

## ***Study regarding Theatres' Role in Increasing Urban Competitiveness***

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**Abstract:** *The analysis of successful experiences in urban development shows that one important vector in increasing the popularity of a metropolis, so necessary in urban competition, is the "theatre-logo". "La Fenice" in Venice, Royal Theatre in Madrid, La Scala in Milan, "Globe" Theatre in London, Broadway the "Boulevard of theatres" in New-York, "Bolshoi" Theatre in Moscow are not only places of cultural production, but true symbols of the city, mandatory points on the numerous tourists' maps. For Romania, and especially for Bucharest, the "I.L. Caragiale" National Theatre represents a true national cultural brand, one of the main generators of the country's cultural image. In the current context of the restoration and its consolidation, the present study confirms that the National Theatre can become a complex centre, unique in its own way, demonstrating a versatile cultural vocation, and increasingly contributing to the strategic development of Bucharest, beyond its well-known performances.*

**Keywords:** *culture, cultural organizations, theatrical sector, competitive advantages, audience, theatre consumption, urban development, urban competition*

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

### **Introduction**

Currently, more and more cities around the world promote cultural organizations as a way to improve urban image, foster development, attract tourists and investors (Richards and Wilson, 2004; Tesu (Pasculescu), 2011, p. 196). This is due to the fact that over time, cultural organizations have become a key element in the urban competition, thanks to their big potential to bring significant local revenues, thus boosting the economies of cities. Also, many authors (Burlacu, 2011; Plumb et al., 2003, Zamfir, 2011) showed that in economically developed countries, measuring the quality of life in big cities cannot be achieved without taking into account the opportunities for culture, art, as well as creative and educational activities. Thus, cities with a strong cultural infrastructure are important epicentres that need to be taken into account by any urban and regional development program.

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The cultural sector includes institutions, spaces in which take place the cultural "elitist" activities (theatre, museums, exhibitions, opera, and operetta) and "mass" activities (cinemas, entertainment, concerts) (CRCC, 2010, p. 4). Referring to the culture industry, Toffler considers that there are "two types of cultural institutions: some is acting in the profitable area (book publishing business, the production of records) and others acting with the status of non-profit institutions (theatres, operas, museums etc.). From these two types of institutions, the non-profit ones are facing financial problems; they usually operate in deficit, while those operating in prosperous activity domains could be considered profitable" (Simandan, 2007). However, lately cultural organizations (profitable or not) have begun to compete with each other over the control of a limited market, being forced "to adapt their actions according to the strategies of their competitors and the pressures they put" (Barbu, 2011, p. 107).

According to the National Institute of Statistics, in 2010 and 2011 in Romania, "*the number of performance institutions* (theatres, performance companies, concerts, philharmonic and similar institutions) was 158, an increase of 1.3% since 2008" (INS, 2012, p 40). *The number of performances and concerts* during the period 2008-2011 was approximately 20,000, which is an increase compared to 2007 (5%), while the *number of viewers* has increased to two million in 2011 (compared with 2010) (INS, 2012, p 40).

## **1. The "I.L. Caragiale" National Theatre of Bucharest**

### *1.1. Mission, objectives and main activities*

The "I.L. Caragiale" National Theatre of Bucharest (NTB) is "a public cultural institution of national importance, with legal personality, *an institution that has a repertoire*, financed from its own revenues and subsidies from the state budget, which is subordinated to the Ministry of Culture" (NTB, 2010, p. 1).

NTB has as a "**main objective** *the promotion of cultural and artistic, local and universal values at national and international level*. In order to achieve this goal, NTB carries out the following **activities**:

- Organizes and performs its own plays or in collaboration with other authorities and institutions;
- Promotes the plays and texts that are representative of Romanian and universal drama, both classical and contemporary;
- Highlights the talent of artists as actors, directors and scenographers;
- Supports the debut of young artists and gets involved into educating youth through theatre;
- Creates or develops national and international cultural projects in areas related to theatre, in partnership with artists, NGOs, performance institutions, and other cultural institutions and similar structures from the country and abroad;

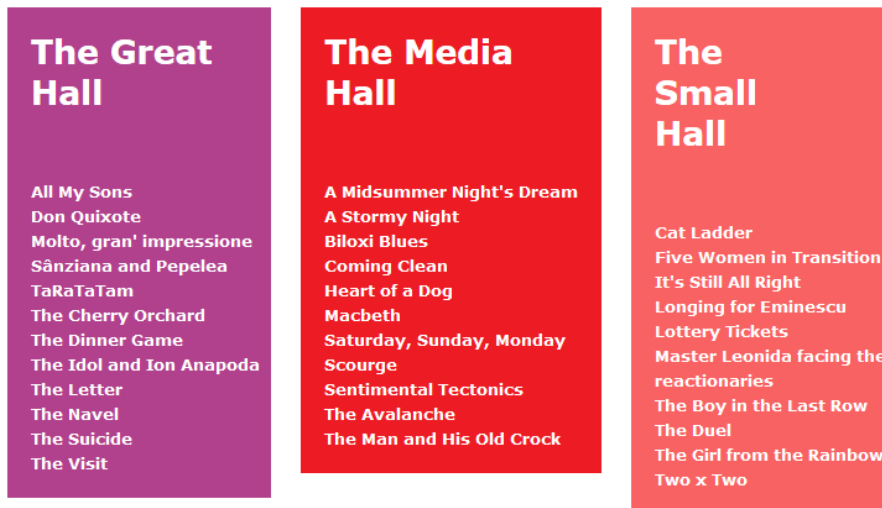
- Creates and publishes specific publications on any type of material, which can be marketed" (NTB, 2010, p. 2).

1.2. NTB marketing mix

**A. Product policy**

For the theatre, the cultural product is a live representation (plays) that requires a unique, unrepeatably performance (Zecheru, 2002, p. 150).

In the season 2012-2013, the NTB offer consisted of 33 plays (figure 1).



**Figure 1. NTB offer -Season2012-2013**

Source: [http://www.tnb.ro/index.php?page=spectacole2\\_en](http://www.tnb.ro/index.php?page=spectacole2_en)

Since 2005, the marketing and product policy found their place in the strategic dimension of the institution. Thus, took place:

- **New plays have been introduced.** As the main theatrical institution, NTB presents to the public:
  - Minimum 8 premières per season (NTB has released in 2012 nine new productions, including 5 plays during the "Caragiale Year");
  - At least 15 different titles per week from the Romanian and universal repertoire, classic and contemporary.
- **Existing plays have been modernized** – The performances "Take, Ianke and Cadâr", "A Midsummer Night's Dream", "Last Hour", "The Queen Mother" have been taken and played from the old repertoire, and have had a great success, thanks to the wonderful acting;

- *“Obsolete „performances have been eliminated–* The performances "Sunset," "Murder for earth", "tail", “The Passion of St. Thomas D'Aquino” were played as this was the order of the political authorities, which were attempting to highlight the plays of the management, and were withdrawn from stage.

**B. Sources of financing and pricing policy**

Although it is subsidized by the state, NTB has a free pricing policy. The competition and efficiency are the key points of this policy.


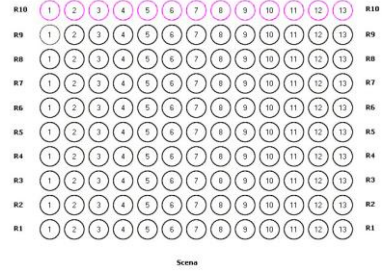
In a study conducted by the Cultural Communication Ltd in 2007, the NTB target audience was asked to evaluate the ticket prices, and the results showed the following:

- 7.5 RON – too cheap to be trustworthy;
- 12.4 RON – cheap;
- 33.85 RON – too expensive;
- 93.97 RON – very expensive;

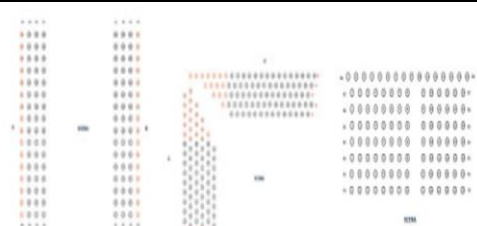
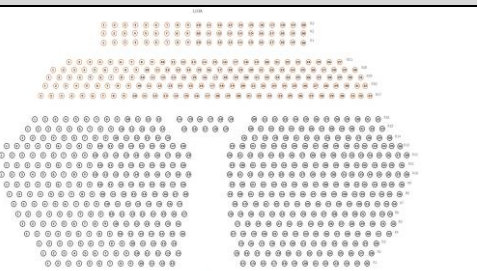
Therefore, the optimal price for the target audience is between 20 and 27.5 RON (Cultural Communication SRL, 2007, 35).

The prices of the performances are categorized according to the auditorium, but also by the category of place the spectator occupies (table 1).

**Table 1. Prices set by NTB in the 2012-2013 season according to the auditorium**

<p><b>The Great Hall (1.114 seats)</b></p> <p>The prices of the tickets range from 70 to 20 RON.</p> <p>In 2012, 126,384 tickets were issued that brought the theatre revenues of 2,346,584 RON.</p>	
<p><b>The Small Hall (130seats)</b></p> <p>The prices of the ticket prices range from 40 to 16 RON.</p> <p>In 2012, 6,458 tickets were issued that brought the theatre revenues of 136.951 RON.</p>	

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<b>The Media Hall (110seats)</b>	
<p>In 2012, 770 tickets were issued that brought the theatre revenues of 24.678 RON.</p>	
<b>Children's Palace (742seats)</b>	
<p>In 2012, the Children's Palace held four performances of NTB. 2,968 tickets were issued that brought the theatre revenues of 154 633 RON.</p> <p>The number of spectators was 2,607, while the occupancy rate was 87.8%.</p>	

*Source: official site data processing and activity reports*

For regular NTB performances, the tickets are available at the theatre ticket agency, which is visited by 3,500 people per week. Also, those interested can book tickets<sup>1</sup> for all the theatre's performances, except for the following plays: "Dinner with fools", "The Selfish", "The Suicide and The Cherry Orchard".

In the case of extraordinary performances, the prices vary between 100 and 50 RON. Also, the tickets can be purchased online on the following websites: [www.vreaubilet.ro](http://www.vreaubilet.ro), [http://www.biletelateatru.3x.ro/comenzi\\_biletelateatru.htm](http://www.biletelateatru.3x.ro/comenzi_biletelateatru.htm), [www.ticketstore.ro](http://www.ticketstore.ro), [www.blr.ro](http://www.blr.ro), [www.bilet.ro](http://www.bilet.ro).

### C. Distribution policy

The distribution is done *directly at the headquarters* from Bd. Nicolae Bălcescu no. 2, which represents the main distribution point (figure 2).

Currently NTB has available **three theatre halls**:

- **The Great Hall** (table 2), which will be closed in the fall of 2013. After renovation, the number of seats in the Great Hall will be reduced from 1114 to 900. The desire is to return to the intimate atmosphere of the performance halls of the 6<sup>th</sup> century from Italy.



**Figure 2. National Theatre Headquarters**

Source: <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/33051023>

**Table 2. Analyzing the use of Great Hall in 2012**

Shows	Performances	Tickets	Audience	Revenue (lei)	Hall occupancy index (%)
<i>Own</i>	117	119.834	84.837	2.191.040	70,8
<i>Invited</i>	12	6.550	3.539	155.544	54
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>126.384</b>	<b>88.376</b>	<b>2.346.584</b>	<b>70</b>

Source: NTB, 2013, p. 8

- **The Small Hall** (officially opened in October 2012) (table 3) "will host *experimental shows*, where the new generation of actors, directors and designers will practice their talent. For this reason, its walls and the 250 seats are actually mobile structures whose alignment can be changed according to the requirements of the performances" (Stanca, 2012).

**Table 3. Analyzing the use of Small Hall in 2012**

Shows	Performances	Tickets	Audience	Revenue (lei)	Hall occupancy index (%)
<i>Own</i>	58	6.198	4.739	132.275	76,4
<i>Invited</i>	2	260	101	4.676	38,8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>6.458</b>	<b>4.840</b>	<b>136.951</b>	<b>74,9</b>

Source: NTB, 2013, p. 8

- **The Medium Hall** (officially opened in November 2012, for the National Theatre Festival) (table 4). The room has padded walls, projectors and screens. Although it has a capacity of 200 seats, after the completion of the rehabilitation process, in this hall will no longer be played theatrical plays, but there will be held *concerts and conferences*. In the foyer of this hall runs the *exhibition space called The NTB Gallery*".

**Table 4. Analyzing the use of Media Hall in 2012**

Shows	Performances	Tickets	Audience	Revenue (lei)	Hall occupancy index (%)
<i>Own</i>	6	660	722	23.520	109,4
<i>Invited</i>	2	110	25	1.158	22,7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>757</b>	<b>24.678</b>	<b>98,3</b>

Source: NTB, 2013, p. 8

In 2013 there will be opened the halls *Painting* (297 seats) and *Studio* (596 seats), which can be arranged according to the needs of the performance, in the styles: arena, Elizabethan or Italian.

In 2012, NTB has held:

- 459 performances (in the main building);
- 54 performances in national (48)<sup>2</sup> and international<sup>3</sup> (6) (Budapest, Brussels, Paris and London) tours;
- 13 new conference titles (also, including 2 DVDs launches with the Conferences from the previous seasons).

#### **D. Promotion policy**

NTB is a true national cultural brand and is one of the main generators of the cultural image of Romania (NTB, 2010).

**NTB visual identity:**

- **NTB logo:** Immediately after the revolution, the artist Dan Perjovschi has hand drawn the logo (figure 3), which was resumed during the current director, Caramitru.



**Figure 3. Theatre's logo**

Source: <http://www.tnb.ro/>

- Through the **slogan** "A new Theatre for a new Audience", NTB aims to:
  - "Attract a younger and more numerous audience;
  - Create specific programs that target this type of audience;
  - Approach in a modern manner the classic repertoire and propose a new repertoire" (NTB, 2013, p. 7).

Over time, each NTB project has benefited from a series of **promotion actions**:

- **Mass-media:** in 2012, NTB has had 500 appearances in print and online; 74 appearances on radio; 63 appearances on TV (NTB, 2013, p. 6). The promotion was accomplished by:
  - Commercials/promotional videos (Ticket agency, TVR Cultural, TVR1, DigiTV);
  - Radio spots (Radio Romania);
  - Programs, reportages, interviews on radio and on national and commercial television (TVR Cultural, TVR 2, TVR 3, Antena 1, Antena 2, Prima TV, Radio Romania Cultural – the Espresso program etc.);
  - Promotional ads in magazines and specialized publications;
  - Ads in printed and online city guides (24-Fun, BeWhere, Time Out Bucharest, Seven nights);
  - Press releases press conferences.
- **Indoor and outdoor promotion** (figure 4) through posters and banners:



Figure 4. Promotional posters

Source: <http://www.tnb.ro/>

- Organizing **events** (celebrating the birthday of an actor, celebrating the longevity of a show etc.).
- Printing NTB **calendars and cards**.

The promotion campaigns in the media have resulted in an effective launch of the premieres, and therefore a notable presence of spectators at performances. By continuing and maximizing the results of the promotion through traditional means, NTB has strategically directed the promotion activity towards **unconventional tools** (internet and electronic media):



- **The NTB Newsletter** – was launched in 2008 and is sent on a weekly basis to 5000 subscribers;
- **The Website**([www.tnb.ro](http://www.tnb.ro)) (figure 5a) was created in 2007 and during 2012 has had 675.843 visitors, of which 353.603 unique visitors (according to Google Analytics);
- **The Facebook page** (figure 5b) was launched in September 9 and in April 2012, had 8.132 likes.



Figure 5. (a) Official Site of NTB and (b) Page on Facebook

Sources: <http://www.tnb.ro/> and <http://www.facebook.com/tnb.Ro>

- **The collaboration with the website B365** (creating a series of contests that had as prizes invitations to the NTB performances);

Also in 2012, NTB was, along with its traditional partners, the host for some of the most important **theatrical events** held in Romania: *the National Theatre Festival, the International Shakespeare Festival, the Flamenco Festival and the International Week of the New Music.*

## 2. Spectators

When it comes to theatres the customers are represented by the viewers / consumers of culture. A loyal spectator is the one that comes often to the performances of the NTB theatre during the theatrical season, and goes on rare occasions to other theatre companies.

In 2007, Cultural Communication SRL has conducted a study aimed at knowing the expectations of the NTB audience. According to the research, the NTB public is divided into:

a) **The loyal audience** of NTB, which has the following **characteristics**(Cultural Communication SRL, 2007, p. 36):

- Heterogeneous, mostly female, with a wide variation in income [young people with high income, elderly with low income (retired), young people with low income (students)];
- Increased education level;

- Uninterested in gossip;
- Uses new technologies;
- Lives in peri-urban areas from northern Bucharest;
- Young audiences (students, high-school students) and active audiences (25-60 years old).

b) *Potential public* of NTB, which has the following *characteristics* (NTB, 2013, p. 7):

- Goes seldom to the theatre;
- Mostly male, young and active (up to 50 years old);
- Married, educated, with low income.

Also, it was recorded that the NTB public has the following main motivations (Cultural Communication Ltd., 2007, p 33 and 36):

- the popularity of artists;
- the reputation of the performance;
- the repertoire and the uniqueness of the performances;
- the recommendations received from friends and family.

Less important in the decision to go to a NTB performance are the ads in the media, or the opportunity to buy from the mini-bar of the location.

In terms of audience satisfaction regarding the *conditions offered*, "cleanliness", "the state of the building", comfort, visibility and the state of the rooms are the positives aspects provided by NTB, the opposite being "the quality of the wardrobe service" and "the coffee, refreshments and souvenir stand offer" (Cultural Communication Ltd, 2007, p 36).

The dynamics of numbers in figure 6 shows a high presence at the NTB performances.

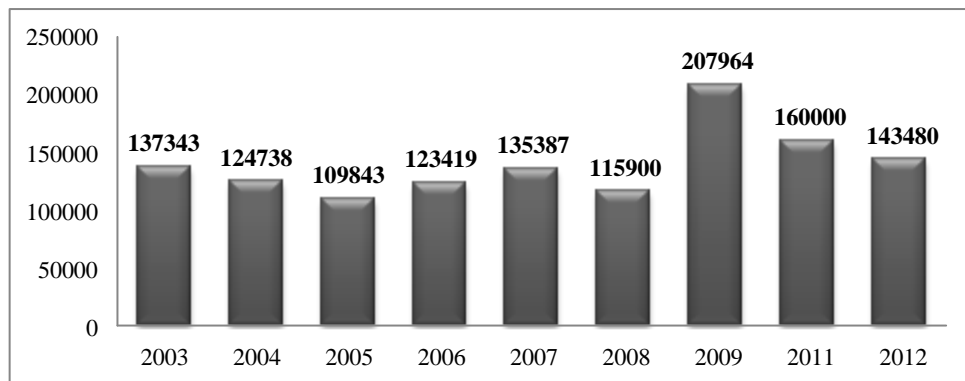


Figure 6. Evolution of the number of audience during 2003-2012

Sources: NTB, 2011; NTB, 2012; NTB, 2013

The decreased number of fans in 2012 is primarily due to:

- "The reconstruction process;
- The closing of the "Atelier " and "Amfiteatru" halls;
- Fewer performances have been scheduled to take place in the Great Hall due to the fact that some performances have been updated" (NTB, 2013, p. 5).

### 3. The NTB renovation project

In April 2011, at NTB, have started the works for the extensive project "Stability and safety in operation, functional optimization, technological and institutional organization of the National Theatre ensemble - buildings A, B, C and D".

The rehabilitation project of NTB (figure 7) was initiated in 2007, but the actual work has started in March 2011.

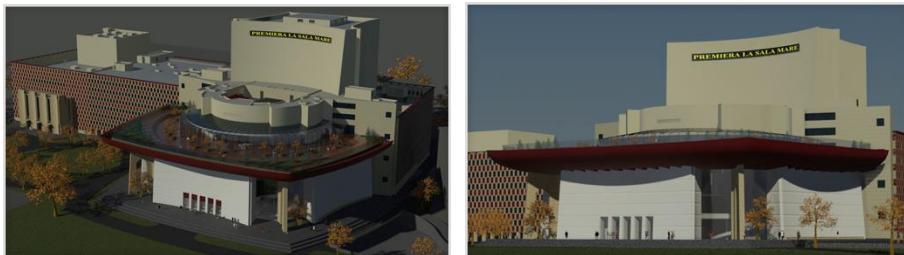


Figure 7. NTB after renovation

Source: <http://www.tnb.ro/>

The 65 million euros project (of which 50% is a loan granted to the Romanian Government by the Council of Europe Development Bank) will last for a period of three years (it has as deadline: 2014) and it will transform NTB into a building comparable to the theatres in major European capitals. Thus, NTB:

- Will be a building that will be open 13 hours per day, where people can stay all day, no matter if they go afterwards to the play or not. Therefore, after the renovations, the entire **ground floor** will be an open public space, with multiple entries, from all sides of the building. There will be available *cafes* and *art galleries*, and people will be allowed access daily between: 10.00-23.00. Also, on the ground floor will be opened an *information centre*.

- Total surface - **60.000 square meters**;
- Will have **six halls** (instead of three);
- **The total number of seats** will increase 1.720, as it is currently, up to approximately **3.100**;
- The complex will include **exhibition and work halls** and **bookstores**;
- **The outdoor arena from the roof of the building** will accommodate 300 spectators and will allow extending the theatrical season during summer.

#### 4. Study on the importance of NTB in the strategic development of Bucharest

##### 4.1. Methodology

##### A. Objectives and the hypothesis of the research

The objectives of the research take into account the following:

- Determining the *cultural preferences* of the population studied;
- Identifying the NTB *reputation* starting from the preferences of the targeted audience;
- Identifying the *expectations* of the population studied regarding the current and future NTB activities and services;
- Validating the “symbol” role of NTB in the *development of Bucharest*.

The hypothesis has been identified in close correlation with the detailed objectives:

- **Hypothesis 1:** NTB is the most appreciated theatre in Bucharest.

**Variables:** the cultural and artistic preferences of the respondents, the competition that the NTB theatre faces and the NTB reputation based on the respondents' preferences.

- **Hypothesis 2:** The current auxiliary services provided by NTB are far from being efficient. The expectations of viewers regarding the NTB activities and services after the completion of the rehabilitation process are very high.

**Variables:** the schedule of the performances, the comfort provided the available stands in the foyer, ways to purchase the ticket, the price of thickets.

- **Hypothesis 3:** The National Theatre can be considered an emblem of Bucharest and can represent, in the context of the rehabilitation, an important vector of increasing awareness of the Romanian capital in the competition with other European capitals.

**Variables:** NTB as a recommendation option for visiting Bucharest, the theatre can be a landmark for the Capital, NTB is a cultural symbol of Bucharest.

##### B. Research methodology

##### Sampling:

- **Sample characteristics:**
  - *Stratification:* gender, age, education level income, , marital status and occupation;
  - *Probability of selection:* the person interviewed.
- **Sample volume:** 546 de persons;
- **The formula for determining the sample volume is the following:**

$$n = t^2 * P * (100 - P) / e^2$$

Where:

t = theoretical value of the probability used =1.96;

P = probability according to which the researched population has the sample characteristic = 90%;

e = permissible limit of representativeness error =4.5%.

- **Data collection period:** February 1 - March 15, 2013;

- **Methodology of data collection:** the questionnaire was released on an electronic platform, and the link was popularized by electronic means for auto complete.

**Researched population:**

- Individuals residing in Bucharest, aged 18 years;
- Characteristic of sampling: theatre spectators.

**The research method** used was based on a questionnaire survey.

**The questionnaire** (20 questions) is a semi-structured questionnaire (containing both closed questions (18) and open questions (2), the respondent has the opportunity to write "open" answers that will help us to better knowledge the variables investigated and adaptation of future hypothesis), and was divided into three sections:

1. **First section** (6 questions) has identified the *socio-demographic* variables related to age, gender, education, income, marital status and occupation of the respondents as follows:

- *Gender:* 68% of respondents are women, and only 32% are men;
- *Age:* the majority of respondents (48%) fall into the category 25-35 years old, and are followed by those aged between 36-50 years old (27%), by those aged under 25 years old (15%) and by those over 50 (10%).
- *Education level:* most of the respondents are people with higher education (76%), people with secondary education (20%) and respondents with primary education (4%);
- *Income* has been considered an indicator of population segmentation in order to see how this influences the results of the research. Thus, 33% of respondents were earning over 3,000 RON / month, 44% had incomes between 1,501 and 3,000 RON / month, 19% had incomes between 501 and 1,500 RON / month, and 4% had incomes below 500 RON / month.

2. **The second section** (2 questions) has been focused on the overall *consumption of theatre* (how often respondents go to the theater in general), as well as very useful information regarding the fact that the respondent has attended the NTB's performances.

From the research, it was observed that most respondents were consumers of theatre, over 50% of who were spectators at least 2 times per month. Also, it was

interesting to research the correlation between this variable and the income that the respondents declared. The research has shown a strong direct link between those who rarely go to shows - several times a year - and their low income levels (less than 500 RON / month, or between 501-1500 RON). Also, the research has confirmed that not only a high salary is the consumer's motivation to go to theatre, as it can be seen in figure 8.

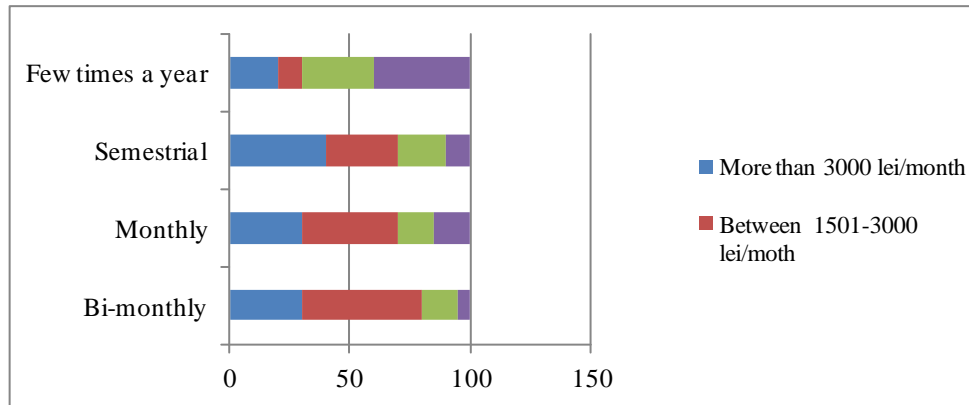


Figure 8. Attendance frequency in theater shows according to income level

The attendance to NTB performances in the last year was a control variable of the questionnaire, being designed so that if the respondent answered negatively and the questionnaire would stop. The choice of this variable was designed to give the study a high percentage of representativeness, and for this reason its value was 100% affirmative.

3. **The third section** has consisted of 12 questions which sought to demonstrate the variables and the hypothesis set:

- The first hypothesis aimed at identifying the NTB reputation based on the preferences of the targeted audience and establish potential competitors of NTB (questions 8-10);
- The second hypothesis was demonstrated by questions 11 to 16, which aimed to knowledge the visitors' perception of current and future NTB services (after the completion of the rehabilitation process) (schedule of the performances, comfort, stands available in the foyer, ways to purchase tickets, the prices of tickets);
- The last hypothesis was demonstrated by the responses to questions 17-19: NTB is an option to recommend to friends who want to visit the city, the theatre can be a tourist attraction for the capital, NTB is a cultural "symbol" of Bucharest and can be regarded as an important vector for increasing the awareness of the Romanian capital.

4.2. The results of the research

For this study we chose to analyse the most relevant questions of section 3, which aimed to demonstrate the hypotheses and the variables of the research.

1. For Hypothesis 1:

Regarding the *competition* that NTB is facing:

- The theatrical institution most often attended by the respondents is NTB (50.48%), followed by Odeon Theatre (33.98%), Nottara (5.82%), Bulandra Theatre (5.82%) Comedy Theatre (1.94%), Theatre "Constantin Tănase" (0.97%) and ACT Theatre (0.97%);
- The question regarding the "*cultural activities*" points out the formal competition that NTB is facing (figure 9).

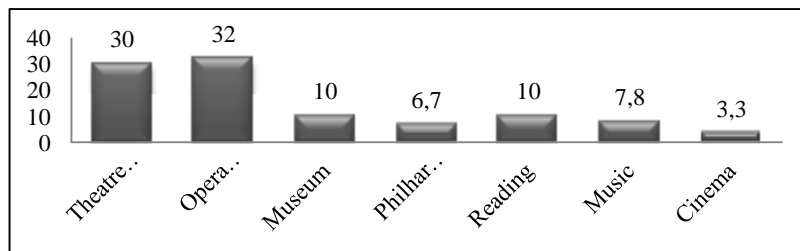


Figure 9. Culture consumers' preferences in the past year, except for theatre (in percent)

Any strategy is outlined against the competition, so knowing who your competitors are is an unmatched advantage. NTB shares its cultural "slice" with children theatres, opera and ballet, museums and reading. Surprisingly or not, the study showed that the theatre fans are not great lovers of cinema.

The question regarding the *motivation of choosing* NTB was an "open" question, designed to avoid influencing respondents (figure 10).

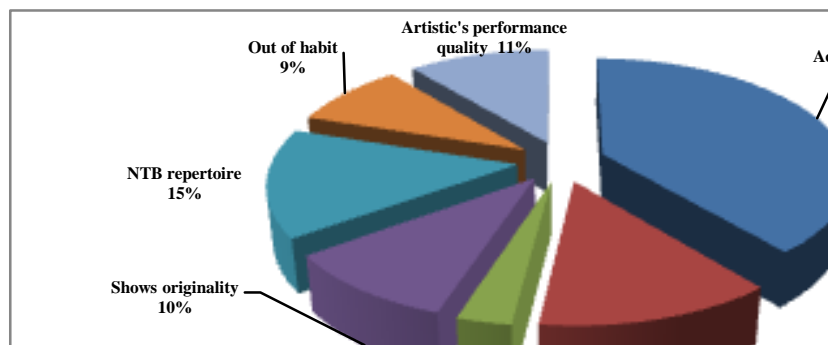


Figure 10. Respondents' motivation in choosing NTB

The fact that over one third of those surveyed considered the reputation of the actors that play on the scenes of NTB, as being a reason for choosing this theatre, is not surprising. However, the fact that almost 10% of respondents go to NTB because they got used to, this theatre being an optimal way of leisure, is a very important result for the request initiated.

**2. For Hypothesis 2:**

Research has confirmed that auxiliary services are strengths in the NTB activity.

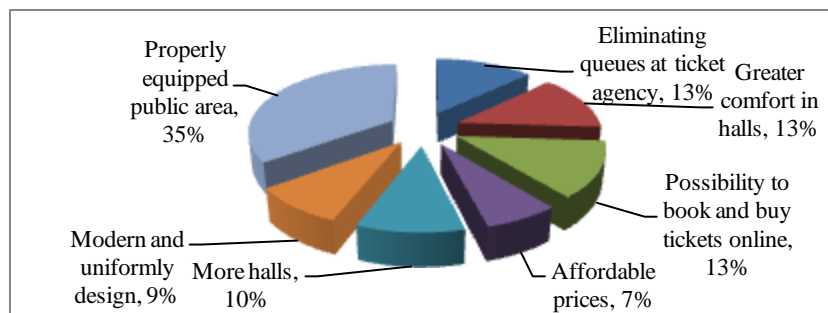
As extremes of dissatisfaction we have:

- *Ways to purchase tickets* - it can easily be observed in almost every Saturday, when the queue at the ticket reaches the boulevard;
- *Stands with drinks and the arrangement of the lobby* (which should be a space for relaxation and for "supplying" the audience).

The *schedule of the performances* is among the few variables that have managed to gather some feedback from the spectators interviewed.

Regarding the respondents' opinion on the *opportunity of the NTB rehabilitation*, and their opinion regarding the extent to which this process affects the quality of services provided by the institution, the research has shown that:

- Most respondents (96%) considered the rehabilitation to be a *positive* thing;
- Respondents agreed that this process has *adversely affected* the quality of services provided by NTB;
- The *audience expectations* regarding the services provided by NTB after the *completion of rehabilitation process* are high. Thus, by means of a question with an "opened" answer, there have been identified eight types of expected (figure 11).



**Figure 11. Respondents' expectations following the rehabilitation process**

The NTB rehabilitation plan promises its audience a modern area, with new features to help them spend their free time. The main features promised are: a library, bookstores, specific shops, exhibition halls, cafes, cafeterias, tea rooms, outdoor performances. The respondents have been asked to give grades based on their views on these facilities and the main conclusion of this question was that the changes are seen as being a positive aspect and are awaited with interest (figure 12).



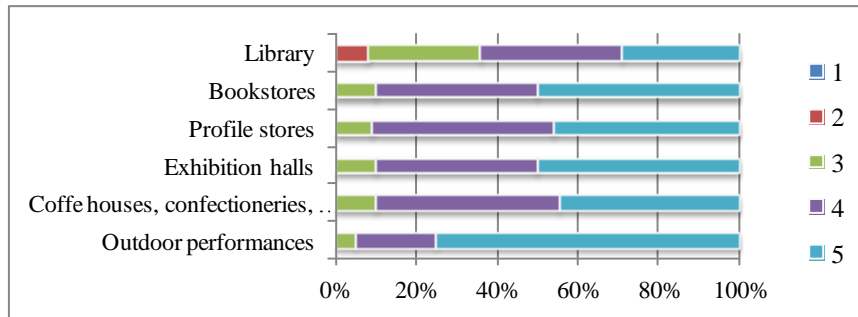


Figure 12. Respondents' opinion about the facilities NTB promises after renovation (1 – not appreciated / 5 – much appreciated)

3. For Hypothesis 3:

The research has confirmed that the respondents perceive the National Theatre as a symbol of Bucharest (figure 13). Therefore:

- NTB is an option to recommend to friends who want to visit Bucharest (79%);
- NTB should be included in the list of tourist attractions in Bucharest (82%);
- 97% of respondents said that NTB is a cultural symbol of Bucharest.

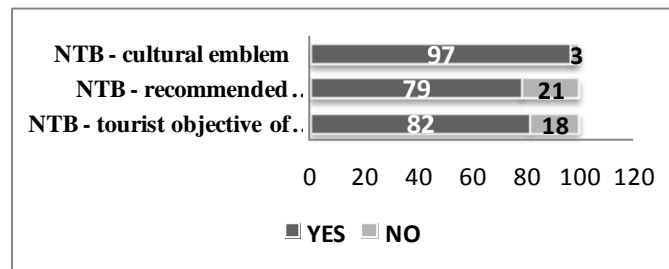


Figure 13. NTB seen as the city's symbol

Conclusions

The exploratory approach has achieved all the objectives and *confirmed the three hypotheses*, including the last one, that NTB is a strategic point on the cultural map of Bucharest and Romania.

Most respondents were female, aged between 25 and 35, with higher education and income of 1,500 RON/month. Most of the respondents attend twice a month theatre performances, being the NTB loyal audience. When respondents do not choose to watch NTB performances, they prefer children's theatre, opera and ballet.

The main reasons why the audience chooses to go to NTB are: the reputation of the actors, the reputation of the performances, the quality of the repertoire and also their uniqueness.

There are also complaints found among the spectators, this being related to the organizational activity of the theatre, and the endless queues at the ticket agency, the impossibility of making reservations and purchase tickets online, the insufficient resources of the lobby, the low comfort of the theatre halls, discrimination policy regarding the allocation of seats that have discount and the unsanitary conditions of the bathrooms.

Regarding the rehabilitation process, there is no doubt that this is necessary, the answers being appreciative, almost unanimously. However, one in two viewers perceives the implications of this process in the quality of the services provided. Related to the expectations of the rehabilitation, these are similar to the promises of the contractors: spacious halls, higher comfort, grandiose and modern design.

The last part of the study has investigated the importance of NTB in development strategy of the strategy. First it was made aware that the National Theatre is for most theatrical art lovers a viable recommendation for friends who come to discover the city, being considered a cultural "symbol" that is worth to be added into its tourist circuit. NTB is the most important theatre in Bucharest, with the highest attendance rate and successful tours.

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#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Reservations can be made up to three days before the performance, and are valid for 48 hours

<sup>2</sup> The total number of spectators in the country: 23.048 (NTB, 2013, p. 26).

<sup>3</sup> The total number of spectators: 1.596 (NTB, 2013, p. 26).