
Tourist Activities and the Impact on Local and Regional Development

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Abstract:

Purpose: The purpose of the article is to assess the impact of the National Festival of Dance Music (OFMT) on the recognition and tourist attraction of Ostróda. The focus is on understanding the festival's influence on the local community and the region's overall recognition and tourist attractiveness.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The research utilized a survey and an interview. The survey, conducted during the first day of the festival in 2018, targeted 100 OFMT participants and included questions about tourist attractions, motives for attendance, accommodation, and perceptions of the festival's impact. An in-depth interview with Robert Klatt, the organizer, was also conducted in 2018.

Findings: The OFMT significantly influences Ostróda's recognition and tourist attractiveness. Participants, mainly from Warmińsko-Mazurskie and neighbouring regions, associated Ostróda with relaxation, the OFMT, and the Ostróda-Elbląg Canal. Surveyed attendees positively evaluated the festival's promotion, choice of artists, information services, security, cleanliness, location, and food outlets. The festival attracted diverse age groups, with most attendees in the 26-35 age range, and the majority were employed. Social media, particularly Facebook, was the most effective form of promotion.

Practical Implications: The OFMT positively impacts the integration of residents with tourists. Respondents indicated that the festival creates a modern image of Ostróda, influences its recognition, and contributes to the region's tourist development. The festival's positive influence on the Ostróda Municipality extends to various aspects, including accommodation, food and beverage facilities, transportation accessibility, and cultural/recreational/entertainment facilities.

Originality/Value: The study provides insights into the specific impact of a dance music festival on a local community's recognition and tourist appeal. It highlights the festival's role in shaping the modern image of Ostróda and fostering community integration.

Keywords: Cultural tourism, music festivals, event tourism, regional development.

JEL codes: Z33, L83.

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1. Introduction

A tourist product such as an event influences the image of an area and affects the increase of tourist traffic in the region. Cultural, entertainment and sports events influence the development of cultural tourism. Among the forms of cultural events are the following, musical events, which include festivals. The National Festival of Dance Music (OFMT) in Ostróda promotes disco polo and dance music.

Disco polo music was originally called sidewalk or backyard music. The above nomenclature is related to its initial dissemination, as cassettes were sold in sidewalk markets and on the streets from which its sounds resounded. A turning point in the history of disco polo was the establishment of the Blue Star company founded by S. Skret. It was the first label in Poland to record disco polo music on cassettes and records.

The owner of the company and the artists were looking for an alternative name for the genre of music they performed. In 1993, S. Skreća came up with the name disco polo, which was a reference to the Italo Disco genre (<https://www.eska.pl/news/disco-polo-nazwa-skad-sie-wziela-i-kto-ja-wymyslil-aa-fyKU-VpZF-57Wr.html>). Disco polo is light and simple music that allows the recipient to get away from everyday life and enter the world of dreams. The rhythms of this genre promote carefree fun and dancing.

2. Literature Review

Tourism has a profound and multifaceted impact on local and regional development (Calero and Turner, 2020; Nunna and Banerjee, 2022). A tourism product such as an event can either function as an independent product or be part of a tourism package. An event in tourism terms is defined as "a planned and organized event (or set of events), integrating simple products and tourist values, aimed at achieving benefits in the psychological, social and economic spheres" (Kaczmarek *et al.*, 2010). It is characterized by such features as (Kaczmarek *et al.*, 2010):

- high thematic and organizational coherence,
- specific location in time and space,
- uncommonness, uniqueness,
- cyclicity.

Characteristic of events is that they are attended by a significant number of people, both locals and tourists. Hence, we can speak of event tourism. Events held in a

locality very often increase its tourist attractiveness and also affect the number of visitors. M. Marczak believes that through events a city's brand is also built, which is often later associated through the prism of a particular event (Marczak, 2015).

Cultural, entertainment and sports events also influence the development of cultural tourism in the region. P. Ratkowska states that tourists' trips to other cities and even countries, in following well-liked forms of entertainment, assuming that the primary purpose of the trip is to participate in a short-term organized event, often of a mass character, is called event tourism, which is one of the forms of cultural tourism (Ratkowska, 2010).

A collective work edited by W. Kurek characterizes event tourism as one of the forms of cognitive tourism. This type includes forms of tourism whose main motive is participation in events of a cultural nature, including festivals, and participation in events of the nature of parties and meetings combined with entertainment, fun and sports (Kurek, 2007).

L. Lyck defines a festival as "an organized set of special events on a specific man-made cultural theme, held on a specific day or period, usually in a specific place, bringing people together in mutual and direct contact with the festival theme" (Lyck, 2012).

In turn, T. Jędrysiak defines a festival as "a series of artistic events, usually of one type (e.g., film, music, theatre), being a review of achievements in a given field, organized at one time and under a common name, often framed as a competition" (Jędrysiak, 2008).

The characteristic feature of a festival is its uniqueness, uniqueness and even festivity of the event-both on the part of the organizers, the people participating in its implementation and the most loyal audience (Ratkowska, 2010). Festivals make cities more attractive and help to promote a better place to live, work and invest (Picard and Robinson, 2006).

Taking into account the criterion of types of festivals, one can distinguish musical, sports, recreational, spectacular, picnic, multimedia, installation, performing and other events (Iwan, 2017). The article will discuss music festivals in more detail using the example of The National Festival of Dance Music in Ostróda (OFMT).

Music festivals are events that include a series of music shows that are thematically or genre-related or represent a common trend or are a review of the work of a particular artist. They can take the form of a competition or review, be cyclical or one-time, and usually last at least two days (Falass, 1987; Cudny and Rouba, 2012; Gładysz and Wszendybył-Skulska, 2018).

There are many classifications of music festivals, they can be generally divided into events related to classical and contemporary music, or more specifically into specific types of music, such as, alternative music festival, country, pop, reggae, disco polo.

Organizing music festivals requires a great deal of commitment from all those who participate in its implementation. It also brings many benefits, including developing tourism, enriching people's lives, giving meaning to societies, enabling shared experiences between hosts and guests of individual events (Buczowska and Mikos, 2009), creating additional income, enabling cities and regions to promote themselves, and making their tourist offer more attractive (Cudny and Rouba, 2012).

Festival events can be a way to prevent the effects of seasonality and in some cases can extend the tourist season which has a positive impact on the economic situation of the localities or regions concerned (Getz and Page, 2016).

3. Methods

The assessment of the attractiveness of the OFMT organized in Ostróda was studied on the basis of a survey and an interview among festival participants during the first day of the festival. The aim was to understand the impact of the National Festival of Dance Music on the local community and the region as a whole in the context of recognition and tourist attractiveness of the Ostróda Municipality. The survey was administered to 100 OFMT participants.

The subject of the survey was to analyze the impact of the OFMT on the recognition and tourist attractiveness of the Ostróda Municipality. The questionnaire contained 19 questions that addressed issues related to the region's tourist attractions, accommodation facilities, motives for arrival, duration of stay, evaluation of the OFMT's promotional activities, evaluation of selected elements of the Municipality's tourist development, and evaluation of selected elements of the OFMT.

Additional questions in the questionnaire referred to gender, age, place of residence and occupational status. These questions were helpful in characterizing the participants. Men made up the largest group in the survey, as much as 59%, while the share of women among those surveyed was 41%.

Most respondents were of working age. Among this group, the age range of 26 to 35 years was the most numerous - 32%. People in the post-working age group accounted for a small percentage of the total.

The survey included 3% of those over 66 years of age. 65% of the respondents were employed, 23% of the survey participants were learners, of whom 15% were students and 8% were pupils. The percentage of pensioners and unemployed was 6% each.

Taking into account the place of residence, the largest group was from the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship, it was 29% of the total. From the neighbouring regions of Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship came 41% of respondents, followed by Pomorskie Voivodeship 15%, Mazowieckie Voivodeship 10%, Podlaskie Voivodeship 9%, Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship 7%.

The least number of OFMT participants came from the following voivodeships: podkarpackie (1%), świętokrzyskie (1%), małopolskie (1%), łódzkie (1%), lubuskie (1%) and zachodniopomorskie (1%). No respondents came from the Opole Voivodeship.

An in-depth interview was also conducted with Robert Klatt, the originator and organizer of the OFMT in Ostróda, on 16.09.2018. A purposive selection of individuals for the study was applied, taking into account the criterion of competence, knowledge and experience.

The interview was direct and partially structured. It consisted of 10 questions that dealt with aspects such as the establishment of the OFMT, the choice of location, the history of the OFMT and its evolution over the years, marketing as well as breakthroughs and challenges faced and still to be faced by the organizers.

4. Results and Discussion

The roots of OFMT, which was organized in Ostróda, go back to 1996. The first edition was organized in Koszalin and lasted one day. Subsequent festivals were already held in Ostróda until 2018 (the 23rd edition). In 2019, the OFMT venue was moved to Olsztyn. Then there was a break in the organization of the event due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2023, the organization of the OFMT was restored in a new location - Augustów. The idea to initiate this event arose due to the omission of the trend of disco polo music, including its representatives, among national music events.

The organizer and originator of the event is Robert Klatt. He is a well-known person in the world of music-he has performed as a TV presenter, co-founded the band Classic, and is a producer and artistic director of many projects.

According to information received during the interview, the creation of OFMT was a need of the moment. When Polish Radio stopped organizing a festival of this genre, it was necessary to create its own festival-an event that would be exclusively for disco polo music.

Creating a new event, unknown to anyone, requires a great deal of commitment to shaping the image of the festival and the venue. Ostróda was a city where the local government was willing to cooperate. The city supported the organization of the

OFMT financially and with marketing. A total of several hundred people work during the preparation of the event.

With the growing experience, the Festival began to develop, introduced, among other things:

- extending the duration of the event: from one to two days,
- the presence of an evening star, i.e., a band that is considered prestigious and recognized worldwide, such as: Thomas Anders of Modern Talking, C.C. Catch, Samantha Fox, Savage,
- a VIP area for artists and some event participants,
- an expanded stage, the event's lighting has been improved,
- a press office has been established.

Festival attendance is usually fifty thousand people. Planning for the next edition begins shortly after the current one is over. Preparatory work continues throughout the year.

Analyzing the information gained during the interview, it can be concluded that the OFMT in Ostróda is a tourist product with the character of an event. OFMT is recognized in Poland and internationally. When inviting evening stars from abroad, there is often a situation in which they are familiar with the event and want to participate.

Artists performing at the event recommend it to other bands through so-called "whisper marketing". In this way they also build the image and reputation of the OFMT. With the event's reputation established, certain things can be dictated, including performance rates. Artists' festival quotas differ from concert rates. The recognition of the OFMT among the public has a positive effect on the above prices.

62% of the surveyed festival participants came to Ostróda for more than one day. Among this group, respondents who came for two days accounted for 30% of the total. Almost one in five declared a stay of three to four days. An answer of more than four days was marked by 13% of the people surveyed. Only 16% of respondents were residents of Ostróda.

Among those who took part in the survey, more than 73% expressed a desire to stay overnight. When asked where they stayed, as many as $\frac{3}{4}$ of the respondents said they stayed overnight in the Ostróda Municipality and the rest stayed outside the Municipality. This means that participants of the event spend the money allocated for accommodation in the Municipality, thus increasing the revenue of local accommodation facilities.

Another important element of the survey concerned how to receive information regarding the organized OFMT. Respondents were given a choice of selecting up to

three answers out of eight: participated in previous editions, from work, from social media, from the radio, from family and friends, from a tourist information center, from a flyer at the accommodation, other.

The most effective form of promoting the event is social media, primarily Facebook, this answer was selected 54 times. The next most effective means of information is radio, which received 23 votes. Spreading the word about the Festival through friends and family was selected 21 times. Knowledge of the OFMT through participation in previous editions was selected 53 times. Polo TV appeared among the "other" responses.

44% of people participated in the OFMT for the first time, while participation in previous editions was declared by as many as 56% of respondents, which means that the OFMT has its loyal fans and its services are at a satisfactory level. This also influences the event's cyclical nature. For many respondents, the 23rd edition of the OFMT was the next one they attended. 20% of respondents indicated that they were attending the OFMT for the sixth time or more.

Respondents mostly came to the OFMT with friends, as many as 38%. In contrast, one in four respondents took their family or partner with them, highlighting the high level of security during the festival. 9% of respondents attended the Festival alone.

The various elements of the OFMT were evaluated by its participants: promotion of the event, invited artists, information services, security, cleanliness, hygiene and sanitary conditions, location, and food and retail outlets.

Referring to the promotion of the event, which includes advertising, promotional gadgets and posters, 80% of respondents rated it positively. 90% of respondents were satisfied with the choice of artists, including 48% who chose the highest rating. This means that the organizers are properly adapting the event program to the preferences of the participants. According to the people surveyed, the information services did their job well. 85% of respondents felt safe participating in the OFMT.

Attention to cleanliness during the event and the provision and maintenance of adequate hygiene and sanitary conditions were also noted by respondents. 60% of respondents positively evaluated the chosen location for the event. Respondents were also keen to use the available food and beverage outlets, rating their functioning at a high level.

Elements affecting the tourist attractiveness and recognition of Ostróda were also surveyed. Respondents answered questions about the main motives for arrival, associations related to Ostróda and tourist attractions in its area. In addition, they were asked to evaluate selected elements of the city's tourist development and also to assess the accuracy of several statements. Based on the analysis of the answers

given to the above questions, an assessment of the impact of the OFMT on the Ostróda Municipality was formulated.

When asked about the main reasons for coming to Ostróda this term, respondents most often indicated the OFMT (over 55%). The implication is that the OFMT is a hallmark of the city for every second person. The next reason was the desire to relax, which was indicated by more than 20% of respondents. Another popular answer was to visit family and relatives.

Motives such as active leisure, cognitive purposes and club events accounted for a minority of the choices. Associations related to Ostróda were also studied. Most visitors associate Ostróda with relaxation in nature, OFMT and the Ostróda-Elbląg Canal. Next with opportunities for active recreation and the boulevard. Cultural events, club events, historical monuments and sports events are a minority among the answers given.

As part of the survey at the OFMT in Ostróda, an analysis of the evaluation of selected elements of tourist development in the Ostróda Municipality was conducted. Participants in the event were asked to evaluate various aspects, such as accommodation, catering, transportation accessibility, sports, cultural, recreational and entertainment facilities, tourist information, rest areas, service facilities and tourist equipment rentals.

The largest group of participants are those who rated accommodation facilities as "very good" (35%) and "good" (29%). However, 20% of people had no clear opinion, suggesting that there is some room for improvement in this aspect, or indicated that accommodation was not used so it cannot be evaluated. The vast majority of participants (45%) rated the food and beverage facilities as "good", while 39% of people considered them "very good". These results indicate participants' satisfaction with the availability and quality of food in the festival area.

As with accommodations, participants were rather satisfied with transportation accessibility, with 35% rating it as "good" and 28% as "very good". However, 31% of respondents had a neutral opinion on the subject.

A significant proportion of those surveyed had no opinion with regard to sports, cultural, recreational and entertainment facilities. As for sports facilities, the majority of participants (32%) rated them as "good", while as many as 44% of people considered them "very good".

However, there is also a group of people (12%) who rated them as "bad" or "very bad". 40% of participants considered cultural facilities "very good", but at the same time 14% of people rated them as "bad" or "very bad". These results suggest some variation in the quality and availability of cultural facilities. Leisure and entertainment facilities were rated as "good" by 33% of respondents.

However, 23% rated them as "very good", while 13% considered them "neither bad nor good". This suggests that there is some room for improvement in these facilities. Almost half of the participants (41%) rated tourist information as "very good". However, 22% had a neutral opinion on the subject, which may mean that not everyone was satisfied with the availability of tourist information. Rest areas at the lake, biking and hiking trails were rated "very good" by 62% of respondents.

Only 2% of respondents answered "bad". Regarding tourist equipment rentals, 42% of respondents had no opinion, while 47% rated them positively. The service base, among which banks, police stations, hair salons, souvenir stores, etc. were listed, was "good" and "very good" for 63% of respondents, 31% of respondents had no opinion, 5% took a neutral stance and only 1% of respondents rated it negatively.

As a summary of this question, it should be noted that the answer to it aroused much controversy. The lower rating for cultural and recreational and entertainment facilities is related to the lack of an active swimming pool and a movie theatre. Respondents also mentioned the insufficient number of parking spaces and their poor marking, as well as long traffic jams in the city. This is related to increased traffic during organized events.

The OFMT in Ostróda, in addition to the musical experience and dance excitement, provides a unique opportunity for participants to discover the charms of the Ostróda Municipality as an attractive tourist destination. During the festival, tourists have the opportunity to explore the various tourist attractions that this picturesque lakeside town offers.

During their arrival in Ostróda, most respondents relaxed on the boulevard (23.40%) and visited sacred and historical sites (13.19%). More than 12% of respondents used hiking trails and 11.49% tried water sports. 11.06% opted to take the opportunity to cruise the Ostróda-Elbląg Canal, which is one of the few such facilities in the world. The same percentage of participants also marked the option of using club events. The option "other" was used as a synonym for the word none, i.e., 8.51% did not use any attractions.

Participants were also asked whether they planned to visit more attractions in addition to those they had already visited. Respondents most often expressed a desire to visit the boulevard on Drwęckie Lake. 15% of respondents declared a desire to relax there. This was followed by hiking trails with a score of 14.5%, swimming on the Ostróda-Elbląg Canal (14%), water sports on Lake Drwęckie (13%), visiting sacred and historic sites (12.5%), club events (11.5%), and bicycle trails (9%). "other" responses (10.5%) included a lack of desire to take advantage of other tourist assets.

Another important element of the survey was the response to a question relating to the degree of influence of the OFMT on the Municipality of Ostróda. 44% of

respondents indicated that the OFMT influences their opinion of Ostróda to a very high degree.

Another 20% of respondents believe the influence is high, 16% rate the degree of influence as medium, 7% as low, 8% say it has no influence and 5% of respondents have no opinion. This means that through the prism of participation in the OFMT, respondents subjectively evaluate the overall image of the city and their perceptions of it.

The last aspect that was studied was to assess the accuracy of six statements that related to the OFMT:

- OFMT creates a modern image of the Ostróda Municipality (true 93%, false 7%): the vast majority of respondents agree that the festival contributes to the creation of a modern image of the Ostróda Municipality, which may be key to attracting tourists seeking a modern and dynamic experience.
- OFMT influences the recognition of the Ostróda Municipality (true 99%, false 1%): an almost unanimous opinion among respondents confirms that the festival is key to increasing the recognition of the Ostróda Municipality, suggesting that the event plays an important role in promoting the region.
- OFMT has an impact on increasing the number of tourists in the region (true 93%, false 7%): similar to the first statement, the results indicate that the festival has a positive impact on tourism, which may translate into an increase in the number of visitors to the region.
- OFMT is a hallmark of the Ostróda Municipality (true 78%, false 22%): while the majority of respondents agree with this statement, there is a significant minority who are not convinced that the festival is a key mark of distinction for the region. This could be an area for further reflection on promoting the event.
- OFMT integrates residents with tourists (true 90%, false 10%): the results show that the festival plays an important role in integrating residents with tourists, which can be key to building strong community relationships with visitors.
- OFMT influences the development of the tourist base of the Ostróda Municipality (true 99%, false 1%): the virtually unanimous opinion of respondents confirms that the festival contributes to the development of the tourist base, which may be key to the long-term development of the region.

An analysis of the responses to the above statements confirms the key role of the OFMT as a generator of a modern image and increasing the recognition of the

Ostróda Municipality. The OFMT not only attracts tourists and integrates the local community, but also effectively supports the development of tourist infrastructure, cementing its position as one of the most important cultural events in the region.

5. Conclusions

The National Dance Music Festival is the main reason for coming to Ostróda for more than half of the respondents. Nearly three-quarters of respondents use accommodation during the Festival. Most among the respondents are in the 26-35 age range, and they are already working people. The event is mostly attended by people from the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship and its neighbouring regions, as well as from the area of the Wielkopolskie Voivodeship. Ostróda is associated with recreation in nature, the OFMT and the Ostróda-Elbląg Canal.

The OFMT is not the only attraction that visitors enjoyed. During their stay, they most often relaxed on the Drwęckie Lake boulevard, visited sacred and historical sites, enjoyed hiking trails, water sports, participated in club events and sailed on the unique Ostróda-Elbląg canal. More than two-fifths of the survey participants said it had a very strong influence on their opinion of Ostróda Municipality and one-fifth considered this influence as strong.

The OFMT, according to 78% of respondents, could be a hallmark for Ostróda. 90% of respondents felt that the OFMT has a positive impact on the integration of residents with tourists. 93% of respondents said that the OFMT creates a modern image of Ostróda and has an impact on increasing the number of tourists in the region. Most respondents, with the exception of 1%, indicated that the OFMT influences the recognition and development of the tourist base of Ostróda Municipality.

The National Festival of Dance Music raises awareness about the city and the region among target groups and strengthens its image. The event also increases the attractiveness of the area and attracts more tourists during the month of July. The increased number of tourists translates into more revenue, among other things.

The OFMT attracts the attention of national and foreign media, giving the city and region free publicity. It also has the effect of increasing the city's visibility among those not attending the event. Another benefit is the perception of the festival as a celebration of culture, which introduces a sense of uniqueness, uncommonness and transience. The above characteristics mobilize people to participate.

The organization of OFMT also influences the diversity of Ostróda's offer, encouraging people with different tastes and needs to take advantage of it. Another positive impact of the Festival on its participants is the opportunity to spend leisure time in the "company" of live music.

The event also supports up-and-coming and existing artists on the scene through their promotion or joint projects. During the Festival's decades-long run, many stars of the foreign music scene who had not yet been to Poland or had bad memories of Poland were invited.

These results can be valuable to local authorities and organizers of OFMT, helping them to better understand the expectations of participants and strive to continuously improve their tourism offer in the future.

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