

## TOURISM AND ITS CHARISMA

**Abstract:** The tourism industry creates and offers products that are among the main ones in the Information Society. This report looks at some aspects of tourism in this community and its associated Virtual Space. Attempts have been made to determine charisma as a compelling attraction or charm, inspiring loyalty among consumers. The factors that bring out the special and magnetic charm of charisma are examined. It shows how captivating tourists can be achieved through empathy, demonstrating hearing and maintaining visual contact. The structure of social organizations and policies of humanization are examined, which multiplies the effect of influence.

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**T**ourism is among the most dynamically developing sector of economics in the modern world. Key activities, among which the progress of infrastructure, transport, construction, retail and many more, are seriously influenced. The tourism industry creates and offers products, which are basic to the modern Information Society.

Simultaneously, the modern tourism industry has become increasingly more dependent on using advanced information technologies and their corresponding applications. It no longer sounds incredible to suggest that tourism this century could exist without the internet. Communication and information technologies are among the fundamental factors of tourism as an industry. The creation and distribution of information, which is not only at the basis of branding, but also on mutual economy, has a decisive influence on the progress of contemporary society. A specific aspect of tourism, including the Information Society and its correlated Virtual Space, are the reputation and charisma of tourist products.

In 2018, visiting Santorini, I found a restaurant called Charisma, which made me ask myself the question – how is it possible to build charisma for a tourist attraction? In its own site, the restaurant is presented as an outdoor food place, offering an eclectic combination of the freshest local ingredients on its menu. Charisma is inviting its guests to enjoy a relaxing atmosphere, the panoramic view from the infinity pool and the ocean beyond, and its exquisite dishes. [9]

One way of approaching this question is to take the view of some popular television programmes by asking the question: What is Charisma? The probability of getting a relatively true and unambiguous answer tends to zero. It is also quite possible that almost all answers will be related with personal charisma.

If we look at the etymology of the term charisma, we will find the following:

- In Ancient Greece, the word Charisma meant favour or gift;

- In the Middle Ages (in a Christian context), the term was related with the gift or the authority given by the Holy Spirit for the good of the Church;
- The modern meaning of the term Charisma began to be used by sociologist Max Weber.

In terms of accuracy, we can use the definition of Charisma given to us by the Merriam-Webster dictionary created at the beginning of the 19th century. It is defined as a personal magic that evokes particular loyalty or an enthusiasm for a social figure, organization, or idea. [10]

The purpose of this report is to try to determine what Charisma is within the tourism sector and why it is an important factor in this field. When we talk about tourism in general, its Charisma can be characterized as:

- Charm;
- Magnetic attraction;
- A tool for influencing a certain type of audience.

For our purpose, we will accept that charisma in the field of tourism is a compelling attraction or charm that can inspire loyalty among users of a service. At the same time, it is likely that each of us could provide numerous examples of tourist destinations, accommodations, or dining venues that do (not) possess Charisma.

We have already mentioned that the current meaning of the term charisma was defined by Max Weber. He did it in his work *The Law on Economy and Society*, published in 1921, where he hypothesised charismatic authority as a form of power different from the existing tradition or imposed by law. The process itself in which charismatic power is transformed into other forms of power (for example, governmental or administrative) is called by Weber the routine of Charisma.

When it comes to Charisma, people perceive it as a given or mysterious quality – you either possess it or you do not. However, there are numerous key factors that can create Charisma.

In the field of tourism, the special and magnetic charm of Charisma is related to the following factors:

- Pleasant exterior and interior of a given destination or object. Demonstrating positive qualities and related experiences, however, should not border on the insane, and even sometimes arrogant and comical self-confidence;
- Creating an optimistic mood regarding the experiences offered;
- Offering more smiles and suppressing any possible discontent. Support staff should also avoid the lack of feelings and, where possible, display a rich and expressive vocabulary, combined with a friendly and sensual voice.

The factors listed here are of high importance, but they should not be construed as limitations on attempts to describe Charisma in detail.

It should be noted that tourist magnetism does not focus on the distant future and it can be even more difficult to connect it to sending numerous texts using a smartphone. This magnetism is only related to the present moment and is largely about *face-to-face* interaction. In order to captivate the tourists essentially one must engage in sympathy, demonstrate hearing and maintain visual contact.

In fact, tourist destinations, by means of their charisma, can have a special power - let's think about the magnetic sunset of Santorini, the romance of Paris, or the beautiful idyll of the Mediterranean. However, the main fundamental strength of the *tourism's charisma* is probably hidden in the effect it has on all people. Through it, groups of zealous followers (and voluntary unpaid advertising agents) can be formed and united in order to pursue specific aims. These collective efforts give that intangible meaning to the tourism product, which cannot be touched and is only in the minds of people. This does not mean that Charisma is the only magic we need in the tourism industry. If a destination lacks other

important factors or skills of the attending staff, then the power of charm can be redirected in the wrong direction.

However, let us not forget that Charisma is not equivalent to perfection. Sometimes it should also be particularly helpful to pay attention to some of the minor shortcomings that may indicate a *more human* perception of the services offered. From personal experience it has found that a certain *vulnerability* of a service *humanizes* it to some extent. As a result of such humanization, the effect of the influence exerted on a possible group of consumers is multiplied. When we acknowledge a weakness, our audience builds a stronger bond with us and accepts us as more pleasant. My advice is that sometimes one can take advantage of his or her imperfections. We should not make excessive efforts to be perfect, impressive or superior, because, as Michel de Montaigne [2] says in his *Essais*: “an arrow that exceeds the destination is worth as much as an arrow that does not reach it.” True charismatic influence is a consequence of authenticity, vulnerability and honesty.

Too often, when communicating, we focus entirely on words - whether in emails or conversations. However, most of our communication is non-verbal and is related to how we support what we say. Non-verbal communication accounts for over 60 percent of our communication skills. This requires a sense of calm and confidence to win over our audience.

How can this be done in the field of tourism?

One of the easiest and most significant ways to demonstrate Charisma can be to persuade the audience that we are a hard to beat factor in the world, both in terms of location and the services offered. From a local lay out, this could mean owning and offering the highest point that connects to the destination itself. On the other hand, in the purely human factor, Charisma is related to the confidence and power of the human gaze. This means maintaining continuous direct visual contact with the people with whom we are interacting – regardless whether we are talking to them or they are talking to us. However, all this must be combined with a show of respect for the other side.

This demonstration of confidence is directly related to the meaning we give to things. Confidence, on the other hand, is a direct consequence of frequently repeated actions. When a person knows the meaning of his actions and how they contribute to the common end, he or she confirms their charismatic expression. This leads to the conclusion that those just starting in the travel industry have a lower degree of Charisma than those who have more practical experience or work in organizations with a well-established reputation.

Persuasiveness is an important factor in gaining confidence and enhances motivation to perform one's job. This requires that the employees in the tourism industry be periodically reminded of their individual importance and significant value. Continuous criticism is unlikely to be helpful for a better job. If you are stressed in social conditions, you may suffer from social anxiety. The wrong approach is to generate social anxiety and tension both in the tourism industry employees and in the tourists themselves.

What are the aspects of Charisma as regards to social structures?

According to Max Weber [8], the distinctive and stable arrangement of the institutions in which human beings interact and live together in a society forms, lays the foundations of the basis of social structures. These structures are often tied to the concept of social change and to the forces that transform public organization. In their turn, tourist trips lead not only to the exchange and absorption of data, but also to social change, based on the information received and realized.

However, the widespread understanding that social structures are similar to the patterns of social life, their practice can hardly be called consistent. Sometimes there are concepts that are misused on the basis of cultural differences such as customs, traditions or social norms.

Tourist trips can lead to curious studies of social structures in the destinations visited, which can grow into an attempt to explain global issues related to social integration or trends in contemporary inequality. All this can lead to certain attitudes towards the reputation of both individual countries and regions, as well as the reputation of individual organizations in the tourism industry. The very approaches that explore individual social organizations and social categories (such as age groups) are sometimes called formal sociology and do not directly relate to individual behaviour or interpersonal interaction. The reputation of tourism structures itself is linked to an overly abstract analysis based largely on empirical research approaches.

Organizational structures, especially in the field of tourism, are too often dependent on diverse social and cultural relationships, which sometimes turns them into too abstract concepts. All this leads to difficulties in building their Charisma. The reason for this is that small structures and small groups are more closely related to their daily activities. When examining larger organizational structures and social groups, the problem arises of what is included as their components. This leads to the existence of various theories offering dissimilar solutions for determining their basic characteristics.

However, without discussing these different theoretical perspectives in detail, the general aspects of tourism structures in different geographical and social regions can be addressed. When considering the action of these structures, their changes must be taken into account, both in time and in space. Specific tourist activities are carried out at a fixed time, which is divided into periods that are related to the rhythms of social life. This has a serious impact on the building of the appropriate Charisma, which attracts not only tourists but also employees in the relevant structure.

When considering the issue of Charisma in the field of tourism, we can metaphorically examine its construction. The reason for such a metaphor is that when the economic structure is discussed, its real basis is on a certain legal determination that corresponds to certain forms of social consciousness. These structures, regardless of their economic or material basis, have a serious impact on the intangible spiritual part of social life.

In the end of 19th and early 20th centuries, scientists such as Herbert Spencer [3] and Emile Durkheim [1] viewed society as a system of interconnected and interacting elements similar to the anatomy of a living body. Although scientists like them do not agree with the basic concept of social structure, there are common elements between the various definitions. In a general sense, organizational structures are identified by societal characteristics that are not only interconnected but also affects the functioning of both the entity as a whole and its individual members. All this leads to the conclusion that the individual behaviour of a person is shaped by influential external forces. It is this idea that is embedded in the analyses of the anthropologist George P. Murdoch [4] in his study of kinship systems in archaic societies. Through social structures, he classifies, compares and collates different aspects of social systems.

As a consequence of the above considerations, we can draw the following three conclusions:

- Relations between individuals are formed, which not only are not arbitrary and accidental, but also exhibit some regularity and continuity;
- The actions of tourists and their social life are not chaotic, but differentiates into specific groups and interests that are interdependent or functionally connected;
- The particular choice of individual tourists is limited and shaped both by their social environment and by the charisma of the individual sites and their associated attractions, which are not always a direct result of the desires and intentions of the person.

Tourist structures and their Charisma suggest that the individual is not completely free and autonomous in his choices and actions.

Within the broad framework of these and other common features of human society and the tourism industry, there is a huge variety of forms of communication between and within different groups of people. Our conclusion is that the Charisma of the tourism industry is organized on basic feelings - perceptions, appearance, sounds, aromas and touches. These feelings have irreplaceable functions. Their existence depends on all participants in the communication processes and can be considered as integrated elements of an organic integrality. It is the interdependence of the elements that shapes and regulates the Charisma of tourism that we adopt as a large and complex system. The social behaviour of employees in this field must be consistent with the norms, values and rules that guide their behaviour in specific situations. Such types of behaviour vary depending on the positions of individual participants, determining their different roles.

Behavioural roles, in the sphere of tourism, and all components of tourism structures, involving different levels of complexity are the basis in the construction of its institutionalization but also the basis in the construction of its Charisma.

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