Abstract

Based on the conceptualisation of the existing literature, the aim of this article is to discuss the risk and crisis communication aspects in tourism with reference to popular culture events. It focuses on (i) the influence of potential crises in popular culture events on destination image and branding, (ii) the crisis marketing aspects that need to be considered from the event organisers and Destination Marketing Organisation (DMO) authorities, and (iii) the communications’ reaction of stakeholders in respective crises. From a theoretical perspective, its contribution deals with the provision of an understanding in terms of marketing communications in popular culture events when facing crises. Managerially, this paper contributes through the formulation of essential tools for crisis communications in the respective events, including both, external and internal marketing strategies.

Key Words: Popular Culture; Risk and Crisis Management; Tourism; Events; Disaster Management Communications
Introduction

The connection of popular culture with tourism lies on the activity of individuals to travel to specific destinations mainly because of popular culture, events and themes existing in these specific areas (Miller & Washington, 2007). From a commercial perspective popular culture can be defined as mass culture for mass consumption including music, literature, sports, film, TV programs, drama, and pop-stars (Lee & Bai, 2016). In terms of tourism marketing, several studies such as Kim et al. (2008) and Lee et al. (2008) highlight the positive influence of popular culture events on the formation of destination image. Still, popular culture may trigger negative perceptions for a destination if these events are not well organised or disastrous aspects appear (Gartner & Shen, 1992), highlighting the importance not only for appropriate risk and crisis management, but also the implementation of sufficient crisis communications.

Since tourism is considered as a prominent victim in crises (Vassilikopoulou et al., 2009), destination risk and crisis management capabilities should be of such quality that it can quickly resolve an evolving crisis and prevent it from spreading in (Racherla & Hu, 2009) and create a considerable damage to its image. As Wilson and Anderson (2004) suggest, the ability to manage a crisis successfully can mean the difference between survival and disaster. As a result the competitiveness of a destination depends on its flexibility and its ability to change and adapt to the new reality (Papanond, 2007). Crises influence private agents’ behaviour, decreasing the level of investment, export compositions, and consumption, and increasing uncertainty about future gains (Furceri & Zdzenia, 2010). Conversely, several strategies (i.e.: cost marketing reorientation; target markets’ refocus; substantial use of Information Technology) have been suggested by researchers to help the destinations to survive when a crisis occurs (Papatheodorou & Pappas, 2013). However, crisis management
usually varies since the managers and stakeholders are likely to have different priorities and objectives, and may not perceive a crisis in the same way (Campiranon & Scott, 2007).

In popular culture events the audience should be used as the epicentre of crisis communications (Coombs & Holladay, 2004) in an effort to minimise the negative perceptions produced from the crisis itself, and the parallel consequences to the destination and event image. According to Schwarz (2012), the crucial point is to provide an understanding of how publics cope with and interpret crises in order to develop a body of knowledge in crisis communications, from both critical and managerial/functionalist perspectives. Regardless the importance of popular culture events for destinations and their contribution to further tourism development, the literature is predominately silent concerning the risk and crisis marketing management and communications for these events.

The aim of this article is to discuss the risk and crisis communication aspects in tourism with reference to popular culture events. It focuses on (i) the influence of potential crises in popular culture events on destination image and branding, (ii) the crisis marketing aspects that need to be considered from the event organisers and Destination Marketing Organisation (DMO) authorities, and (iii) the communications’ reaction of stakeholders in respective crises. From a theoretical perspective, its contribution deals with the provision of an understanding in terms of marketing communications in popular culture events when facing crises. This is because popular culture events cannot only suffer by crises, but can also be used as communication means in order to overcome a crisis. This unique characteristic highlights the necessity for further evaluation between popular culture events and crises. Managerially, this conceptual study contributes through the formulation of essential tools for crisis
communications in the respective events, including both, external and internal marketing strategies.

Managing Event Communications during Crises

The literature includes a considerable amount of marketing research focusing on the recovery of destinations after crisis events (Beirman, 2003; Huang et al., 2008). The main problem concerns the reduction of travellers’ propensity to visit these destinations due to their perspectives of a lack of personal safety (Bonham et al., 2006), also including fears for disaster reoccurrence as well as the capability of these areas to host tourists (Ghaderi & Henderson, 2013). Thus, destinations develop appropriate strategies which incorporate a series of marketing and communications’ activities (Henderson, 2007; Hystad & Keller, 2008), including ‘Back on track’ campaigns in order to address misconceptions about prevailing risks and circumstances (Shimizu, 2013), and the regaining of visitors’ trust through post-disaster marketing programmes (Ghaderi & Henderson, 2013). As Beirman (2003) indicates, a crisis can be communicated through the monitoring of news, setting out and presenting the facts, publicising positive experiences and developments in the destination, restoring confidence, protecting destination and enterprising branding, and offering incentives to visitors. In addition, global communication campaigns should be implemented aiming the promotion of domestic tourism, the cultivation of new niche products and markets, the provision of familiarisation trips for the press and industry partners, and the strengthening of cooperative initiatives amongst the stakeholders (UNWTO, 2005).

Although the literature in crisis management stresses out the importance of marketing and communications whilst dealing with a crisis, studies tend to focus on the external marketing activities that are carried out in order to attract visitors to a destination (Bregoli et al., 2015).
Internal marketing needs to be implemented in order to regain trust, not only to visitors but also to host community, stakeholders and cooperative destinations directly affected by the crisis event (Pappas, 2008). The strengthening of marketing communications after a disastrous event can speed up a return to normality or so, by addressing the concerns of the parties of interest, and in parallel by conveying sympathy for victims (Carlsen & Hughes, 2008). As Ghaderi and Henderson (2013) support, well-designed marketing communication strategies and appropriate advertising are able to mitigate the harmful short and medium-term impacts of disastrous events, and regain the destination image lost from the crisis.

*Communicating Crises in Popular Culture Events*

It is common ground that crisis and disaster management is a crucial topic in tourism connected to a growing body of literature (Hajibaba et al., 2015). However, there is a lack of studies examining the communication aspects of crises in popular culture events. This is of particular importance since crises in events may create havoc, leading to the destruction of the event itself and even a considerable damage in destination image. For example, on July 2010, a crowd disaster at the Love Parade electronic dance music festival in Duisburg, Germany has caused the death of 21 attendants, whilst 510 more injured (Der Spiegel, 2010). The media have blamed the organisers for the disaster since the capacity of the location was for 250,000 people but more than one million visitors were expected (Jager, 2010). The organisers have accused the police for having caused the stampede, the police accused Duisburg authorities and the organisers for security failures, and the Mayor of Duisburg blamed the police and the organisers (Diehl et al., 2010). This blame game combined with the devastating event has destroyed the festival and severely damaged the destination image, due to the lack of appropriate crisis communications, and the failures in crisis response (Schwarz, 2012).
However the unique characteristic of popular culture events is that they are not only affected by relevant crises, but they can also be extensively used for crisis recovery, even long after the crisis event itself. For example, 16 years after the 9/11 terrorist strikes in the United States (the strikes were held in 2001), several popular culture events were organised for the commemoration of the victims. These events included the ‘Tribute in Light’ concerning the illumination of the New York City skyline, the gathering at the 9/11 Memorial, and the public service programmes and commemoration pop culture events held throughout the country (Greenwald, 2017).

To proceed even further, several events, with special reference to mega-events, express current cultural aspects and embed popular culture, even if they are not directly considered as popular culture events. For example, the contemporary Olympic Games are part of the current world culture reflecting countless popular culture aspects, creating idols and sports-stars, and formulating globalised cultural behaviours (Pop, 2013), since they are extensively covered and promoted by all kinds of media (Pappas, 2014). The Olympics are also considered as major contributors that influence tourism growth (Fourie & Gallego, 2011), have substantial impact on destination development and branding (Qu et al., 2011) and promote contemporary cultural activities (Dyer et al., 2007). Due to their media explosion and their worldwide communication impact, terrorist incidents have repeatedly occurred in Olympics. The first one was held in 1972 during Munich Olympics, with the shooting of Israeli athletes in the Olympic village. This incident has established the relationship between tourism and terrorism (Pappas, 2010) and let international tourists being actually aware of this relationship (Lepp & Gibson 2003). Another terrorist strike was during 1996 in Atlanta at the Centennial Olympic park during the Games. Media coverage of the bombing had
exploded, directly affecting the legacy of the games and the destination image. As a result, the Olympic officials and city leaders said that the bombing had turned six years of planning into an instant nightmare (Sack, 1996). These vulnerability aspects highlight the importance of appropriate crisis marketing and communications strategies in popular culture events for the minimisation of the negative impacts of both, events and destinations.

**Crisis Management Communications**

The importance of crisis management in tourism creates the necessity to develop and share good practice examples able to maintain enterprising and destination success, and provide guidance for adequate marketing communications during crisis (Page et al., 2010). Incorporating the formulation of crisis management communications, it is essential to build on both, external and internal marketing environment.

**The Pillars of Destination Crisis Marketing**

At the first stage when a destination is affected by a crisis and wants to attract specified tourist flows, it needs to create and mainly promote through its image the necessary safety conditions. For a destination in crisis, it is considerably difficult to achieve a positive image, both in terms to infrastructure and/or service as well as the considerable intangible damage to the destination's image (Avraham, 2015). The difficulty and process of this task is so great, that it is likely to take several years for the destination to tackle (Baker, 2007). Thus, targeted marketing is essential for aiming specific tourist flows and market segments. According to Pappas (2008), this crisis marketing strategy is based on two pillars (Figure 1). The first one aims potential visitors and is concentrated to the promotion and advertising of the existing safety conditions in the destination. The marketing strategy is necessary to be implemented in each and every tourist origin with a different way, according to the local/regional/national
culture, the ethical values, the expectations and stereotypes for the destination, the way of life, and the mainstream decision-making process of the potential visitors. The second pillar targets the development of safety conditions to the people already visiting the destination. This incorporation of safety perceptions to current visitors also strengthens the former pillar through the reconfirmation of its presented messages. In the case of failing to support these safety perceptions, the overall image and brand name of the destination is in jeopardy.

Concerning popular culture events, the marketing communications should be based on the same pillars, also including the destination itself, since the image of both the event and destination are interrelated and connected. For example, the main terrorist massacre (in total five simultaneous terrorist strikes were held) in the tragic events on Friday the 13th November 2015 in Paris was held in Bataclan rock concert venue leaving more than 80 people dead (BBC News, 2015). Contingency plans such as the closure of French borders, the army deployment in Paris, and the harsher police controls all over France have directly implemented by the French authorities (Aljazeera, 2015), aiming to minimise fear and confusion and start restoring the feeling of safety within France and abroad. For reminders, France is the most successful tourism destination in the whole planet hosting more than 83 million tourists annually (UNWTO, 2015), whilst Paris is the most famous destination not only for France but worldwide hosting more than 32 million tourists per year (Daily Mail, 2014), considerably more than 1/3 of the overall French tourism.
Response Operations for Crisis Communications

The formulation of crisis communications in destinations and events is dependent on the perceived risk, meaning that the higher the perceived risk, insecurity, or uncertainty, the lower its demand (Herrero & Pratt, 1998). Risk is defined as an alternative decision or an attribute reflecting the variance of its possible outcomes (Gefen et al., 2002). The inclusion of high perceived risk in tourism decisions decreases consumers’ trust, and as a consequence minimises the purchasing potential (Lee, 2014). The development of trustworthiness in tourism decisions is considerably affected by branding aspects, as they seem to be the main factors involved in minimising the perceived risks involved (Pappas, 2017). As a result, the ‘brand trust’ of the destination and/or event can determine the extent of its selection by potential consumers and ultimately its overall success (Chomvilailuka & Srisomyong, 2015).

An example of crisis communications can be derived from the Paris case, as presented at the end of the previous chapter. A year after the 2015 Paris terrorist strikes several commemoration events (most of them dealing with popular culture aspects) have been organised in the city. These events were (McQueen, 2017): (i) a poetry reading at the Institut du Monde Arabe (ii) memorial plaques unveiled near the sites of the attacks (iii) a rally at the town hall of the 11th arrondissement (iv) a round table on the theme of memory (v) a special performance of the play Djihad, followed by a debate (vi) Lanterns released in eastern Paris (vii) a memorial concert at the Bus Palladium (viii) Various TV specials about the attacks (ix) Candles on windowsills, and (x) an exhibition of memorial objects. Two years after the 2015 Paris terrorist strikes more events have been organised, such as a ceremony led by the French president Emmanuel Macron to commemorate the victims (Xinhua, 2017).
However, destination image is also affected by the perceptions of the host community and the stakeholders involved in the tourism process. As Presenza et al. (2013) suggest policy makers should implement internal marketing promoting the involvement of residents and stakeholders in decision making since this can strengthen the destination branding. Thus, crisis marketing communications don’t only need to be addressed in their internal audience but also include it for its formulation and development.

Tourism destinations should strengthen their crisis management centres not only in operational level but also in communication and promotion initiatives (Figure 2). As Pappas (2008) suggests, it is imperative for crisis decision making to create operational groups focusing on the implementation and development of risk management. The groups should include scientists, stakeholders, tourism industry, incoming tourism (tour operating) and host community representatives, as well as state advisors (intelligence, security) and peripheral authorities. A process of participatory democracy can increase the adaptability and efficiency of both, crisis operations and marketing communications. Considering the internal crisis marketing, the inclusion of locals and stakeholders activated in the region, can increase the direct positive output of crisis communications, further strengthen and more efficiently protect the destination image and branding during the period of turmoil, as well as decrease the pressure from competitive destinations.

At this point it needs to be stressed out not only the operational/organisational cost of a disaster, but also the political consequences a disastrous event may have in a regional and/or national level. Within the region or country the impact of a crisis predominantly deals with
the capability of state (peripheral/national) agencies – in cooperation with regional authorities and locals - to resolve the crisis produced by a potential disaster, and ultimately minimise its negative impacts. For example, on May 2017 a devastating terrorist strike during a music concert in Manchester arena, U.K., has left 23 people dead, and hundreds other reported injured (Abbit, 2017). In a local level, taxi companies and Manchester residents offered free transport or accommodation, and a nearby hotel served as a shelter for people displaced by the bombing (Kerslake, 2018). The central state has fully deployed police and military units, making their presence visible to locals and tourists throughout the country (ITV News, 2017). Furthermore, during June (less than a month later from the terrorist strike) a music concert was organised in Manchester arena from the same performer (Ariana Grande) who’s event was targeted from terrorists, commemorating the victims of this attack (BBC News, 2017). To progress further, another popular culture event entitled “Manchester Together – With One Voice” was held a year after the tragic event in Manchester Arena, focusing on the commemoration of this terrorist strike’s victims (Perraudin, 2018). This action has further brought the Manchester community together, strengthened the event product of the city, and substantially contributed to the recovery of the destination image.

Focusing on an international level the crisis deals with the presence of visitors since they are supposed to be ambassadors of their countries and how people perceive them reflects on their origin destination (Pappas, 2013). A potential failure in crisis management and its communications can even lead peripheral and/or central governments to collapse or lose forthcoming elections. An indicative example is the 2004 general elections in Spain. Just a week before the elections, polls put the governing conservative party four points ahead of the Socialists; however, the latter won the elections with five per cent more than the governing party mainly because of the insufficient crisis management and communication policies
implemented by the government concerning the terrorist strike in Madrid (Canel, 2012). As a result, it is likely for governments to implement propagandistic strategies aiming to gain higher obedience from locals and finally to control their behavioural patterns (Pappas, 2013).

In the event industry the interactive communication should include all the people implicated in the event; the company that organises the event, the organisation that ordered the event, and the participants, having also in mind that the impact and the success of an event heavily depends on the communication mode and extent of communication with the authorities and the participants (Daniel et al., 2012). If an event is forced to face a crisis it is likely the publicity surrounding the incident to cause more harm to the event and the subsequent destination than the physical ramifications of the incident itself (Keown-McMullan’s, 1997).

Adversely, specific disasters and crisis incidents may create new popular culture events. In most of these cases the popular culture events occur under the umbrella of the incident’s remembrance and tribute to the people lost in the disaster. For example, just ten days after the 9/11 terrorist strikes in U.S., a rock-pop concert was organised by the four major American networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, and Fox) participating a plethora of famous American singers and artists. The communications and promotional activities of the concert were organised by Warner Bros. EVP Corp Comm, also having a significant support from the publicity and marketing departments of the four major American networks (Carman, 2001). Obviously, in this case the crisis communications along with the TV marketing have joined forces in order to assist for handling the psychological shock of the 9/11 terrorist strikes, exploiting the opportunity to organise a most successful popular culture event, and predominantly address to the American nation. In some other cases commemoration popular culture events get a more permanent character. An indicative case is the 1989 Hillsborough disaster in Sheffield
UK, where 96 people died and 766 injured during a football match at Hillsborough Stadium (Eason, 2009). Since then, an annual memorial ceremony is held at the Liverpool football stadium (Anfield) and at a Liverpool church, whilst in the 10th and 20th anniversary (10,000 and 28,000 people have respectively attended these two ceremonies) the disaster was remembered with the organisation of multiple popular culture events such as concerts, song releases (BBC News, 2009), and football matches (BBC Sport, 2009) also having extensive media coverage.

All the above indicate that depending on the response operations of crisis management and communications, and the internal and external marketing implemented by decision makers, a disastrous event may produce fruitful grounds for the destination. Popular culture events can contribute to this process, and assist to the strengthening of the destination image and brand name. On the antipode, crisis communications in popular culture events should have an interactive character and include all the event stakeholders, destination authorities, as well as the participants of the event itself.

**Reacting in Crisis through Marketing Communications**

In general, when a destination or an event invests in promotional activities it attracts more visitors (Lahav et al., 2013; Kulendran & Dwyer, 2009). However, the impact of mainstream marketing and communications activities is limited when a destination or an event is associated with risk facing a crisis and consequently being in turmoil (Taylor, 2006). As Nielsen (2001: 207-208) indicates, “promoting a destination in normal circumstances is a difficult task, but promoting a destination that faces tourism challenges – whether from negative press, or from infrastructure damage caused by natural disasters or man-made disasters – is an altogether more arduous task”. As a result, marketing communications
during crises cannot be the same as in periods of normality, but readjust according to the incident they have to face. This also operates vice versa. During periods of normality crisis marketing communications should not be implemented because they are likely to fail and may cause severe problems to destinations and events.

The extent and mode for communicating a crisis needs to be readjusted according to the crisis itself, and the different parameters occurred in the internal (organisational / destination) and external (enterprising competition / national / international) environment. A common problem of destinations and enterprises is to identify and discriminate an actual crisis from a serious operational / managerial problem. When talking about a crisis we address to a critical point of decision or event which, if not handled in an appropriate and timely manner or fails to generally being handled, may turn into a catastrophe or disaster (Business Dictionary, 2015). Preparation for crises (what we actually call 'risk management’) focuses on the minimisation of negative impacts, including the reduction of demand and revenue, the rising costs, the disruption of normal or normalised operations, the failures in decision making and communication activities, the staff lay-offs, the cancellation or indefinite postponement of investments, the stressful working and living environments, and the closure of organisations (Kash & Darling, 1998). It can not be stressed enough the vital importance of not implementing crisis management and/or crisis marketing communications strategies, if the incident that needs to be handled does not deal with and actual crisis.

In the tourism and event industry, crises and recessions force the organisations to critically examine operations and performance and to reassess strategies for gaining competitive advantage (Pappas, 2015). A basic response strategy for a disastrous event includes four steps which are: (i) expression of regret, (ii) action for resolving the situation (iii) ensure the public
and authorities that the situation will not recur, and (iv) if necessary an offer of restitution or compensations to the injured parties (Stocker, 1997). In all four steps the communication of message sent needs to be clear and concise to all audiences of interest. If the organisation fails to appropriately deliver the message the disastrous effects of the crisis are likely to remain and create permanent negative perceptions for the incident.

The organisers of popular culture events should prepare specific communications plans able to send appropriate messages in case of a crisis during the event. Due to the usual nature of the audience (participation of youth, familiarised with Information Technology) in most of these events, the dissemination of information through the use of social media is necessary. ‘Social networks and discussion boards are considered to be important forums to track spontaneous crisis discourses from the publics’ perspective’ (Scwharz, 2012: 431). Moreover, mechanisms of information control relevant with the incident need to be in place. The media dissemination of information can play an essential role for the brand name and image of the destination as well as the survival of the event. In several cases – even if the ethicality of these tactics is questioned – the media have been manipulated by the event organisers and DMOs in order to minimise the impact of the crisis. This is justified through a teleological perspective of ethics, meaning that the ends served justify the means when the benefits of the actions would be weighted against the costs of acting unethically (Saunters et al., 2007). Of course these kinds of practices are heavily debatable, still their occurrence is frequent.

**Modelling Popular Culture Crisis Communications**

According to Lee and Bai (2016) popular culture events have a multilevel influence to host destinations? more specifically: (i) the destination image induced by popular culture changes in a positive way (ii) the stars of the popular culture event reinforce a positive place image
through experiences of the event and travels in the destination, and (iii) the positive image from popular culture experiences have a strong impact on future visitor behaviour. Since destinations and their visitors are affected by popular culture events they should build a strong cooperation in terms of operational and communications reaction in a potential crises.

As already illustrated in Figure 1, the cooperative levels towards DMOs and event organisers need to be based in both crisis marketing pillars including internal and external communications. Unavoidably the crisis communications should include the media, where strong cooperation from both DMOs and popular event organisers has to be established. In addition, the provision of information has to be based on targeted crisis marketing also produced from the cooperation towards event organisers and DMO authorities. The crisis management centre (Figure 2) is responsible for the careful, analytical and extensive preparation of crisis contingency plans and the fundamental policies of internal and external crisis marketing.

The previously presented conceptualisation of crisis marketing management and popular culture events, and the prospect of potential disastrous incidents affecting events and destinations, lead to the creation of a model concerning the crisis communication response (Figure 3). The model is oriented in internal and external crisis marketing, emphasising on the actions taken by the involved parties. The successful implementation of crisis communications can minimise the consequences of the disaster and strengthen the protection of the destination and the event.

<<<Figure 3 here>>>
As the model indicates the collaboration towards DMO Authorities and popular culture event organisers is essential in order to better coordinate their communications efforts. A well-structured and fully operational crisis management centre can immensely assist on this collaboration. Jointly, the destination authorities and event organisers can directly disseminate appropriate information to the media in order to achieve the appropriate extent of coverage for the disastrous incident. The media will then externalise this information to the interest groups (destination visitors and event attendants; locals and stakeholders; potential visitors and attendants). This information dissemination of media should include messages based on targeted internal and external crisis marketing and communications. Furthermore, DMOs and event organisers need to have direct external communications with the tourist/visitor origins. Event organisers also have to assist the crisis communications of DMO authorities to potential visitors providing and further information for the event itself. This assistance has a mediating influence to the communication of the destination with potential visitors. The DMO’s internal direct communications are addressed to visitors and Event attendants, and locals and stakeholders. In both cases the event organisers can have a mediating influence on the DMO’s crisis communications. In addition, it is important for the popular culture event organisers to do whatever possible in order to minimise the shock and confusion of the disaster to locals and stakeholders, and especially to visitors and event attendants. For the latter group, the communication on the way the incident is handled and if necessary any potential restitution offering to the injured parties need to be promoted and advertised accordingly. This effort can also be promoted as an aspect of Corporate Social Responsibility, creating positive perceptions for the event organisers, or at least reducing the extent of negative feelings.
As it is illustrated in Figure 3, the communication transmitters are the DMO authorities, the popular culture event organisers, and the media. This is the area that the management and operations of crisis communications are to be created, developed and appropriately promoted.

It needs to be highlighted that the interactivity given to people through Information Technology, can dynamically transform two out of three communication receivers (visitors and event attendants; locals and stakeholders) to transmitters, having an influential impact to the third receiving party (potential visitors and attendants). Thus, the flow of crisis communications’ information from the initial tree transmitters needs to be distributed on time and characterised by high credibility, minimising the creation of potential rumours and aggregation of negative emotions and perceptions.

The extent of cooperation towards the three main communication transmitters (DMOs; pop-culture event organisers; mass and social media) will also give the grounds for any potential organisation of future popular culture events for the remembrance of the initial incident. The ‘area of crisis communications formulation and management’ is also the field that the reputation and brand name of forthcoming popular culture events will be held in the specific destination. Looking towards the future, appropriate crisis communications are not only used as tools for the minimisation of negative perceptions, protection of the event and destination brand name and image, and acceleration factors of recovery from the shock and confusion created by the disaster. They are also the means for future investment in destination image and event branding. Thus, after the post-disaster period crisis communications should progressively transform to mainstream marketing activities, always keeping the crisis experience and improve their performance.
Conclusions

The flows of tourism in a destination are subject to disruption by a series of disastrous events that can happen, Prideaux et al. (2003). Thus, destinations need to provide a safe, secure, and predictable environment for visitors (Volo, 2007). Several studies such as Sonmez and Graefe (1998) and Lepp and Gibson (2003) indicate the tourists are susceptible to risks, thus, their decision to visit a specific destination may change from any perceived or actual threat to their health, safety or security. The brand image and success of popular culture events is directly connected with the destination they are held, whilst their success also influences the tourism and hospitality industry of the destination (Chen et al., 2005).

Popular culture events can act as supplementary tourist activities in a destination, significantly contributing to tourism development. On the other hand, a crisis or a disastrous incident to these events heavily impacts not only the event itself but directly affects the destination branding and image. Thus, appropriate risk and crisis management, as well as risk and crisis marketing and communications need to be prepared and in case of an incident successfully implemented from both DMOs and event organisers.

Still, the research in crisis communications concerning popular culture events is very limited if not non existent, and several suggestions for further research need to be proposed. Despite the plethora of researches and studies in risk and crisis management, risk and crisis communications seem to be somehow neglected from the literature. First, in the case of popular culture events, and considering their rapid growth and development worldwide, further research in risk and crisis aspects is more than necessary to be held. This can give evidence for the extent crises influence popular culture events and highlight the difference in crisis communication (if any) from the rest of the events that might be hosted from a tourism
destination. Second, the collaboration aspects and extent towards tourism destination authorities and popular culture event organisers needs to be examined. In several cases in the past, the insufficient collaboration towards these two parties has created chaotic psychological conditions, increased the shock and confusion from the disaster itself and, in some cases, led to the total destruction and permanent cancellation of the event. Thus, the power relationships towards DMOs and popular event organisers need to be further examined and evaluated in depth. Finally, the examination of the involvement of host community in popular culture events can produce interesting findings concerning the approval of events from the locals, the active engagement of the community in the events and the formulation of perspectives and their impact in the area the event is held.

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Figure 1: The Pillars of Crisis Communications

1st Pillar
Marketing Strategies in Tourist Origins / Regions

Special Characteristics of Potential Tourists in Origin Countries / Regions

TARGETED MARKETING

POTENTIAL TOURISTS

Bilateral Information

2nd Pillar
Destination Tourism Marketing

Promotional Activities in Tourism Destination

TOURISTS

Source: Pappas (2008)
Figure 2: Destination Crisis Management Decision Making

Source: Pappas (2008)
Figure 3: Crisis Communication Response for Popular Culture Events