

# EXPLORING THE MARKETING STRATEGIES OF KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS IN EUROPE

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**ABSTRACT**

The aim of this paper is to analyze and identify the marketing activities of different communities devoted to Krishna consciousness in Europe, and to develop a model based on these findings to interpret the system devotees have built up throughout the years to gain more followers of the religion. Krishna consciousness is well-known for the marketing efforts of the community; however, the research literature is limited so far concerning the activities they apply in order to reach a wide audience. In 2016 and 2017 a qualitative research was carried out including observations and interviews in five European villages in Hungary, Belgium, the Czech Republic and Germany. The research identified a pattern of a two-step marketing process in all of the four communities. In the first step the communities are promoted as touristic destinations, focusing mainly on tourism and its cultural motives. Here the devotees apply a wide range of methods, such as online media, fliers and organize numerous festivals and cultural events to attract people. In the second phase tourists - who have already taken the first step towards Krishna consciousness by visiting the villages - are informed about the essence and most important teachings of the religion and they can experience many aspects of it via interactive programs, which increases involvement and understanding. The model created contributes to analyzing and understanding the marketing activities of Krishna consciousness more in details. In the long run it can also be extended to other religions, therefore makes the analysis and development of marketing concepts of other religious groups also possible.

**KEY WORDS:** religious marketing, krishna consciousness, marketing of religions, religious tourism, online marketing.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Krishna consciousness is one of the best known religions of their promotional activities, which were initiated by devotees stopping pedestrians on the streets, telling them about the teachings of their Lord Krishna. Nowadays ISKCON (International Society for Krishna consciousness) has numerous churches, villages and visitors' centers all over the world, hosting a large number of festivals, and engaging themselves in charitable activities, while communicating actively online and using the social media. Apparently their system works, as they are able to raise the attention of more and more people in countries far away from India, having barely no cultural similarities with the homeland of the religion (Bence, 2014; Wuaku, 2012). Surprisingly enough, only a few researches have studied the marketing activities and strategy of Krishna consciousness so far, even though the understanding of the processes and activities going on could provide a better overlook on the mechanisms and best practices of religious marketing.

This paper has two main aims. The first one is to analyze and identify the marketing activities of different communities devoted to Krishna consciousness in Europe; and the second one is to form a model based on these findings to interpret the system devotees have built up throughout the years to gain more followers of the religion.

In this paper the literature of marketing religions is discussed, followed by the introduction of the methodology applied. In the main body of the paper four countries and case studies are introduced based on the analysis of five villages devoted to Krishna consciousness.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Marketing of religions had been a topic of research only in the past few decades (Iannaccone, 1990), and different researchers have taken various approaches on it. The marketing strategies of religious communities – and also the way of studying them – varies a great deal in many aspects. In this paper religion is understood as set of beliefs, values, norms and traditions and even a state of mind, which are offered to the potential devotees by different churches and religious groups; and which are highly characterized, but not solely defined by the products and services offered by the church; based on Iannaccone (1990, 1992, 1995, 2016), Iyer et al, 2014; Kuran, 1994; and Shaw and Thomson, 2013.

Abela (2014) directed the concept of religion towards being more abstract and intangible than the definition above suggests; like a household commodity, claiming that the marketing of religion falls into the category of social marketing. Social marketing means those forms of marketing activities, where the focus is not on selling a product or service, but on spreading certain ideas, beliefs or worldviews among the public, which ‘may involve modifications in their attitudes, values, norms, and ideas’ (Brenkert, 2002, p. 16). This definition fits religion as well, which suggests that social marketing may be applied to market religions. Fine (2009) also included religions in his book of Marketing the Public Sector, and proposed an expanded marketing model of the 7P’s of social marketing, changing three of the original 7Ps: ‘people’, ‘process’ and ‘physical evidence’ are replaced by ‘producer’, ‘purchaser’ and ‘probing’.

**Table 1.** The difference between the 7Ps of service marketing and social marketing

7P of service marketing	7P of social marketing
Product	Product
Price	Price
Place	Place
Promotion	Promotion
<i>People</i>	<i>Producer</i>
<i>Process</i>	<i>Purchaser</i>
<i>Physical evidence</i>	<i>Probing</i>

Source: own edition based on Fine (2009) and Kolos & Kenesei (2007)

The social marketing approach focuses on the intangible part of religion by including the human side of both parties: producer and purchaser. This model raises the attention to the importance of the churches offering religious services and the nature of people potentially receiving it; however, probing or market research is less applicable to religions than the 7P of service marketing. Another weakness of the social marketing approach is the lack of the focus on physical evidences, which play important role in characterizing religions (e.g. design of churches and sacred items). Bence, 2014; Hashim & Hamzah 2014; Iyer et al, 2014; Kuran, 1994; and Shaw & Thomson, 2013 took a different approach and focused especially on the resemblance of religions to services, services provided by religious organizations; and different product categories as the material and tangible realizations of the services and the religion. This approach has also been justified by many researchers, claiming religions do have some common features with services in many aspects, such as being intangible, not measurable, perishable and pretty heterogeneous as well; and if we consider religious services themselves, then we can clearly see that applicability of the services marketing models (Bence, 2014; Hashim & Hamzah 2014; Iyer et al, 2014; Kuran, 1994; Shaw & Thomson, 2013).

However, the marketing of religion is a sensitive topic: ‘present and potential consumers’ meaning members and potential members of the church may regard promotion inappropriate for a religious organization - which is supposed to be non-profit - to engage in commercial activities. According to the researches many of the people generally think that churches doing marketing and for-profit activities – even though it is usually necessary for their survival – undermines the credibility and the sacredness of a church (Attaway, Boles & Singley, 1997; McDaniel 1986; McGraw, Schwartz & Tetlock, 2011). In the past years the general attitude has slightly changed, and also the clergy and church members are more accepting towards a certain level of commercial activity, which aims to provide the survival of the religious group, but according to McGraw et al (2011) a lot depends on the strategy itself. Marketing strategies will work well, if people cannot misunderstand the aims of it: when it suggests that the church is seeking for material benefits, people are more likely to strongly oppose it. If the aim is visibly good, such as renovating a church or supporting a charitable case, the public is likely to accept that there are problems even churches cannot solve without money (Ann & Devlin, 2000; Bence, 2014; McDaniel 1986; McGraw et al, 2011).

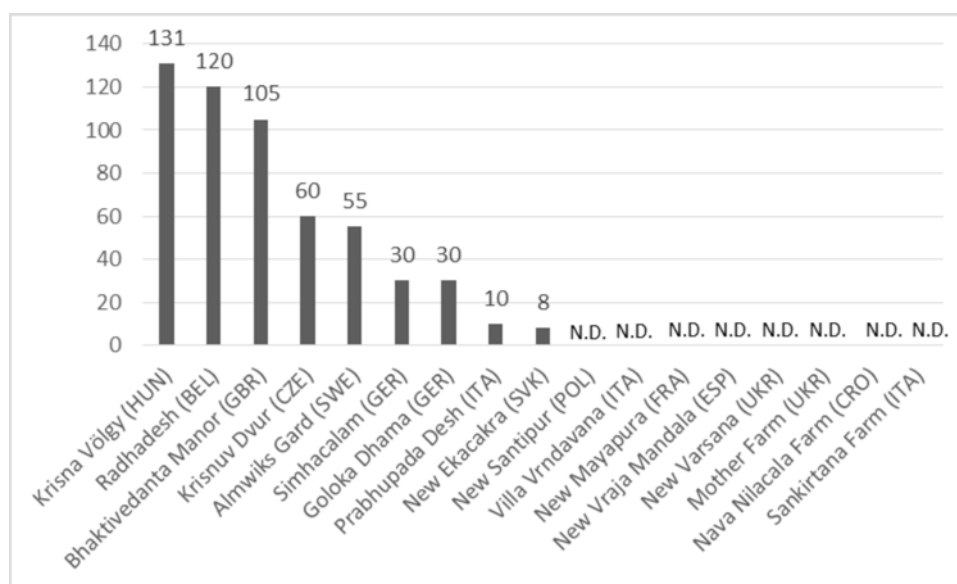
### 3. METHODOLOGY

The desired outcome of the research is to identify a model suitable to describe the marketing activities applied by communities devoted to Krishna consciousness in Europe. The primary reason for choosing this religious group was a previous research (Bence, 2014), which has shown that in Hungary devotees of Krishna consciousness apply the tools of marketing consciously and openly; therefore stand out among other religions in the country. The level of consciousness and the range of the tools applied raised the interest towards an international analysis and comparison of the marketing activities of communities devoted to Krishna consciousness. The study focuses on the activities of European communities, since this is the continent, where we may find numerous groups in different countries established approximately at the same time and under similar conditions, which provides a good basis for analyses.

The number and location of the devotees of Krishna consciousness in each country is really hard to determine, as many of them practice their religion at home, without any church connections. According to the database of the International Society for Krishna consciousness there are 30 countries in Europe, where there is at least one religious center or temple of Krishna consciousness - which suggests a certain level of organized religious activity in these places; so presumably there are also marketing activities on these places. After studying the database, the sample was selected based on the presence of marketing activities in each location. The first minimum requirement of being part of the research was to have online presence. Since most of the religious centers have at least a basic web page, this criteria was easily fulfilled. Following the identification of the potential subjects of the research, an analysis of the websites was carried out to get an overview on their level of online presence. The analysis has shown that larger variety of marketing activities were to be found in those countries, where not only a center or temple, but also a village existed, so this was introduced as a second filter when choosing the sample (ISKCON, 2018).

By 2018 we register eighteen villages devoted to Krishna consciousness in different European countries, giving home to variable number of devotees, as Figure 1 shows. The initial data inquiry, beginning in 2016, was sent back by representatives of seven out of the eighteen villages; these are the ones for which population data is shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1.** Population of the villages devoted to Krishna consciousness in Europe



Source: Own edition based on the data provided by the villages

So far, as Table 1 indicates, four out of the seven villages were visited with an aim of field research, which included personal visits in each of the villages, documented by photos and notes on the facilities available and the special characteristics of the area. Table 1 shows the most important general data on the four villages in Hungary, Belgium, the Czech Republic and Germany.

**Table 2.** The five villages analyzed in the research

Village	Country	Founded	Population	Main profile	Facilities available
Krisna Völgy	HUN	1993	131	Tourism and organic products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temple</li> <li>• Restaurant</li> <li>• Guest house</li> <li>• Gift shop</li> <li>• School</li> <li>• Cowshed center</li> <li>• Bio garden</li> <li>• Apiary</li> </ul>
Radhadesh	BEL	1980	120	Tourism and cuisine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temple</li> <li>• Restaurant</li> <li>• Guest house</li> <li>• Gift shop</li> <li>• Bakery</li> <li>• Museum</li> <li>• Bookshop</li> <li>• University</li> </ul>
Krisnuv Dvur	CZE	1990	33	Flour and biscuit production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temple</li> <li>• Flour-mill</li> <li>• Cowshed center</li> <li>• Apiary</li> </ul>
Simhachalam	GER	1980	30	Guest house	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temple</li> <li>• Restaurant</li> <li>• Gift shop</li> <li>• Guest House</li> <li>• Cowshed center</li> </ul>
Goloka Dhama	GER	1998	30	Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temple</li> <li>• Restaurant</li> <li>• Gift shop</li> <li>• Guest House</li> </ul>

Source: Own edition based on the observations and interviews

The method chosen for the research was qualitative due to the small size of the sample; being so few villages in Europe. Also, the initial aim of the research is to discover and understand the marketing strategies of the communities devoted to Krishna consciousness and to get a better insight into their practices, which requires qualitative research techniques. Following the initial inquiry for data and the analysis of the online appearances; the second stage of the research consisted of a field research in each of the villages, which took place in the years 2016 and 2017. The field research consisted of two essential elements: the first part was made up of semi-structured observations in each of the villages, searching for common patterns in physical appearance, ideas and marketing activities, while the second stage consisted of semi-structured in-depth interviews in each of the communities with people involved in the marketing processes. This paper introduces the findings of the semi-structured observations, which included a visit in the temple of the village, a general overview of the whole village area, visit in the facilities such as the restaurant, guest house and gift shop, participation in a guided tour – if available – and collection of the fliers and printed materials available in the visitors' center (Malhotra & Simon; 2009).

During the field research the main goal was to observe and identify the main marketing tools applied by each of the communities in order to find similarities or differences in their activities. Notes were taken of each facility and marketing tool applied by the religious communities of each country, including the villages; and the data collected through observation were summarized in a database. After the data collection the molecular model – created by Shostack (1977) and applied by Srinivasan (2012) – was used to evaluate and summarize the most important characteristics of each country. Shostack and Srinivasan used the molecular model to visualize the good and service elements of certain products, which owned both tangible and intangible characteristics. This research applies an altered molecular model (based on the original work of Shostack) in order to distinguish and visualize the marketing activities of communities devoted to Krishna conscious and to identify the subject of each marketing activity (Shostack, 1977; Srinivasan, 2012).

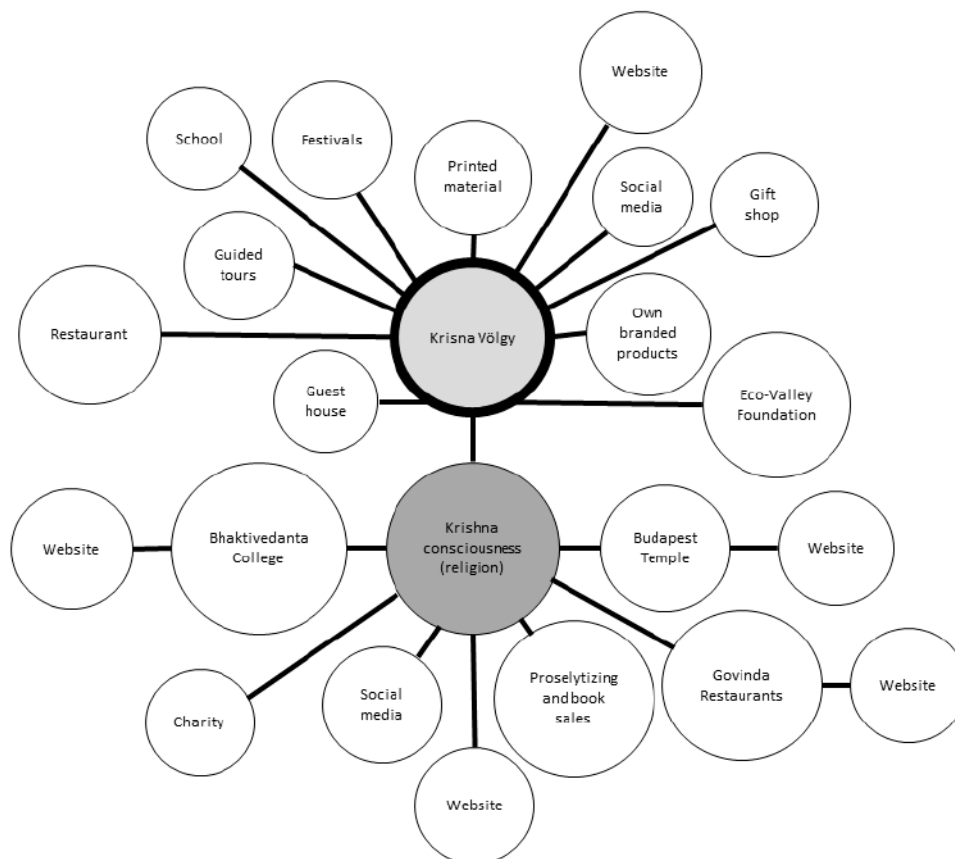
In the following molecular models of the marketing activities of the five communities in four countries are drawn, in order to visualize their main characteristics. The four molecular models represent one country each, based on the initial online marketing analysis and the observations and documentation carried out during the research. During the in-depth interviews the data collected through observations was validated and clarified. The molecular models contain all the means the devotees apply to make people get to know and understand their religion.

#### 4. RESEARCH RESULTS

After carefully analyzing the methods devotees use to promote the religion it became clear that some things have not changed in the past decades: the traditional way of promoting the religion was talking to people on the streets and selling books, ever since the appearance of the religion in the Western World in the 1960's (Kamarás, 1998). These methods are still visible nowadays, and they could be found in all the countries examined as well. However, marketing

and technology have developed a lot in the past fifty years, and people devoted to Krishna do consciously apply these methods in order to fulfill the most important goal set by their spiritual leaders: to spread the teachings of Krishna. The analysis had also shown that the 7Ps – of both service and social marketing – are cannot be satisfactorily used in order to analyze the marketing of Krishna consciousness: while aspects like probing and price are not so significant in the case of religions, some elements characteristic of marketing Krishna do not fit into any of the Ps. In the following section the cases of four countries are analyzed, identifying the differences and highlighting the uniform features within the four contexts, with an aim of building a model, which fills in the gaps identified in the former ones.

**Figure 2.** Marketing model of Krishna consciousness in Hungary.



Source: Own edition based on the observations and interviews

The first country – and community – analyzed was Hungary, where the former research of 2014 (Bence 2014) had shown an interesting phenomenon: even though there is a religious center in Budapest and the religion operates an own website and a Facebook page of 7969 likes, most of the activities and communication are directed towards the village, Krisna Völgy. The website and the Facebook page provide general information about the religion and the events happening in the country. The website gives an overview on the philosophy of Krishna consciousness and the lifestyle of devotees, but directs the visitors towards Krisna Völgy. The Facebook page gives insight into the past events and most important festivities, some happening in the Budapest Temple, and Bhaktivedanta College, but the majority of the pictures and posts focus on Krisna Völgy as well.

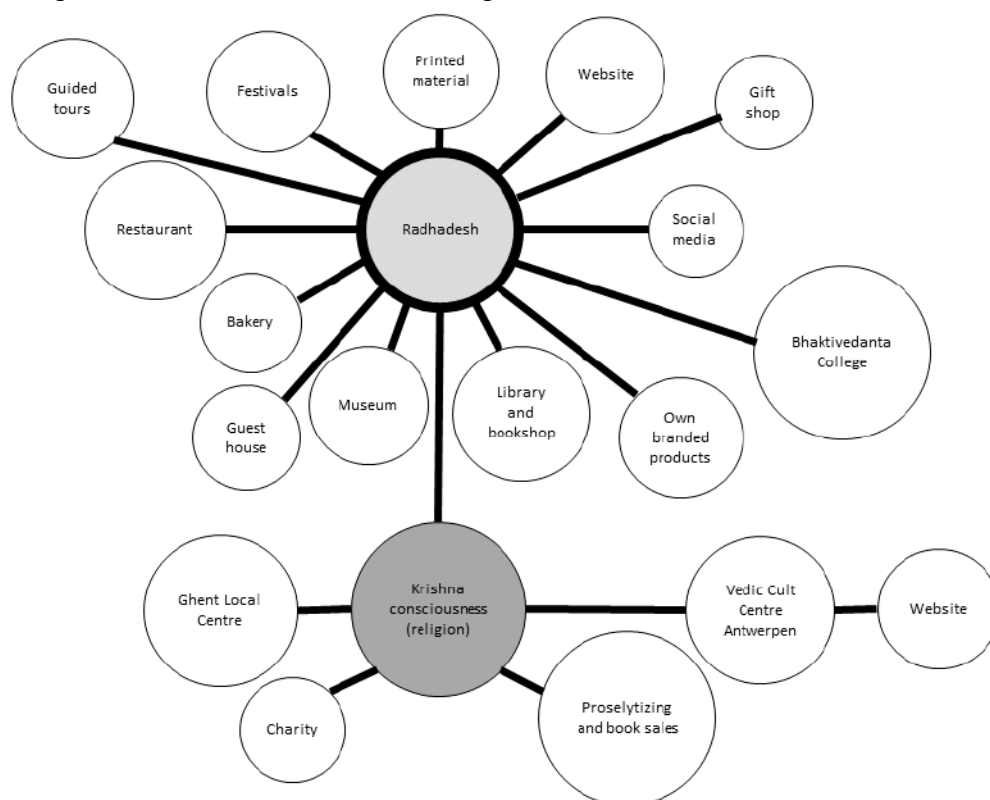
There are Govinda Restaurants also operating in some cities of Hungary (in Budapest, Eger, Debrecen), providing vegetarian food for eating on the spot and take-away. In Hungary there is one central website, where one may find all the restaurants and their offers. In their case – obviously - the content needs to focus on the menu and vegetarian or vegan nutrition, and not so much on Krishna consciousness, so they represent only a small segment of the life devoted to Krishna. However, the site redirects to other institutions of the country: Krisna Völgy, the temple in Budapest and the university in Budapest.

A great achievement of the Hungarian community was to establish a school and a university operated by the religion. There is a Gurukula in Krisna Völgy, where the local children can learn, but so far there had been no precedent of hosting a student from outside the community, so this does not have such a big promotional value at the moment. On the other hand at the Bhaktivedanta University in Budapest education focuses mostly on theology and yoga practices and it is open to the public as well. This means a powerful way of spreading valuable knowledge about Krishna consciousness – though the audience is pretty much limited to those, who are already interested in the religion and the lifestyle as well.

As we could see, many of the online platforms direct people towards Krishna Völgy, the village near Somogyvámos, which has a strong online presence including social media. In Krishna Völgy visitors – after paying an entry fee - can meet devotees, participate in guided tours, eat in the canteen, sleep in the guest house and take part in certain worships and festivals, which provide a glimpse into the daily life of Krishna-conscious people. Visitors can buy souvenirs and organic comestible products and soaps labeled with the Krishna Völgy brand. Since the foundation of Krishna Völgy there are more and more different festivals, where special programs, such as dance exhibitions, traditional weddings, yoga workshops and food tastings attract hundreds of people a day. The biggest of these is the Fair of Krishna Völgy, but numerous other sacral events take place as well. In the past years the number of thematic camps increased as well, which include yoga, cooking, meditation and lifestyle coaching.

The community operates a modern, informative, up-to-date website in multiple languages, focusing primarily on tourism and events. The main focus of the page is not the religion itself, but on the cultural experience and the traditional events of Krishna consciousness. The community in Krishna Völgy is active on Facebook (12.938 likes) and Instagram as well, where they mainly post still life photos or scenes of the daily life of the community, which is a little bit more introductory to Krishna consciousness, but still does not create the feeling of marketing the religion at all. Also, if we look at the more promotional activities in social media, they exhibit Krishna Völgy as touristic destination, not as a religious center in the first place. Printed materials are available in the community and are spread in tourist offices, so they are also primarily used for attracting visitors to the community, providing information about the upcoming programs and opportunities.

**Figure 3.** Marketing model of Krishna consciousness in Belgium



Source: Own edition based on the observations and interviews

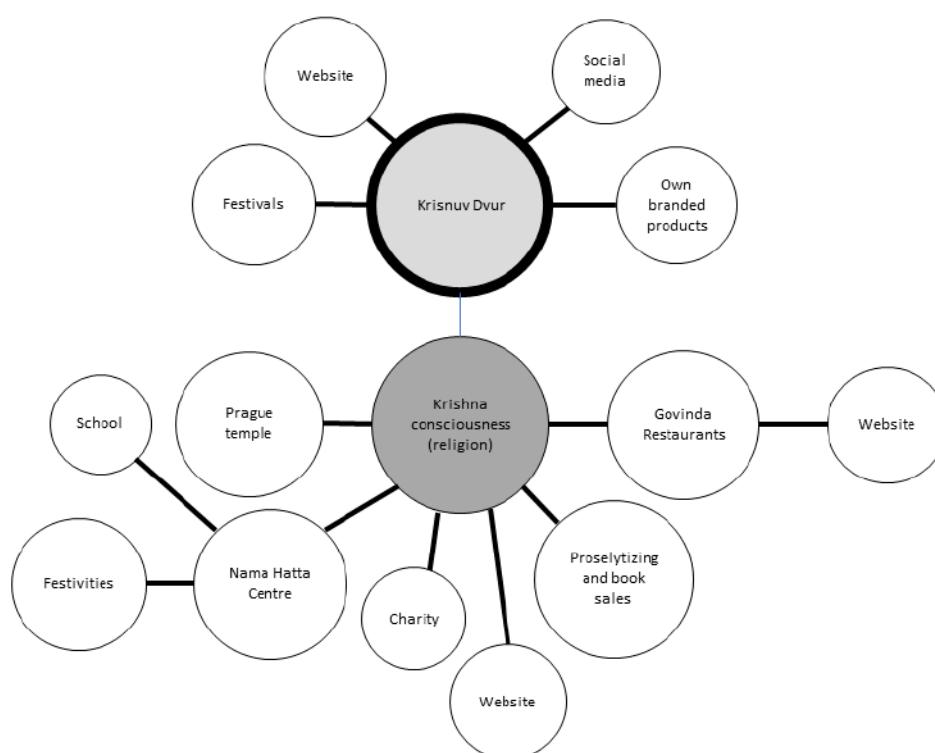
Belgians on the other hand do not maintain a national site at all, the only web pages available are those of Radhadesh, the village and the cultural centers in two other cities. In Belgium there is no separate temple, but two cultural centers in Ghent and Antwerp serve the same purpose as the temples, while fulfilling the aim of a gathering point and an event location as well. These facilities also operate their own websites with general information on the religion; they primarily promote cultural programs, festivities organized by the institution, events and learning opportunities concerning Krishna consciousness and bhakti yoga.

In Belgium Govinda Restaurants are not spread yet, the only one is in Radhadesh at the moment so they are missing from the model as a separate unit.

Just like in Hungary, in Belgium there is also a Bhaktivedanta University, where education focuses on theology and yoga practices, but the Belgian one is an integrated part of Radhadesh, far from the capital, so while in Hungary people interested in yoga and Eastern religion may participate without difficulties, in the case of Belgium the audience is more restricted to those, who are already familiar with the religion; and also moving to the countryside to gain admission requires more sacrifice, which limits the number of applicants even further.

It was visible that the online communication of Krishna consciousness in Hungary focuses a lot on Krisna Völgy. This phenomenon is far more emphasized in the case of Radhadesh, as the website of the village serves as the official site of the Krishna conscious community in Belgium as well. This site provides a general introduction of the religion in general and informs about the village and the upcoming events too. The Belgian community is also active on Facebook (13.161 likes) and Instagram, applying the same guidelines as Krisna Völgy: they enhance the beauty and attractiveness of the place and aim to involve more people in the programs. Just like Krisna Völgy, Radhadesh is also prepared to host many tourists at a time: there are guided tours available, where devotees tell people about their daily life in the community and explain the core of Krishna consciousness briefly. Visitors may eat in the restaurant of Radhadesh, buy pastries in the bakery and stay overnight in the guest house and buy souvenirs, sacred items and Radhadesh-branded fudges in the gift shop. If people would like to get more involved in the religion, they may look at the Museum of Sacred Arts and gain more information in the bookshop and the library, but for Radhadesh it is also true, that both in online and offline communication they emphasize that Radhadesh is an interesting cultural experience and a good place to visit and people get more exposed to the religion only during their visit, especially the guided tours.

**Figure 4.** Marketing model of Krishna consciousness in the Czech Republic



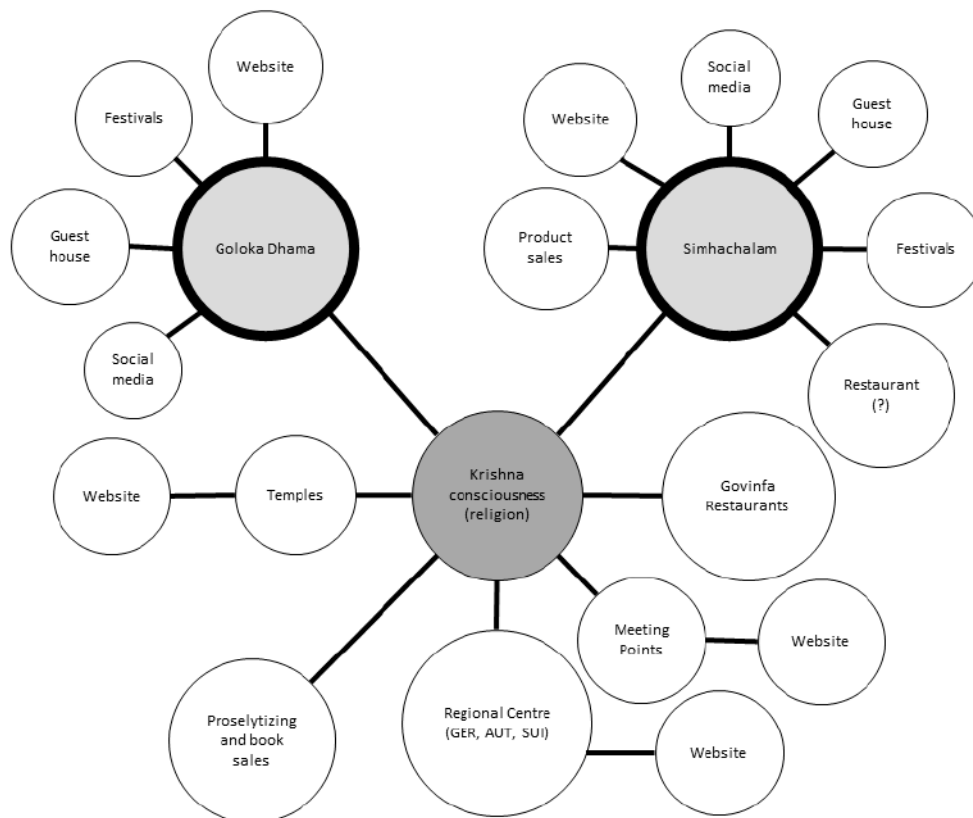
Source: Own edition based on the observations and interviews

Just like Hungary, the Czech Republic also operates a dedicated web page of Krishna consciousness, but here too, the site contains only basic information about the national community and redirects to other local pages. There is also a temple in the capital, serving as religious center, just like in the case of any other religions, operating together with the only Govinda restaurant of the country. Besides this, in the Czech Republic there is also a small cultural center called Nama Hatta Centre in Lutotin, on the Eastern side of the country, where a Gurukula weekend school and an event location may be found as well. However, the school is not equal to the primary school of Hungary, this one teaches some basics, but the audience is limited so far.

Krisnuv Dvur in Figure 4 is visibly less developed both in terms of marketing and infrastructure than the other two villages, however, the village serves the same aim in many senses. The devotees of Krisnuv Dvur are also operating a website (which is available only in Czech language) and are active on Facebook, though their page is less popular as the previous two communities (1850 likes), and they do not own an Instagram profile. However, the website and the Facebook page generally follow the same structure and strategy as Krisna Völgy and Radhadesh, though a bit less actively: the website provides general information about the location and the visiting opportunities, while on Facebook life scene pictures and videos and events are posted continuously. Though in the case of Krisnuv Dvur there is no strong marketing activity directing people towards visiting the community yet, there are possibilities to go around the area, where information boards indicate what the visitors can see, and though there is no dedicated guest house, staying overnight is also possible. There are no official guided tours, however devotees take the time to lead people around and talk about the community and the religion upon request.

However, Krisnuv Dvur is still more developed than it seems at first sight: besides being the supplier of organic, high quality flour for local bakeries in the Czech Republic, they also sell a wide range of Krisnuv Dvur branded cookies and biscuits in the area, which also carries the name of the community and the reputation of the religion.

**Figure 5.** Marketing model of Krishna consciousness in Germany



Source: Own edition based on the observations and interviews

Simhachalam and the model of marketing Krishna consciousness in Germany (Figure 5) stands a bit out of the line of the other communities, which can be related to multiple reasons. First of all, one could be the fact Germany is significantly larger than any of the countries studied above. The large geographical distance may cause that the general structure of the religious community is slightly different, more decentralized and operating more than one villages, temples and religious centers. Traditional forms of promoting Krishna consciousness, such as proselytizing, selling books and doing charity services do also happen, just like in any other countries. But in Germany there is not only one, but two farming communities, and Simhachalam and Goloka Dhama. Unlike in the previous cases, Germany operates a Regional Centre in Burg Hohenstein, which is also partially responsible for the communities in Austria and Switzerland. This is however the only one of the four countries analyzed, where we can speak about a dedicated authority to manage, support and supervise communities, temples and devotees in the country. Also, there are numerous temples in bigger cities all over the country, and there is a network of meeting points – centers or common rooms, where devotees may meet, gather, share experiences and organize events. All of these entities have their own websites, providing information about the upcoming programs and opportunities. These hubs are maintained primarily for present devotees, but other people interested in the programs are also welcome to the events, so these also have a certain level of marketing value.

Many Govinda Restaurants exist in the country, and as it may be expected, their number is far larger than in the countries studied before, but schools or universities cannot be found in this Germany yet.

However, if we take a closer look at the two farming communities and the marketing activities concentrated around them, we can recognize exactly the same pattern as in Hungary, Belgium or the Czech Republic. Both Simhachalam and Goloka Dhama have websites, though they are not so much focused on tourism, as we could see in the case of Krishna Völgy and Radhadesh; they are more dedicated to devotees around the area, to offer a gathering point and daily worships. However, the worships and the daily events, as well as the festivals are open to the public too – and the latter are also promoted, at least locally. Both Simhachalam and Goloka Dhama welcome passers-by to join for a meal in their canteen, but there is no visible promotion of it, and the canteen cannot actually be called a restaurant, since it is just the kitchen and the place where the locals eat, but guests are also welcome. In both communities there is also a small guest



house to welcome visitors, who are usually devotees from other areas. The possibilities to stay overnight are open to civilians as well, but they are not promoted except for the website, so, according to the manager of the guest houses, the arrival of guests, who are not devotees is pretty accidental. As the leader of the guest house emphasized, at the moment the community has no real capacity to promote itself to the larger public. Simhachalam is basically prepared for hosting a limited number of visitors, and there is an intention to follow the example of Krisna Völgy and Radhadesh, but they still have a long way to go – and there is also a necessity of a good leader with a vision and a strategy to reach this goal. Goloka Dhama is in the same situation; at the moment not yet ready for enhanced touristic activity, but they are developing in product sales. This part of marketing has been declining in Simhachalam in the previous years. A decade ago candles produced in the community were the main profile, but since then it had stopped, so now the only products are Indian pre-prepared items and non-branded cookies, which are produced locally, but they are also sold irregularly.

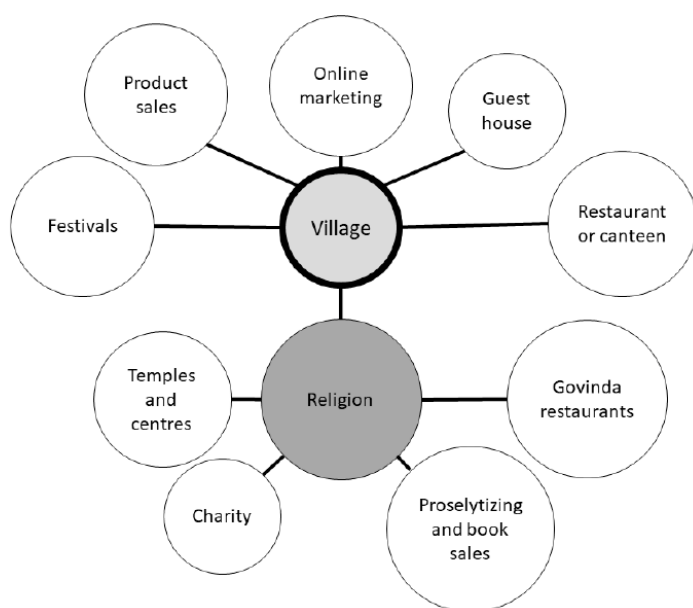
The Facebook page of Simhachalam is the most followed of all the communities examined (17.640 likes), however, the contents here are pretty different from the above mentioned ones, they are mostly only broadcasting the daily worships and events, for which the audience is more likely to be present devotees than people curious about the religion. The leaders of the village do have the intention to focus more on the touristic aspects both in online presence and marketing activities – this is also visible in the promotion of certain festivities and events – but at the moment their knowledge, capacities and resources do not make it possible. The Facebook page of Goloka Dhama – though far less followed (4.768 likes) is also restricted mostly to daily worships and promoting events.

## 5. CONCLUSION

After analyzing the five villages in four countries, we could see that the most significant similarity of the four models is the presence of a village or a farming community in each of the countries, and the intensive marketing activities concentrated around them, especially in Hungary and Belgium.

So if we take a look at the big picture, we can see that the villages analyzed are representing Krishna consciousness, trying to make it more understandable and tangible to the wide public. Most of the marketing activities are directed towards attracting people to these locations instead of the religion itself. At the moment not all the communities are able to follow this pattern as Krisna Völgy and Radhadesh do it, but the smaller communities look at these villages as the examples for best practices, so they are also working on following the same path. Figure 6 introduces the summarized model based on the findings of the analysis of four countries.

**Figure 6.** Summarizing model of the two-step marketing model



Source: Own edition based on the observations and interviews

We could see that in all of the countries there are some forms of marketing directed towards the religion, such as proselytizing on the streets, selling books and engaging in charity activities. Some countries also operate a web- or Facebook page for the religion and some institutions, such as temples, schools and cultural centers, but in most of the cases these communication channels serve to direct people towards the villages, which are primarily marketed as touristic

destinations. This is the most important characteristic of marketing Krishna consciousness, which does not fit into the 7Ps, as the villages are more than the physical evidences of the religion. Villages devoted to Krishna consciousness serve both as the focal point of the marketing activities attracting people towards the religion; and the most important mean of introducing people to Krishna consciousness. This suggests that there is a two-step marketing process in focus, where in the first step the religion is not expressed; the aim is attracting the audience to a touristic destination based on cultural motives. Only after this does the religion appear in a more expressed way, and people will get familiar with it without even realizing that they are involved in a promotional process. This practice makes the marketing activities less visible, just like precious researches suggested; and the audience experiences it more as a learning process than promotion, while they are provided with the same information, just by different means. During the research the village itself and all the physical evidences and tools supporting touristic activity in the communities (such as guest houses, restaurants, museums, guided tours and branded products transmitting some aspects of life devoted to Krishna consciousness) were identified as elements of the toolbar devotees apply to enhance the recognition of the religion.

Numerous limitations and implications are inherent in this paper, also due to the early phase the research is still in. First of all the sample at the moment is really small, which was suitable for initially finding the patterns and crucial areas to focus on; however, the aim of the author is to carry out a comprehensive analysis of communities devoted to Krishna consciousness in Europe. For this a thorough research of the European communities is required, including those countries, where no villages or farming communities exist at the moment. However, this research implies the need for the application of a model studying the marketing of Krishna consciousness, which contributes to the theoretical background of studying religious marketing. The model should be tested on all the countries, where there is a possibility of two-step marketing, meaning that these villages exist; also extending worldwide, to be able to justify the validity of the model. Further analysis should cover the case of those countries, where Krishna consciousness is present, but there are no villages to act as the core of the marketing strategy.

Furthermore, the identification of the two-step marketing model of Krishna consciousness in Europe raises the need for the measurement of the efficiency of this model. This research has already revealed that there are significant differences among the different countries and communities in terms of the acceptance and recognition of the religion, therefore further research should also investigate if there is a relationship between the general acceptance and knowledge of the religion, the two-step model and the marketing activity of the communities in the second step, upon attracting tourism to make people more aware of Krishna consciousness. These questions require a carefully designed quantitative research in order to provide trustworthy data applicable for further analysis and conclusions. When tested and validated, the model may support the development of those countries, where Krishna consciousness is not widespread yet and the foundation of more villages may be urged, which can contribute to the income and acknowledgement of the religion. This model may provide support for other new religious movements as well, which strive with gaining more followers in Europe or in other countries with cultures differing from that of their origin.

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## ISTRAŽIVANJE MARKETING STRATEGIJA SVJESNOSTI KRIŠNE U EUROPI

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### SAŽETAK

Cilj ovog rada je analizirati i identificirati marketinške aktivnosti različitih zajednica posvećenih svjesnosti Krišne u Europi, te razviti model zasnovan na tim nalazima za tumačenje sustava koje su zagovornici izgrađivali tijekom godina kako bi stekli više sljedbenika religije. Svijest Krišne je poznata po marketinškim naporima zajednice; međutim, literatura je za sada ograničena u pogledu aktivnosti koje primjenjuju kako bi dosegli široku publiku. U 2016. i 2017. godini provedeno je kvalitativno istraživanje, uključujući promatranja i intervju u pet europskih sela u Mađarskoj, Belgiji, Češkoj i Njemačkoj. Istraživanje je identificiralo obrazac prema kojem se marketinški proces odvija u dva koraka u sve četiri istraživane zajednice. U prvom koraku zajednice se promoviraju kao turističke destinacije, usredotočujući se uglavnom na turizam i njegove kulturne motive. Ovdje zagovornici primjenjuju širok raspon metoda, poput internetskih medija, letaka i organiziraju brojne festivale i kulturna događanja kako bi privukli ljude. U drugoj fazi turisti - koji su već učinili prvi korak prema svjesnosti Krišne posjećujući sela - informiraju se o suštini i najvažnijim učenjima religije i mogu doživjeti mnoge aspekte putem interaktivnih programa, što povećava uključenost i razumijevanje. Stvoreni model doprinosi detaljnijoj analizi i razumijevanju marketinških aktivnosti svjesnosti Krišne. Dugoročno se može proširiti i na druge religije, pa je stoga moguća i analiza i razvoj marketinških koncepata drugih religijskih skupina.

**KLJUČNE RIJEČI:** religijski marketing, svjesnost krišne, marketing religija, vjerski turizam, internet marketing.