre has to offer:

- *Basic service*, more specifically, *the Theatre performance*: 20 performances in the 2011-2012 season;
- *Auxiliary services* which integrate all activities conducted by staff of the institution, within the service implementation process: scenarios, choreographs, music, lights, costumes, scenery, etc.

E. Funding and pricing

Odeon Theatre is funded both from its own funds and from the local budget of Bucharest. Own revenues are achieved through:

- The proceeds from the sale of tickets of performances, as well as from the sale of program specifications;
- Hiring temporary the halls;
- Donations and sponsorships from individuals and legal entities;
- Other activities or programs, subject to legal provisions.

As can be seen in Figure 9, expenditures exceed income, so normally, without subsidies received; the Theatre could not operate cost-effective.

In the theatrical institutions, in the process of determining the price, cultural managers take into account the costs and not the demand for culture, available at a certain time. A key objective of cultural marketing is to create cultural needs for the public who is disinterested in certain offerings (Moldoveanu & John-Franc, 1997, p. 190). For this reason, the greatest interest, when determining the price level in the cultural environment, is to cover all costs and get a reasonable profit to enable the institution to continue its work.

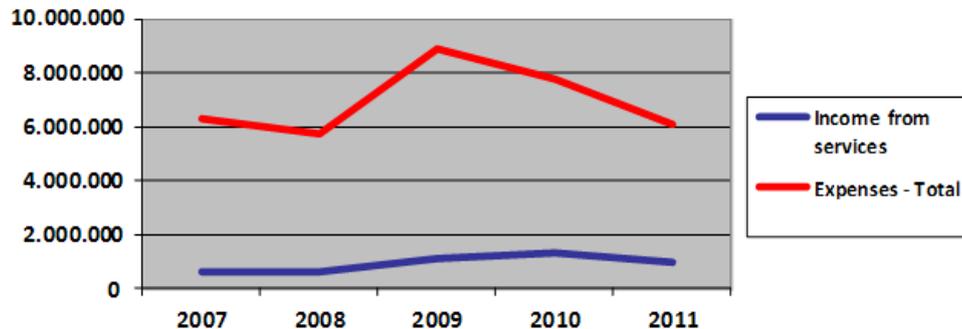


Figure 9. The dynamic of revenues from services and expenditures

Source: data taken from the Odeon Theatre

In terms of consumer, the price set by the Theatre does not represent the only cost, because to the price of the theatrical service adds up the round-trip price, parking fees, or the purchase of goods or services needed: an adequate clothing or supervision of children left at home (Nita & Olteanu, 2004). In Figure 10 are presented the cost of the theatrical service from the consumer's point of view.

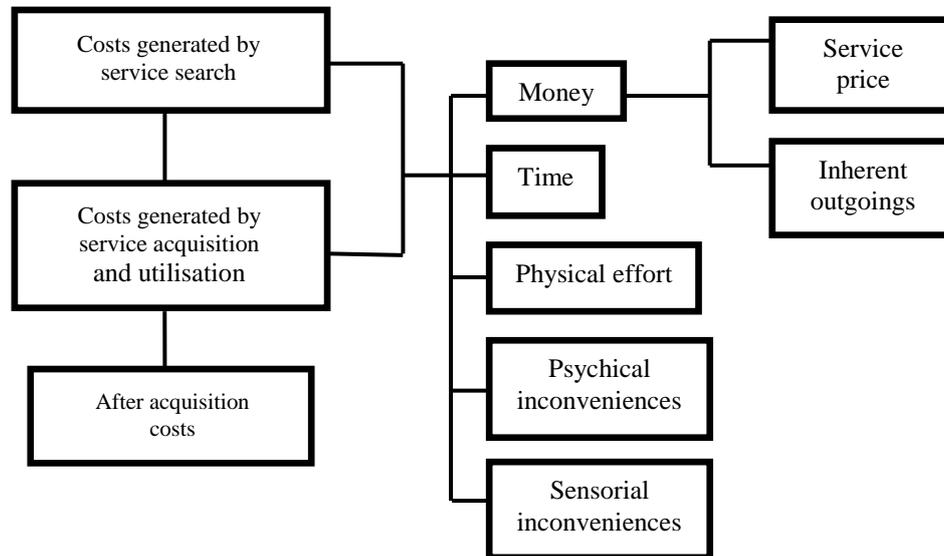


Figure 10. The total cost of the service from the consumer's point of view

Source: Niță & Olteanu, 2004, p. 170.

The costs of the theatrical performance vary depending on the popularity of the performance to be presented. Thus, in the costs can be included fixed and variable expenses. It is also important to calculate the marginal costs generated by the additional expense relating to the sale of a single place. All these costs are included in the ticket price.

Concerning the Odeon Theatre, the ticket prices have remained unchanged for years, maintaining a low and accessible threshold. This represents a tradition in the Romanian cultural space, whereas a high price in our country would lead to the loss of existing viewers, and attracting other audiences would remain an illusion.

Since the Odeon Theatre is subsidized by the local budget, the prices are more affordable, due to the fact that part of the costs is already covered by subsidies. The charges levied on the tickets to the Theatre's performances vary depending on the complexity of the performance, its reputation, or if the play is a premiere or not (see table 1). Also, it should be noted that students and pensioners have discounts.

Table 1. Odeon Theatre prices

	Full price (Ron)	Price with a discount (Ron)
High complexity performances, premieres, dance performances	31,80	15,90
Usual performances (average complexity performances, which are not premieres or special performances)	21,20	12,72

Source: Odeon Theatre

F. Customers

The last analysis based on a research on identifying the target audience took place in the season 2001-2002, and was conducted by a team of sociologists led by Professor Ioan Drăgan, University of Bucharest. The survey was conducted on a sample of 305 subjects, following sociological-demographic characteristics, motivation to participate in performances, preferences etc.

The most relevant results of this analysis have been the following:

- A growing trend of female audience, maintaining a constant difference between the two types of audience. Thus, 60% of public Theatre is composed of women and 40% of men;
- Very young audience and young (between 19 and 28 years) is large (40%), and has a growing trend. This is due mainly to the affordable prices and attractive performances for this age group. Also, the adult public (40-50 years) represent a majority group within the Theatre audience (about 60%);
- According to studies, people who usually come to Theatre, are in general university graduates (58.2%), but this should not be termed as a universal applicable rule. 33.5% of viewers have graduated high-school or "post high-school", 27.10% are students, 8.3% are graduates of secondary school or vocational school and 7.5% are high-school students;
- The professional status of the Odeon Theatre audience is mainly permanently employed (49.2%). This underlines their financial stability, which motivates them to invest their spare time in attending performances. In contrast, there is a downward trend in participation in performances of casual workers (1.5%), unemployed who benefit from welfare (0.7%) and jobless persons (0.5%).

In this study, we've recorded that the Odeon Theatre audience consists of middle-aged people (40-50 years), female, highly educated, who have an average / high income. The age of this analysis, plus the dynamic of the environment, make the study we propose to present to be of interest, being useful and timely.

G. Competition

Competition is based on several criteria such as:

- *Type of Theatre*: Odeon Theatre, as a repertory Theatre, competes with Theatres, such as: Bucharest National Theatre, Bulandra Theatre, Nottara Theatre, Comedy Theatre, Small Theatre, Metropolis Theatre etc.;

- *Number of spectators*: we can't really have a clear perspective on this, as the number of viewers varies according to a number of external factors, which are not directly influenced by the competitive advantage;
- *Revenues from customers*: this depends on the number of viewers, so the previous statement remains valid;
- *Number of plays*: regarding this, Odeon Theatre ranks at the top, among competing Theatres. However, we can't really say what institution ranks the first due to the permanent changes in the volume of plays;
- *Prices*;
- *Actors' prestige*.

As a result of the investigation conducted by the University of Bucharest, a ranking of the most attended Theatres was made (see figure 11).

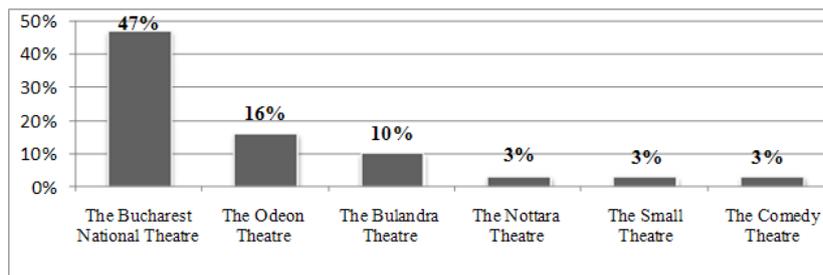


Figure 11. The most attended Theatres in Bucharest

Source: Opinion poll conducted by the University of Bucharest for the Odeon Theatre

H. International recognition of the Odeon Theatre

Odeon Theatre is one of the most representative Theatres in Bucharest. It has a lot of collaborations and participation in international events, which highlight the attractiveness of the multicultural institution.

Since 1994, the Theatre has participated in numerous international festivals. Also, in recent years, the Theatre has received numerous Theatre festivals distinctions⁵ in Piatra Neamț, Brașov, Galați, Timișoara and in the UNITER⁶ Awards.

To sustain an active international presence, Odeon Theatre has established in 2006 the ARTS program (American - Romanian Theatre Exchange) in partnership with the Lark Play Development Center in New York. This program consists of a theatrical exchange between writers from Romania and the United States, offering participants the opportunity to attend various courses, seminars,

⁵ Theater and its performances have obtained: 1979 - Best Performance Award at the International Festival of Theater in Arezzo; in 1991 and 1992 - Award of Excellence; 1993 - Theater of the Year; 1994 - Award for the best performance in the National Festival Theater; 1995 - Award for the best performance in the Romanian Comedy Festival (Odeon Theater, 2011).

⁶ The Romanian Association of Theatre Artists (UNITER) is a professional, apolitical, non-governmental and non-profit organization representing people working in the theatre industry all over the country, which has partnerships with the institutionalized theatre system and contributes to the consolidation and stimulation of the movement to support theatrical art.

workshops and meetings held at the Odeon Theatre and Lark Theatre (Odeon Theatre, 2011a).

In the same year, 2006, was launched a new international program, Odeon.art dedicated to the art and culture of a European⁷ country (Odeon Theatre, 2011c).

2. Study on spectators' perception on theatre consumption

2.1 Research methodology

A. Purpose and objectives of the research

The purpose of this research was to assess the degree of interest of viewers towards Theatre, in general, and to study the audience' preferences on the performances and programs of the Odeon Theatre.

The objectives of this research have taken into account the following:

- To identify the place that the Theatre occupies among the entertainment possibilities, in the interviewees' preferences;
- To identify the main resources of information regarding theatrical plays, in general, and the Odeon Theatre, in particular;
- To study the viewers' preferences and expectations regarding theatrical performances, programs and actors, directors and other important elements of the Odeon Theatre;
- To study the viewers' public motivation in choosing the Odeon Theatre in the context of cultural and artistic competition, and the degree of comfort generated by spending the free time in this institution.

B. The research hypotheses. Defining the variables

These elements were identified in close correlation with the objectives described:

- The Theatre is a favourite way of spending free time for many of Bucharest's inhabitants;
- Broadcasting information for promotional purposes is highly effective;
- The performances and programs that are currently played by the Odeon Theatre are in accordance with the preferences and expectations of the audience;

⁷ In March 2006, took place the *Week of the Hungarian Theater* (organized in collaboration with the Hungarian Cultural Center), in October 2006, the *Week of the Czech Theater* followed (organized in collaboration with the Czech Center in Bucharest and the Prague Theater Institute), in November 2007 took place the *Dutch Culture week* (organized in collaboration with the Netherlands Theater Institute in Amsterdam and the Embassy of Netherlands), in October 2008, took place the *Days of the Polish Theater* (organized in collaboration with the Polish Institute in Bucharest), and in October 2009 were held the *Days of the Israeli Theater* (in collaboration with the Embassy of Israel) (Odeon Theater, 2011c).

- The originality and unconventional programs constitute a competitive advantage for Odeon Theatre.

In table 2 we'll use the conceptual definition (concrete explanation of variables) and operational definition (alternatives that can characterize these variables):

Table 2. Defining the variables

No. item	Name of the variable	Conceptual definition	Operational definition
1.	Frequency of participation in Theatre	How often do respondents go to the Theatre in an year	<input type="checkbox"/> several times a month; <input type="checkbox"/> several times a year; <input type="checkbox"/> once a year; <input type="checkbox"/> every few years; <input type="checkbox"/> this is the first time.
2.	The most attended Theatre institution	The Theatre institution most attended by the respondents	<input type="checkbox"/> Odeon Theatre <input type="checkbox"/> Bucharest National Theatre <input type="checkbox"/> Nottara Theatre <input type="checkbox"/> Bulandra Theatre <input type="checkbox"/> Comedy Theatre <input type="checkbox"/> "Constantin Tănase" Variety Theatre <input type="checkbox"/> Hebrew State Theatre <input type="checkbox"/> The Very Little Theatre <input type="checkbox"/> Metropolis Theatre <input type="checkbox"/> Small Theatre <input type="checkbox"/> Act Theatre <input type="checkbox"/> Others. Which?
3.	Information resources	The main information resources regarding Theatres' performances, in general, and concerning Odeon Theatre, in particular.	<input type="checkbox"/> Street posters/Flyers; <input type="checkbox"/> General information guides (24 FUN, 7 Nights, Days and Nights etc.); <input type="checkbox"/> Internet; <input type="checkbox"/> Mass Media; <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendations of friends and acquaintances <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural programs <input type="checkbox"/> Directly from the Theatre (from the Theatre's ticket booths or by phone); <input type="checkbox"/> Others. Which?
4.	Obstacles	What factors prevent, in general, respondents to come to the Theatre	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of time <input type="checkbox"/> Ticket availability <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of performance <input type="checkbox"/> Parking <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of acting <input type="checkbox"/> Ticket price <input type="checkbox"/> The services provided by the staff <input type="checkbox"/> Others. Which?

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5.	Respondents' preferences	What exactly do the respondents prefer in terms of cultural-artistic	
5.1.	The type of play	Preferences in terms of type of play	<input type="checkbox"/> Comedy; <input type="checkbox"/> Drama; <input type="checkbox"/> Both
5.2.	Epoch	Preferences in terms of the of a play's period	<input type="checkbox"/> Classic; <input type="checkbox"/> Contemporary; <input type="checkbox"/> Both
5.3.	The approached subject (s)	The preferred subject (s) approached in theatrical plays	<input type="checkbox"/> Mundane plays; <input type="checkbox"/> Plays with unusual subjects; <input type="checkbox"/> Both
5.4.	Author(s)	Favorite authors of theatrical plays	<input type="checkbox"/> Romanian authors; <input type="checkbox"/> Foreigner authors' <input type="checkbox"/> It doesn't matter/both
5.5.	Public involvement	Preferences regarding the degree of public involvement in the performance	<input type="checkbox"/> Plays in which the public is not involved; <input type="checkbox"/> Plays in which the public is involved; <input type="checkbox"/> Both
6.	Elements of the play	Giving grades (on a scale 1-5, where 1- is the least important and 5- is the most important) to the essential elements of the play	<input type="checkbox"/> Title ... <input type="checkbox"/> Author ... <input type="checkbox"/> Actors ... <input type="checkbox"/> Director... <input type="checkbox"/> Decors, costumes ... <input type="checkbox"/> Subject ...
7.	Inappropriate elements in a play	Elements from the theatrical performances that don't match the taste of the respondents	<input type="checkbox"/> Eroticism <input type="checkbox"/> Violence <input type="checkbox"/> Atheism <input type="checkbox"/> Filth poverty <input type="checkbox"/> Street language <input type="checkbox"/> Something else. What?
8.	Matinee	Identifying the respondents' interest on organizing matinee	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
9.	The respondents' satisfaction regarding Odeon Theatre performances	Giving grades to certain performance elements, of Odeon Theatre, using grades between 1-5 (where 1- is extremely unsatisfied and 5- very satisfied).	<input type="checkbox"/> Plays ... <input type="checkbox"/> Actors... <input type="checkbox"/> Miss an scene ... <input type="checkbox"/> Decor ... <input type="checkbox"/> Atmosphere ... <input type="checkbox"/> Theatre staff ... <input type="checkbox"/> Ticket price... <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation (Experimental Theatre, Unconventional miss en scene etc.) ...

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10.	Degree of satisfaction towards Odeon Theatre services	The respondents opinion regarding the degree of satisfaction towards the Odeon Theatre services	<input type="checkbox"/> Very unsatisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Pleased <input type="checkbox"/> Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Don't want to answer
11.	The age of the respondent	Identifying the age of the respondent	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 18 <input type="checkbox"/> 19-24 <input type="checkbox"/> 25-34 <input type="checkbox"/> 35-44 <input type="checkbox"/> 45-54 <input type="checkbox"/> 55-64 <input type="checkbox"/> over 65
12.	The studies of the respondent	Identifying what's the last type of education graduated by the respondent	<input type="checkbox"/> Secondary school; <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational school; <input type="checkbox"/> High-school; <input type="checkbox"/> Post high-school; <input type="checkbox"/> Higher education (University); <input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate studies
13.	Occupation	Identifying the occupation of the respondents	<input type="checkbox"/> student; <input type="checkbox"/> unqualified laborer; <input type="checkbox"/> qualified laborer; <input type="checkbox"/> unemployed; <input type="checkbox"/> retired; <input type="checkbox"/> housewife; <input type="checkbox"/> entrepreneur; <input type="checkbox"/> intellectual activities; <input type="checkbox"/> occupation that requires average studies; <input type="checkbox"/> Other occupation...
14.	Monthly revenue	Identifying the monthly revenue of the respondent	<input type="checkbox"/> less than 300 Ron; <input type="checkbox"/> between 301-700 Ron; <input type="checkbox"/> between 701-1000 Ron; <input type="checkbox"/> between 1001-1500 Ron; <input type="checkbox"/> between 1501-2500 Ron; <input type="checkbox"/> over 2500 Ron
15.	Sex	Identifying the sex of the respondent	<input type="checkbox"/> Masculine; <input type="checkbox"/> Feminine.
16.	Marital status	Identifying the marital status of the respondent	<input type="checkbox"/> Married; <input type="checkbox"/> Unmarried; <input type="checkbox"/> Widow

C. Research method

For this study it has been used a non-probabilistic sample, and the respondents were selected based on the interest and willingness to participate in the study and fill in the survey.

The proposed research sample was 103 respondents.

The research method used was based on **questionnaire survey**. Regarding this method, literature and marketing research consider the questionnaire to be the most important and commonly used tool for collect necessary pieces of information for market-prospection (Ilie, 2004, p. 2). Of course, there are other reference tools, such as: benchmarking, with the help of which cultural services can run and manage a large part of the applications and services' data that they need (Abăluță, 2006).

Questionnaire (20 questions) was completed by respondents, inside the Theatre (in the show room or foyer), before, during the break and after the performance. It was divided into three sections:

1. *The first section* (had 6 questions) has identified the socio-demographic variables related to age, sex, education, income, marital status and occupation of respondents.

2. *The second section* (had 4 questions) was focused on the general consumption of Theatre (the frequency with which the respondents go to the Theatre in general), the most attended Theatre institution in Bucharest, the main information resources regarding Theatre in general, and concerning Odeon Theatre, in particular, and also the factors that prevent, in general, respondents to come to the Theatre.

3. *The third section* contained 10 questions focused on obtaining information about the respondents' preferences in terms of culture and art (subject of plays, authors of plays, public involvement, literary species, etc.), identifying inappropriate elements within the plays, the respondents' satisfaction concerning the Odeon Theatre performances (plays, actors, scenery, costumes, directing, etc.), the degree of satisfaction with the services provided by the Odeon Theatre.

2.2 The results of the research

The results of the undertaken research are the following:

- Theatre audience consists of adults (33.01% - between the age of 35 and 54) that go to the theatre often and relatively constant, and also young people (27.18%⁸);
- Slightly above 40% of the Odeon Theatre viewers, who have been interviewed, represent a loyal audience of the Theatre;
- The female audience represents 69.90% of the people who go to the theatre. They have higher education, and have as main occupational status

⁸ In this category, we included children and teenagers (under 18), the group of very young persons (19-24 years) and the group of young persons (25-34 years).

intellectual activities. For all age groups, female audience has a higher share than men, the latter don't exceed 50% at any age category (the highest percentage is attained at the age category of 65 years (44%), and the lowest percentage (18%) is found in the category under 18 years). Regarding the current occupation of respondents, the highest percentages are represented by the persons who have intellectual occupations (24.27%) and the category of students (22.33%);

- The most attended theatrical institution by respondents is the National Theatre Bucharest (50.48%), followed by the Odeon Theatre (33.98%), Nottara Theatre (5.82%), Bulandra Theatre (5.82%), Comedy Theatre (1.94%), "Constantin Tanase" Variety Theatre (0.97%) and Act Theatre (0.97%).

- Obtaining information on the theatrical plays to be viewed is achieved mainly via the Internet (36.89%). For 22.33% of respondents, general information guides (such 24Fun, 7 Nights or "Days and Nights") is the main source of information, and 17.47% of respondents obtained this information through cultural programs;

- The reasons most often mentioned as the inability of respondents to participate to Theatre performances are: lack of time (47.57%) and lack of tickets availability to the most successful performances (44%). The acting quality of the actors is the least mentioned reason for non-participation (1%), this can be interpreted as a proof of satisfaction of the public with the performances in Bucharest;

- When choosing a theatrical play, the most important element is the actors (48%), and the way the play is promoted (45%);

- Depending on the type of play, most subjects are neutral. Thus, 56.31% of respondents prefer classic and contemporary plays, 46.6% prefer both dramas and comedies; regarding the approached subjects, 61.16% of respondents prefer both the mundane plays and the plays with unusual subjects, 60.19% had no preference regarding the nationality of authors; 67.96% of respondents prefer to see, over time, performances where the public is involved in the play, as well as performances where the public is not involved in the play;

- As a mean of expression in a play, the most disturbing elements are atheism and violence (42.71% and respectively 22.33%), and the least disturbing are the eroticism elements (7.76 %);

- The possibility of organizing matinee was encouraged only by 26% of all respondents, while the others have opted for the current program;

- The quality of the services provided by the Odeon Theatre is expressed by the viewers with grades awarded using a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 is the grade for "Extremely dissatisfied" and 5 for "very satisfied"). Thus, the spectators have declared that they are very satisfied, firstly with the actors, following the plays and staff. It should be noted that the element that generates the greatest dissatisfaction among viewers is the ticket price;

- The overall rating given to Odeon Theatre, by the respondents of the questionnaire, is "satisfied" (52.42%).

Conclusions

The comparative analysis of the results of the survey, from 2002, to the one presented in this paper, shows that Odeon Theatre has preserved, in general, the characteristics of the target audience, taking into account an increased position in terms of "market share" and audience loyalty. The Theatre identifies itself through the quality of plays and the value of actors, and is not perceived as a Theatre focused on a certain dramatic genre. The study has also highlighted an apparent contradiction: viewers consider price an impediment to choose a play, while the lack of availability of tickets is a frequent reason of criticism. This can be explained by the relationship between supply and demand, meaning that the price is close to optimal market. The viewers look the "product" and pay the price. However, they have the perception that the price growth would determine them to give up the purchase. Finally, it must be mentioned that promotion via the Internet tends to be, in this field, a decisive factor in the competitive struggle.

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