



The Marketing Mix in Mountain Bike Sports Events in Mexico. The View of the Organisers

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ABSTRACT

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This article presents the opinions of mountain bike event organisers on the marketing mix generated by the different events, which will help us to detect areas of opportunity in the preparation of the sporting challenges. The analysis was carried out using a survey of twelve organisers from different municipalities in the state of Michoacán, where the minimum selection requirements were to have held the event for at least 5 consecutive years, to ensure continuity, and to have at least 400 participants in each one of the events, to subsequently analyse the answers through the experton theory, giving as a result what each of the questions asked represents for them, one of the findings was that the price is an important factor in the decision to participate in the events, while, in the same vein, the organisers are not satisfied with what is offered at the events.

1. INTRODUCTION

The present study was carried out using the fuzzy logic technique called "experton", which takes into account the opinions of various organisers of mountain biking events in the state of Michoacán, Mexico, since the treatment of uncertain data from the subjective knowledge of experts is now an important field [1], it is thanks to the process of expert aggregation based on this technique that we will obtain reliable information so that the values given are as close to reality as possible [2], where the most common way to reduce the entropy of an experton can be obtained by calculating the mathematical expectation of the probability set [3].

The globalization of sports has brought opportunities to destinations and in the quest to try to diminish the negative impact of the main reason reported by tourists for not visiting Mexico, insecurity problems, by using sports as part of the marketing mix [4], in our case, trying to promote mountain biking events in the State of Michoacán, analysing which of the indicators of the marketing mix should be reinforced to attract new participants according to their organizers.

In many ways, entrepreneurs sell an event as part of a place experience [5], since as each rider navigates the trail and its location, they are able to develop their own practice, while demonstrating to others the places visited with the mountain bike [6], in many occasions using different APPs such as Strava, Ciclogreen or MapMyRide, among many others, this is of vital importance since when traveling, cyclists choose places that particularly interest them [7].

Throughout history, companies have applied marketing in different ways, depending on the company's objectives and the

situation and environment [8], for the various mountain bike event entrepreneurs, being able to offer an adventure experience, the scenery and the location are not only intrinsic to their business offer, but are part of their very identity [5], requiring that advertising for the destination be incorporated into the event [9] and taking into account the general state of the economy, for its influence on the willingness of participants to attend [10], as the main motivation of the organisers is sport lifestyle oriented [11].

It is for these reasons that market research is necessary, since it is unavoidable to consider the resources and strategies of product, price, place and promotion, given that the main premise of marketing is: Know your customer [12], and the use of the marketing mix creates competitive advantage [13], each of the "ingredients" of the marketing mix must be considered, where no one single element can be considered in isolation, and this is the key to make events a success [14].

2. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Market research is the gathering, recording and analysis of all facts about problems related to the activities of individuals, companies and institutions in general [12], where each programme consists of two elements: a target market(s) and a marketing mix [13], it is the marketer's primary responsibility to achieve and maintain a marketing mix that provides the market with greater satisfaction than that offered by competitors [15], denoting that an effective marketing programme combines all elements of the marketing mix into a

coordinated programme, designed to achieve marketing objectives by delivering value to consumers [16].

The marketing mix is a classic tool that helps plan what to offer and how to offer customers [17], marketing mix models analyse information from a range of sources in order to accurately understand the effects of different marketing activities [18], being McCarthy and Perreault [19] those who classified the various marketing activities into marketing-mix tools by giving four main types, which they called the four Ps of marketing: product, price, place and promotion. These four instruments of the strategy must be integrated and coordinated in such a way as to achieve the organisation's objectives [20], as each function presents different opportunities, risks and requirements, events should be strategically incorporated into the destination's marketing plan [9].

Some of the main activities that can be developed with the 4 Ps are the following: Adapting the physical characteristics of the service to the market served, identifying and differentiating the brand, forming a portfolio of products and services, adjusting the price to the conditions of demand, among many others [21]. Certain actions defined in relation to the marketing mix will contribute to an increase in profits [22]. The simplicity that characterized all forms of sports practice a few decades ago contrasts with the sophistication and extraordinary relevance of sport in today's society [23], and one of the sports activities that communities are taking advantage of to attract tourists is cycling, because it is a thriving and growing tourism market [23].

Cycling is often seen as a useful means of reducing urban congestion and improving people's health, where its contribution to social and environmental outcomes is undeniable [24], this is why groups of entrepreneurs seeking to develop a business case for financing mountain bike tourism development are currently hampered by an incoherent body of empirical knowledge to competently articulate the size and economic value of the mountain bike tourism market [25] and as is often the case in surveys of outdoor recreation visitors, these visitors to forests and nature sites were primarily looking for the opportunity to be outdoors in a relaxing natural environment, escaping from their general routine [26], this is why the questions listed below in Table 1 were formulated.

Table 1. Instrument

Nomenclature	Question
pe1	For participants Is price a factor in deciding to attend an event?
pe2	Are the prices of the events appropriate to what is offered to the participant?
po1	Do you consider that the sporting events promote tourism in the locality visited?
po2	Are the events well organised?
pl1	Do you consider that the infrastructure for the various sporting events is adequate?
pl2	Are the access routes (roads) to the various events safe?
pr1	Is there adequate promotion of the sports events by the organisers?
pr2	Is the advertising of the events carried out with sufficient time?
pr3	Is the advertising of the events attractive?

Source: Own elaboration

In recent years, mountain tourism has been increasing its position among the preferences of tourists at international level, one of the main reasons being the strong relationship that

man has developed with nature and precisely with the mountains [27], one of the main concerns of event organisers is how events can be leveraged for repeat visits to the destination and to the event [28], In this way a city can achieve with its resources an influx of sport tourists distributed over time, transforming it into a flow of new money for the city [29].

3. METHOD

The mountain bike event organisers surveyed were selected from the different municipalities of the State of Michoacán, where the selection criteria were to meet two requirements: to have organised an event for at least 5 years to ensure continuity and to have had a minimum of 400 participants, obtaining 12 responses to the questionnaire, which was designed in google forms and sent electronically through a link in WhatsApp, all the experts selected were willing to participate in the survey, thus demonstrating the relevance and importance of the topic [30]. By using expertons in group decision-making problems, the information becomes more robust because it is evaluated by several experts and the analysis usually leads to better decisions [31], this methodology can facilitate decision making by obtaining qualitative data from a dialogue with various stakeholders [32].

The questions were made using an endecadary scale, it is worth mentioning that all the experts had the same weight in the evaluation [33], the content validity of the questionnaire was determined through the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the univariate analysis of the SPSS 25 statistical programme, giving us a result of 0.794, taking as a starting point the lower number of the confidence intervals of the survey; given that the result is higher than the recommended minimum of 0.7 [34, 35], we will take it as valid. As can be seen in Table 2, there is no significant variation if any of the survey items are removed from the survey, so all items are left in the research.

Table 2. Total element statistics

	Cronbach's Alpha If the Item Has Been Removed
pe1	.801
pe2	.731
po1	.721
po2	.826
pl1	.762
pl2	.798
pr1	.731
pr2	.794
pr3	.766

Source: Own elaboration in SPSS 25

Table 3. Endecadary scale

Degree	Meaning
0	Totally disagree
.1	Almost disagree
.2	Nearly disagree
.3	Rather disagree
.4	More disagree than agree
.5	Neither agree nor disagree
.6	More agree than disagree
.7	Rather agree
.8	Nearly agree
.9	Almost agree
1	Totally agree

Source: Adapted from Kaufmann [36]

Table 4. Relative frequencies

Scale	Price		Product				Place			Promotion								
	pe1	pe2	po1	po2	pl1	pl2	pr1	pr2	pr3									
0	.08	.08	.08	.08	0	0	.08	.08	.08	.08	.08	.08						
.10	0	0	.08	0	0	0	0	.08	0	.08	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
.20	0	0	0	.08	0	0	0	0	0	.08	.17	.08	0	0	0	0	.08	0
.30	0	0	0	0	.08	0	0	0	.08	0	0	.17	.08	0	.08	0	.08	.08
.40	0	0	.08	0	0	.08	0	0	.25	.08	.25	0	0	.08	0	.08	0	.08
.50	0	0	.08	.17	.08	0	.25	0	.17	.42	.33	.50	.08	.08	.08	.08	.17	0
.60	0	0	.17	0	0	.08	.08	.25	0	0	0	.08	.25	0	0	0	0	.17
.70	.25	0	.25	.17	0	0	.17	.08	.25	0	.08	0	.17	.25	.08	0	.33	0
.80	.08	.25	.17	.25	.17	0	.33	.25	.08	.25	0	.08	.08	.17	.42	.08	.17	.33
.90	.08	.08	0	.17	.08	.17	0	.25	0	.08	0	0	.08	.08	.08	.42	0	.17
1	.50	.58	.08	.08	.50	.58	.17	.17	0	0	0	0	.17	.25	.25	.33	.08	.08

Source: Adapted from Kaufmann [36]

The first step in constructing an experton is to provide an eleven-point semantic scale, as shown in Table 3, for rating a statement or assertion, including the lower and upper limits of the range [37-39], where "0" corresponded to strongly disagree and "10" to strongly agree, as the opinions obtained are usually elaborated on this scale [40], the expertons were elaborated with the help of an Excel spreadsheet.

4. RESULTS

The criteria of the experts involved in the process were transformed into values on a scale of 0 to 1, in decimal places, and then the first step in the calculation of the experts was to determine the frequencies of the ratings [41], where the absolute frequency tables are made in order to subsequently calculate the relative frequencies as shown in Table 4.

Table 5 shows the dimensions of the marketing mix, where we find that price is an important factor in participants' decision whether or not to attend an event pe1 [0.82;0.86], this is relevant since the monetary price is significantly associated with the loyalty to the destination of the sports participants [42]. However, there is a considerable decrease in what is offered to the participant for event registration pe2 [0.58;0.65], with these results obtained it is more interesting to observe the α -cuts of the experton and the results obtained in each one, as an example, in the α -cut (1.00) only 8% are totally satisfied with what was offered in the events, being until the α -cut (0.70) where we observe an increase in the satisfaction of the participant, who considers being slightly in agreement [0.50;0.67].

In mountain biking events, the aim is to promote tourism in the visited area, since the sport plays an important role in the formation of the image of a place [43], organizers consider that

the events do indeed promote tourism, as shown by the results obtained in po1 [0.78;0.82], being the opportunity to emphasise the physical aspects of the city [44], in relation to the organisation of the event po2 [0.73;0.80], we can mention that the organisers consider that the various sports events are well organised, so it is important that the sports events sector has guidelines and empirical knowledge about the characteristics of the events that can determine their performance [45].

In many ways, entrepreneurs sell an event as part of a place experience [5], in which moments and characteristics of the event are identified and related to the development of the place [46], as we can observe, regarding the infrastructure available for holding events pl1 [0.46;0.53], we found that the opinion of the organizers is that they do not have the necessary resources, either in facilities or services, to offer a higher quality event, in addition to the perception that the accesses or roads to the different events are unsafe, as can be seen in pl2 [0.37;0.43], which reflects the feeling of insecurity when traveling to the different destinations

In terms of event promotion, the use of advertising is known to be an important strategic element due to its intentional exposure effect on a potential consumer [47], mountain tourism is integrated for exchange through advertising, which appeals to people's desires [48], this can be observed in pr1 [0.64;0.71] and according to this result it is necessary to increase the way to promote participation in events, where advertising mountain bike challenges and destinations together, create the shaping of the destination image and travel intentions [49], as well as making advertising more attractive pr3 [0.58;0.66], integrating the event into destination communications and working with organizers to include the destination in advertisements and publicity [9], as there is sufficient time to do so pr2 [0.78;0.85].

Table 5. Cumulative complementary frequencies

Scale	Price		Product				Place			Promotion								
	pe1	pe2	po1	po2	pl1	pl2	pr1	pr2	pr3									
0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
.10	.92	.92	.92	.92	.92	.92	1	1	.92	.92	.92	.92	.92	1	1	.92	.92	
.20	.92	.92	.83	.92	.92	.92	1	1	.83	.92	.83	.92	.92	.92	1	1	.92	.92
.30	.92	.92	.83	.83	.92	.92	1	1	.83	.83	.67	.83	.92	.92	1	1	.83	.92
.40	.92	.92	.83	.83	.83	.92	1	1	.75	.83	.67	.67	.83	.92	.92	1	.75	.83
.50	.92	.92	.75	.83	.83	.83	1	1	.50	.75	.42	.67	.83	.83	.92	.92	.75	.75
.60	.92	.92	.67	.67	.75	.83	.75	1	.33	.33	.08	.17	.75	.75	.83	.83	.58	.75
.70	.92	.92	.50	.67	.75	.75	.67	.75	.33	.33	.08	.08	.50	.75	.83	.83	.58	.58
.80	.67	.92	.25	.50	.75	.75	.50	.67	.08	.33	.00	.08	.33	.50	.75	.83	.25	.58
.90	.58	.67	.08	.25	.58	.75	.17	.42	0	.08	.00	0	.25	.33	.33	.75	.08	.25
1	.50	.58	.08	.08	.50	.58	.17	.17	0	.00	.00	0	.17	.25	.25	.33	.08	.08
Sum	8.2	8.6	5.8	6.5	7.8	8.2	7.3	8.0	4.6	5.3	3.7	4.3	6.4	7.1	7.8	8.5	5.8	6.6
M.E.	.82	.86	.58	.65	.78	.82	.73	.80	.46	.53	.37	.43	.64	.71	.78	.85	.58	.66

Source: Own elaboration based on Gil Lafuente [49]

5. CONCLUSIONS

To date, scholars have made little effort to establish a descriptive understanding of the demand side of this market [50], this study has provided descriptive information on the views of mountain biking event organizers, where this information may be of paramount importance to policy makers, who should strive to be inclusive, integrative and holistic when developing and implementing a place branding strategy together with stakeholders [51], in this case with event organizers.

In marketing, the set of the 4 Ps is also known as the marketing mix, which is the complete offer that the organiser makes to its participants: a Product with its Price, its Place and its Promotion [15]. The marketing mix consists of everything the event organiser is able to do to influence demand for their product, combining all the elements of the marketing mix into a coordinated programme designed to achieve the objectives by delivering value to consumers [16], where event entrepreneurs must determine how best to shape their marketing mix to meet the needs of their participants [10]. When the four P's of the marketing mix are optimally designed, selling becomes less difficult as customers are attracted to the value propositions [17].

Among the results obtained, we found that price is an important factor in the decision to participate in the events, while, in the same vein, the organisers are not satisfied with what is offered at the events, quality issues (what is offered to the participant) with the absence of marketing activities and price issues can have a strong influence on the participants' decision-making process [52], where some tourist attractions or, as in our case, MTB events, try to reduce ticket prices to attract more customers, but soon realize that this is an unsuccessful strategy [53], all since the higher the expected satisfaction, the higher the price that can be charged [54] and consequently the profits obtained by the organization of the event. It is for the same reason that destinations should develop mountain bike tourism products with prices adapted to the income of the different age categories [50], taking special care in what is offered to participants, to ensure their loyalty to events held in the State of Michoacán.

The development of mountain bike tourism provides an opportunity to reflect on the role of long-term entrepreneurship [55], and with positive results in terms of the product, which most of them consider well organised, where many cyclists are likely to be highly involved and novelty seekers, making it clear that loyalty (repeat visits) can also be strong [56], and that tourism is promoted in the different venues where these events are held, opportunities to participate in other activities, along with access to restaurants and breweries, are decisive factors in mountain bikers' choice of destination [50].

In contrast with the results obtained in the variable Place, since the organisers disagree more than agree with the fact that there is adequate infrastructure for the holding of events, where more involved MTB event participants choose more events based on the attractiveness of the destination and not just their interest in its specific attributes [56], with landowners often being beneficiaries of the tourism generated by these events, as many of them run various businesses, resulting in a recognition and understanding of the benefits of expanding existing mountain biking infrastructure as well [30], as disagreeing with the safety of the access roads, the problem is that in a risk society immersed in a culture of fear and

insecurity in the face of hidden danger, people tend to turn to risk-free market events rather than try to go it alone on their own [57].

With an important point of improvement related to the attractiveness of the promotion, where the advertising of the destination includes mentions or images of the event, also suggesting attributes or advantages of the destination [9], since according to their answers, this is done adequately and with enough time for the participant to find out about it.

As this study was conducted in Mexico, with organisers of mountain biking events in Michoacán based on their perceptions, its conclusions cannot be generalised. Future research should investigate further in other destinations and different types of sports events [43], to demonstrate the adaptability of these methods using different contexts and events, as it is one of the first studies to use the "expertons" method for mountain bike event organisers on the marketing mix of the events they develop.

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