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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TOURISM ENTERPRISES' OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES OF TOURISM

ISSUES OF TOURISM SERVICE MARKET

REGIONAL PROBLEMS OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

The increase in importance of tourism in the contemporary world is visible at many levels of socio-economic systems. It strongly underlines its influence on the economy, the quality and style of living as well as the environment. The complexness of tourism and its interdisciplinary character are the reasons for the constant growth of interest in research regarding tourism of various scientific disciplines, especially the economical sciences. It is caused by the rising influence of the tourism sector on the economic development, not only on the local and regional but also on global scale.

In a series of the *Scientific Journal University of Szczecin: Economic Problems of Tourism* the results of research and the scientific achievements in the field of the economical aspects of tourism, gathered by scientists from Polish and foreign scientific centers are presented. The accepted outline of the journal allows publication of papers regarding diverse problems connected with the conditions and consequences of the development of tourism on the economical; these include the operation of tourist enterprises, the market of tourism services, development of a tourism worldwide and the regional problems of tourism development. The issues undertaken in the presented journal of *Economic Problems of Tourism* are diverse. However, its main focus are the matters of regional determinants of tourism development and the market of touristic services.

With the beginning of 2012 the formula of the publication of the *Scientific Journal University of Szczecin: Economic Problems of Tourism* changes. It will now be coming out quarterly, not once a year, as it has been until now.

TOURISM ENTERPRISES' OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS

SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL

NO. 658 ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF TOURISM VOL. 1 (17) 2012

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WEIGHING PASSENGERS BECAUSE AIR FARES ARE NOT FAIR

Introduction

Air transport is a critical driver of the world economy, and in Africa it is one of the solutions to poverty.[1] It plays a vital role in achieving sustainable development through its contribution to tourism.[2] The internal tourism expenditure (inbound and domestic) on air passenger services in 2005 in South Africa (SA) was 11.9% of total spent.[3] Passenger traffic has grown worldwide at an average yearly rate of 9% since 1960, and it is estimated to grow at a rate between 5% and 7% into the foreseeable future.[4] However, the airline industry is in trouble. A market shake out occurs and carriers that are leaving have the highest cost or

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[1] J. Mitchell, C. Ashley, *Tourism and poverty reduction; a case for pro-poor policy development*, "African Analyst Quarterly" 2007, vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 44–60. C.M. Rogerson, *Reviewing Africa in the global tourism economy*, "Development Southern Africa" 2007, vol. 24, No. 3, pp. 362–379.

[2] R. Abeyratne, *Economic benefits of civil aviation justify substantial investment in industry*, "ICAO Journal, the magazine of the International Civil Aviation Organization" July/August 2005, vol. 60, No. 4, Montreal, pp. 11–13, p. 27; H. Ueckermann, *Staat wil verseker dat toerisme vlerke kry*, "Sake-Rapport", September 3, Media24, Johannesburg 2006, p. 3.

[3] Statistics South Africa, *Draft tourism satellite accounts*, D0405.7, Statssa, Pretoria May 2009, p. 36.

[4] P. Hanlon, *Global airlines competition in a transnational industry*, Elsevier, Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford 2007, pp. 3–4.

a thin demand. The industry is plagued by runaway fuel costs and an inability to price its product appropriately.[5] South African Airlines (SAA) is no exception[6] and being a long-haul destination flights into SA is expensive; for over one third of potential visitors from key source markets, the cost of the airfare represents a significant barrier.[7] Ardell[8] argues that passengers and airline bottom lines are inversely related, because super-sized passengers added significantly to fuel cost of airline operations. In addition airlines have been squeezing more seats into planes.[9] Slimmer travelers do not only have to contend with a cramped airplane seat but may be squeezed out of the space they have paid for, by obese passengers sitting next to them. Besides, passengers that are not overweight subsidize those that are. The question arises: "What can airlines do to cut fuel and costs and raise revenues whilst dealing fairly and sensitively with all passengers?" When prices are determined they should not be contentious, but satisfy the criteria of procedural and distributive justice. Distributive justice refers to the perceived fairness of prices for different categories of passengers and procedural justice to the perceived fairness of the means used to determine those prices.[10] Procedural justice is related to legitimacy (Should the fair structure be changed? Is it justified?), and distributive justice to the outcome satisfaction

[5] R.E. Neidl, *US Airlines need consolidation and rational pricing*, "Aviation Week & Space Technology" 2005, vol. 163, No. 19.

[6] M. Mittner, *SAL kan tot 2 232 laat loop; Maar Ngcula sê hy bly tot 2009*, "Sake24", September 6, Media24, Johannesburg 2007, p. 1.

[7] *Draft National Tourism Sector Strategy*, Department of Tourism, Pretoria 2010, p. 65, *SA Tourism. Global Competitiveness Programme for the Tourism Industry in SA, 2005–2010, Executive Summary*, November 2005, p. 42.

[8] D.B. Ardell, *How airlines can make money and promote wellness; a call for incentive-based ticket pricing*, www.seekwellness.com, 1.1.2011.

[9] C.H. Blickenstorfer, *Think tank; airlines and fat passengers*, NAAFA (National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance) Convention, 2002, www.naafa.org, 1.3.2011.

[10] R. Folger, M.A. Konovsky, *Effects of procedural and distributive justice on reactions to pay raise decisions*, "The Academy of Management Journal" 1989, vol. 32, No. 1, pp. 115–130.

(Are the prices non-discriminatory? Does it give rise to inequality[11]? Whether price discrimination is fair involves making value judgments.[12]

Price discrimination occurs when different prices are charged for reasons not associated with differences in cost of supply.[13] In most cases discrimination is based on differences in demand elasticity. High-income and business travellers, who may place a high value on status by travelling in relative luxury, and are generally subject to strict limitations on the time, as well as those travelling for urgent personal reasons, such as attending a funeral, have relative price-inelastic demand.[14] On the other hand, holidaymakers, those visiting friends and relatives, and students are generally more sensitive in their demand to the fares charged. Airlines thus ask different prices based on passengers' willingness to pay.

1. *PRICE DIFFERENTIATION OF AIR TICKETS BASED ON SIZE TO ENSURE COMFORT AND EQUITY*

Southwest Airlines introduced a *person of size* policy to ensure maximum comfort for everybody.[15] It requires of large air passengers who need to lift the armrest because they do not fit into the seat, to buy two seats; the second one at a reduced child's fare rate, payable only if there are no empty seats available. However, it has been met with much resistance. The following arguments have inter alia been raised:[16]

– If large passengers pay more for comfort will they get double frequent flyer miles?

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[11] D.B. McFarlin, P.D. Sweeney, *Distributive and procedural justice as predictors of satisfaction with personal and organizational outcomes*, "The Academy of Management Journal" 1992, vol. 35, No. 3, pp. 626–637.

[12] P. Hanlon, *Global airlines…*, p. 254.

[13] J. Tribe, *The economics of recreation, leisure and tourism*, 3rd ed., Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford 2005, p. 118; P. Hanlon, *Global airlines…,* pp. 246–262.

[14] J. Tribe, *The economics…*, p. 75.

[15] M.A. O'Neill, *Obesity and air travel: weighing up the issues*, "Hospitality review: a School of Hospitality and Tourism Publication" 2004, vol. 22, No. 1, Florida International University, Miami, pp. 80–98.

[16] M.A. O'Neill, *Obesity and…*, p. 84.

- Obesity is a disability and airlines routinely accommodate others with special needs, such as those in wheelchairs and children travelling alone; it is thus discriminatory.
- Passengers are paying for a trip for point A to B and not a well-defined space.

On the other hand; if a person of average height and weight board a plane and his/her luggage exceeds the allowance he/she has to pay extra, but the next person in line whose body weight is 50 kilograms more, incurs no extra cost if the latter's baggage is within the acceptable allowance. In addition, overweight people pay more than slimmer people for health insurance and for clothing; one price does not fit all.

A possible solution is to charge air passengers according to how much they weigh and how much space they take up, the same way as it cost more to take excess, overweight and oversize baggage. In 2003 the International Air Travel Association (IATA) was in the final stages to develop a model where not only the luggage, but also passengers is weighted, but airlines seem to be hesitant in adopting it; probably because it is a sensitive issue.[17]

2. *PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH, RESEARCH METHOD AND FINDINGS*

The purpose of the research was to establish if passengers are of the opinion that determining airfares based on the combined weight of passengers and their luggage is fair, and what is the main factor influencing their decision when purchasing an air ticket. This may contribute to procedural and distributive justice for pricing decisions of airline tickets. It was an exploratory descriptive study. A survey was conducted in October 2006 amongst 328 persons who have purchased an air ticket during the preceding twelve months. The fieldwork was done by senior university tourism students. The questionnaire design was based on a literature search and tested in the field. A non-probability, judgmental sample was drawn and the composition of the final sample is reflected in Table 1.

[17] D. Burton, *Obese fliers weigh down planes; Overweight passengers pushing up the cost of flights*, "Associated Press" ET Nov 4, 2004, www.msnbc.msn.com, 1.3.2012.

Table 1

Sample composition

Age	Count–%	Population	Count–%	Size	Count–%	Class ticket	Count–%
Up to 35	185–56.4	White	142–43.3	Small	70–21.3	First	20–6.1%
36–50	86–26.2	Black	105–32	Medium	158–48.2	Business	58–17.7%
51& older	31–9.5	Indian	44–13.4	Large	60–15.2	Economy	248–75.6%
		Coloured	14–4.3	Extra large	10–3		
Missing	26–7.9		23–7		40–12.2		2–0.6%
Total	328–100		328–100		288–100		328–100%

Source: own elaboration.

More males (156 or 47.6%) than females (149 or 45.4%) were interviewed. The sample had more white (142 or 43.3%) and young persons (185 or 56.4%), and more respondents were classified as of medium size and weight (158 or 48.2%). It is neither representing economy class passengers who are price sensitive, nor small and overweight passengers who may feel that a price based on weight is discriminatory.

Respondents were asked, as opening questions, to indicate the most important factor that influenced them to fly with a particular airline, what type of ticket they bought, and then to indicate the most important factor that influenced their decision to buy that type of ticket. Questions one and three were in an open ended format. The expectation was that persons flying economy class because of price sensitivity, especially those that were relatively small, would be in favour of a price based on the combined weight of the passenger and his/her luggage, and indeed this was the case, as illustrated later on. The question could not be asked directly because it would be a leading question. It would also be socially insensitive. The following funnelling approach in the questionnaire design was thus used:

- Determine if price is an important decision factor and the relative importance thereof; first in an unaided manner and then providing a list of decision factors, of which sufficient leg space plus comfortable seating was one.
- Verify the opinion by adding a sacrifice and putting a price tag to the preference.
- Ascertain what is considered to be fair price determination for air tickets amongst three given methods; current practice, based on weight plus luggage, and categories of weight.

- Ask passengers' feelings towards providing free extra space for those in need, and then towards free space to four different categories of passengers of which obesity was one.
- Lastly, uncover if respondents had ever been inconvenienced on a flight by an overweight passenger taking up some of their space.

Only the most pertinent findings will be discussed and the comparison of responses between age and population groups will not be reported on. As three quarters (75.6%) of the respondents flew economy class it was expected that pricing was the dominant decision factor for 215 persons (65.5%) to buy a particular type of ticket and it was the case, as reflected in Table 2. It was also the most important factor for 152 passengers (46.3%) in selecting a particular airline. Respondents used descriptors such as: "better rates, cheapest fare, cost of the ticket, affordable rates, value for money, get a discount, rewards, incentive programmes, loyalty points, voyager miles and a free pass".

Table 2

Factors influencing choice of airline and type of airline ticket bought

Most important factor that influenced my decision to…	fly with a particular airline		buy a particular type of ticket	
	Count	%	Count	%
Pricing; e.g. better rates, value, incentives, rewards	152	46.3	215	65.5
Familiarity/recommendation; e.g. media, used before	32	9.8	3	0.9
Service/professionalism; e.g. friendly, caring, punctual	25	7.6	9	2.7
Safety/consistency; e.g. reliable, never had a crash	19	5.8	2	0.6
Convenience of booking; e.g. ease, access, package	19	5.8	7	2.1
Luxury/comfort; e.g. entertainment, space, privacy	16	4.9	35	10.7
Availability of routes; e.g. only means to get there	15	4.6	8	2.4
Time schedules; e.g. frequency, duration, flexibility	12	3.7	3	0.9
No choice; e.g. bought for me, company preference	12	3.7	12	3.7
Other; no difference, language, neat, smart uniforms	10	3	17	5.1
Food; e.g. free drinks, refreshments	2	0.6	0	0
Missing	14	4.3	24	7.3
Total	328	100%	328	100%

Source: own elaboration.

Respondents were then asked to rate the importance of seven pre-selected factors that may also have impacted on the decisions to fly with a particular airline, and to buy a particular type of ticket on the scale of one to five, where

five indicated *very strongly* and one, *not at all*. The results confirm the response given to the opening questions as illustrated in Table 3. Low and competitive air fares, was again rated as a very strong decision factor by 224 (68.3%) respondents. The findings are reported in order of importance, not in the order the questions had been posed. Respondents were so price sensitive in that half (167 or 50.9%) of them were willing to change their arrival and departure times in order to fly cheaper, and 73 respondents (22.3%) were not willing to pay more to fly at a time that suits them best.

Table 3

Other factors that may have played a role in buying air tickets

Other factors influencing decision	Not at all	2	3	4	Very strongly	No response	4+ very strongly
Safety record of airline	17	11	45	77	160	18	237
	5.2%	3.4%	13.7%	23.5%	48.8%	5.5%	72.3%
Low and competitive airfare	13	18	57	87	137	16	224
	4%	5.5%	17.4%	26.5%	41.8%	4.9%	68.3%
Convenient departure and arrival times	12	21	59	81	141	14	222
	3.7%	6.4%	18%	24.7%	43%	4.3%	67.6%
Overall service before, during and after the flight	10	20	56	109	112	21	221
	3%	6.1%	17.1%	33.2%	34.1%	6.4%	67.3%
Comfortable seating	19	36	83	68	106	16	174
	5.8%	11%	25.3%	20.7%	32.3%	4.9%	53%
Sufficient leg space	40	43	78	73	77	17	150
	12.2%	13.1%	23.8%	22.3%	23.5%	5.2%	45.8%
Other	8	8	7	21	35	249	57
	2.4%	2.4%	2.1%	6.4%	10.7%	75.9%	17.1%

Source: own elaboration.

Almost a third (95 or 29%) of the total sample was willing to pay extra for more leg space and comfortable seating. The size of the respondent did not influence the response. A fifth of the sampled passengers (67 or 20.4%) indicated that they were willing to pay up to ten percent extra for more leg space and comfortable seating, and 24 (7.3%) indicated that they were willing to pay 11–20% more for this benefit.

Respondents were asked in three consecutive questions if they think the given method to determine the price of an air ticket was fair or not, and their opinions are summarized in Table 4. The starting point was not rotated and may

have influenced the results. The current practice, namely different prices for first class, business class and economy class seem to be fair for most (301 or 91.8%). According to 232 (70.7%) respondents the second method based on the size of the seat and legroom was also considered fair.

Table 4

Fairness of three different methods to determine the price of an air ticket

Methods to determine the price of an air ticket	Yes	No	Missing	Total
The current practice, that is different prices for first class, business class and economy class?	301	25	2	328
	91.8%	7.6%	0.6%	100%
A price category based on the size of the seat and legroom?	232	91	5	328
	70.7%	27.7%	1.5%	100%
A price based on the combined weight of the passenger and his or her luggage as in the case of airfreight?	169	141	18	328
	51.5%	43%	5.5%	100%
Would you consider categories of up to 100 kilos, 101–120 kilos and over 121 kilos to be fair?	121	66	141	328
	36.9%	20.1%	43%	100%

Source: own elaboration.

As was expected, there is an inverse relation between the size of the respondent and the proportion who agreed that it is fair to base the price of an air ticket on the size of the seat and legroom, but the difference was insignificant (71.1% for large, 72.2% for medium and 72.9% for small passengers). Contrary to what was expected, a price based on the combined weight of the passenger and his/her luggage as in the case of airfreight was seen to be the least fair (141 or 43%). However, there is a small inverse correlation between the size of the passenger and this opinion, as indicated in Table 5; 37.1% of small passengers felt it was not fair, 42.4 percent of medium sized passengers and 48.3% of large passengers.

Table 5

Fairness to base the price of an air ticket on the combined weight of the passenger and his or her luggage as in the case of airfreight

Size	Small				Medium				Large			
Count	42	26	2	70	86	67	5	158	25	29	6	66
%	60	37.1	2.9	100	54.4	42.4	3.2	100	41.7	48.3	10	100
	yes	no	mis.	total	yes	no	mis.	total	yes	no	mis.	total

Source: own elaboration.

Four fifths (262 or 79.9%) of respondents were of the opinion that passengers with special needs should be provided with extra space without them paying extra. Again, there is a slight inverse correlation between to the size of the passengers and the proportion that are in agreement with this opinion. With respect to different categories of special needs, respondents were most sympathetic towards people in wheelchairs (259 or 79%) and the least with obese passengers (148 or 45.1%) as illustrated in Table 6 (reflected in order of empathy).

Table 6

Providing free extra space for airline passengers with special needs

Should extra space without paying be made available to passengers who suffer from…	Yes	No	No response	Total
Disabled passengers who are in wheelchairs?	259	24	45	328
	79.0%	7.3%	13.7%	100%
Deep Vein Thrombosis?	218	57	53	328
	66.5%	17.4%	16.2%	100%
Blind passengers?	168	115	45	328
	51.2%	35.1%	13.7%	100%
Obese passengers?	148	135	45	328
	45.1%	41.2%	13.7%	100%
Any other group of passengers?	87	167	74	328
	26.5%	50.9%	22.6%	100%

Source: own elaboration.

The sampled airline passengers were divided on whether obese persons should pay more for their air tickets; 45.1% said yes and 41.2% said no, even though 114 (34.8%) testified that they had been inconvenienced on a flight by someone who were overweight and took up some of their space. As was expected, in the case of small passengers more (47.1%) were of opinion that obese passengers should not be given free extra space, than those who said yes (38.6%). See Table 7. More small passengers (41.4%) had been inconvenienced in a flight by someone who were overweight and took up some of their space, than medium sized passengers (38%) and large passengers (26.7%).

Table 7

Providing free extra space for obese airline passengers

Different categories of respondents		Yes		No		No response		Total	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Age	Up to 35 years	85	45.9	79	42.7	21	11.4	185	100
	36 to 50 years	35	40.7	36	41.9	15	17.4	86	100
	51 and older	12	38.7	14	45.2	5	16.1	31	100
Population	Black	58	55.2	35	33.3	12	11.4	105	100
	White	45	31.7	75	52.8	22	15.5	142	100
	Indian & coloured	30	51.7	20	34.5	8	13.8	58	100
Size	Small	27	38.6	33	47.1	10	14.3	70	100
	Medium	73	46.2	64	40.5	21	13.3	158	100
	Large	26	43.3	25	41.7	9	15	60	100

Source: own elaboration.

3. *MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS*

For passengers air transport is about price and for airlines it is about cost.[18] Airlines have to focus on driving down controllable cost (distribution and administration) delivering cost efficiencies (promotion, insurance, fuel, maintenance, spares, crew, passenger services and investment) and managing revenue (fleet management and seat revenue). With respect to curbing obesity and eventually driving down cost, Ardell[19] suggests that prices should be increased by a certain percentage (say 10) to pay for added fuel costs. Airports can place wellness reward scales and height charts at all check-in-counters to enable lifestyle conscious passengers to reduce the price of their tickets by 10%. They may read their Body Mass Index (BMI) and if it is 25 or below, receive a 10% discount on their next airline ticket purchase. The BMI combines information about height and body weight and compares them, using a scale from 18 to 40; 18.5 to 24.9 is the ideal weight range, 25 to 29.9 is overweight and 30 or higher is obese. In the long run this may lead to overweight passengers adopting a healthier lifestyle to lose weight which will contribute to fuel savings.

[18] G. Cullen, *The value chain and the economic impact of air transport financing*, "Twelfth CDB Special Discussion Forum", www.caribank.com, 1.3.2011.

[19] D.B. Ardell, *op. cit.*

Seat revenue management could be improved by introducing a new passenger tariff, based on space occupied and combined weight of the passenger and his/her luggage. This may stimulate demand, especially from fare conscious leisure and private business passengers, who might otherwise not have travelled as frequently. The tariff must be closely aligned with the market and growing competition. It is expected that the rapid growth of low cost carriers will continue, which will add excess seat capacity and exert downward pressures on fares.[20]

Prices of air tickets should not be contentious, but satisfy the criteria of procedural and distributive justice. People fly for different reasons and have different valuations of tickets and some flights are more popular than others. Recognizing theses differences, and taking cognizance of the perishability of the product, airlines should have a price structure with differential pricing to appeal to different types of travellers and to manage demand.

WAGA PASAŻERA A TARYFY LOTNICZE

Streszczenie

Pomimo wzrostu liczby pasażerów linie lotnicze mają kłopoty ze względu na coraz większe koszty. Jedną z przyczyn jest otyłość pasażerów. Otyłość jest problemem światowym, a w czasie lotu pasażerowie szczupli *de facto* subsydiują pasażerów otyłych. W artykule przedstawiono wyniki badań, których celem było określenie stosunku pasażerów do hipotetycznych taryf opartych na wadze pasażera i jego bagażu. Badania przeprowadzono na grupie 328 pasażerów.

[20] *Annual review of civil aviation, 2004*, "ICAO Journal, the magazine of the International Civil Aviation Organization", Sept/Oct 2005, vol. 60, No. 5, Montreal, pp. 5–32, 46; V.C.T. Middleton, A. Fyall, M. Morgan, A. Ranchhod, *Marketing in travel and tourism*, 4th ed. Elsevier, Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford 2009, p. 384; R.E. Neidl, *US Airlines need…*

WEIGHING PASSENGERS BECAUSE AIR FARES ARE NOT FAIR

Summary

Despite worldwide growth in passenger traffic airlines are in trouble because of increasing cost. It can partly be ascribed to carrying heavier passengers who add to fuel cost. Obesity is becoming a worldwide problem and overweight passengers are being subsidized by others paying the same air fare, which seems to be unfair. The purpose of the research was to establish if passengers are of the opinion that determining airfares based on the combined weight of a passenger and his/her luggage is fair. This may contribute to procedural and distributive justice for pricing decisions of airline tickets. A survey was conducted amongst 328 persons who have purchased an air ticket during the preceding twelve months. More small passengers were of the opinion that obese passengers should not be given free extra space, than other groups.

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NO. 658 ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF TOURISM VOL. 1 (17) 2012

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CHANGES IN TOURISM PRODUCT OFFERED BY A SPA RESORT

Introduction

Foreign literature emphasizes the fact that health oriented tourism is practiced in spa resorts and therefore the spectrum of tourism forms, possible to experience in a spa resort, becomes more and more extensive (in the sense of new perception of health).[1] So far Polish authors have not provided detailed descriptions of transformations occurring in Polish spa resorts.[2]

The product of a spa resort is created and offered at the meeting point of two markets – tourism market and health care one. Health, as the motive for practicing spa tourism, constitutes the basis for considerations presented in the this article. The concept of health kept evolving along with progress in medical and social science, as well as the development of civilization.

World Health Organization joined the stream of broad health definition advocates referring to health as overall physical, mental and social wellbeing of

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[1] W. Bacon, *Economic systems and their impact on tourist resort development: the case of the Spa in Europe*, "Tourism Economics" 1998, No. 4, pp. 21–22.

[2] The first, cross-section publication about transformations in Polish spa resorts, which applied market approach, is the article: A. Kopczyński, A. Szromek: *Hypotheses concerning the development of Polish spas in the years 1949–2006*, "Tourism Management" 2008, vol. 29, No. 5, pp. 1035–1037.

a human being.[3] Wellbeing represents the result of combining individual's physical health with the feeling of happiness, life quality and life satisfaction.[4]

The objective of the article is to identify changes occurring in a spa resort tourism product which resulted in distinguishing two product categories offered at present in Poland.

The article is based on Polish and foreign literature analysis, as well as the authors' individual observations which allowed for performing the synthesis of product changes.

1. SPA RESORT AS THE LOCATION FOR PRODUCT CREATION PROCESS

A destination for product creation process may be (and in case of spa tourism – has to be) a spa resort i.e. the area which offers spa treatment and has been designated to take advantage of and protect its natural treatment resources and also meets the conditions quoted in the article 34, section 1 of the Act on spa resort treatment, spa resort locations, spa resort protected areas, and spa resort communes which have obtained the spa resort status.[5] As it has been indicated in the definition of a spa resort "the conditions specified for providing treatment" have to occur[6] in order for a spa resort to be established.

German Union of Spa Resorts and German Tourism Association define spa resorts as privileged areas and locations regarding landscape and climate,

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[3] R. Hughes, *What is health? Stretch the medical model*, "Foundation News and Commentary" 1997, No. 4, p. 18.

[4] D. Gilbet, J. Abdullah, *Holiday taking and the sense of well-being*, "Annals of Tourism Research" 2004, vol. 1, p. 105.

[5] The Act dated 28 July 2005 on spa treatment, spa locations, spa protected areas and spa communes, Journal of Laws 05.167.1399.

[6] Treatment properties of natural resources and the climate are confirmed on the basis of documented research proving the occurrence of such properties and ruling out their negative influence on human health. A commune which applies for awarding a given area with a spa resort status, or a spa resort protected area status is obliged to obtain the confirmation of its natural resources therapeutic properties and treatment properties of the climate by a specified certificate. Source: The Act dated 28 July 2005 on spa resort treatment, spa resort locations and spa resort protected areas and spa resort communes, Journal of Laws 05.167.1399.

with their major objective to provide rest and relaxation in order to keep and support good health and are characterized by unique, unrepeatable profile.[7]

Once analyzing European tourism literature (including Polish) and European Spas Association (ESPA) statistics it is noticeable that the word spa is common for locations characterized by the occurrence of natural springs, as well as for enterprises which offer treatment based on therapeutic properties of spring water. In other parts of the world, especially in USA, the notion of Spa carries less recognizable meaning than it does in Europe. It rather refers to a rejuvenation centre and in order to avoid ambiguity in its meaning two terms are used jointly: health and fitness (associated with relaxation and beauty treatment).

Each spa resort (spa location or commune) is characterized by a specific treatment profile, e.g. cardiologic, pulmonological, gastric, orthopedic, etc. and specializes in treating certain diseases, or disabilities. In Poland spa treatment constitutes an integral part of health care system and is the continuation of hospital or ambulatory treatment, as a follow up form of post hospital rehabilitation preventing further illness development and increasing patients' mobility, or their functional efficiency after hospital treatment, in the process of chronic diseases treatment by offering spa resort prophylactic treatment and health oriented education.[8] In a spa resort both types of activities, hospital and rehabilitation treatment are carried out, of which mainly stationary patients take advantage,[9] and also open type of services for external patients are provided mainly for ambulatory patients and other groups of clients.[10]

Spa resorts have a specific position among holiday destinations owing to the following factors:[11]

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[7] www.deutscher-heilbaederverband.de, 18.04.2002.

[8] See: I. Ponikowska, *Medycyna uzdrowiskowa – istota, rola i kierunki działania*, in: *Uzdrowiska polskie. Informator, op. cit.*, p. 14.

[9] *Stationary patient* is a person who is accommodated in a spa treatment institution providing also full board and adequate treatment; A. Jagusiewicz, *Infrastruktura turystyki uzdrowiskowej w Polsce*, Institute of Tourism, Warszawa 2002, p. 46.

[10] *Ambulatory patient* is a person who takes advantage of treatment in spa resort institutions based on medical orders for ambulatory treatment; A. Jagusiewicz, *Infrastruktura…*, p. 46

[11] A. Kornak, A. Rapacz: *Zarządzanie turystyką i jej podmiotami w miejscowości i regionie*, AE Publishing House, Wrocław 2001, p. 118.

- they constitute a nationwide wealth,
- they perform an important function in health protection system,
- they have natural treatment resources at their disposal and take advantage of them,
- spa resort product includes apart from typical subsistence services also cultural ones and treatment care package,
- individuals using offered services are patients – rehabilitees, who come to spa resorts for health treatment and to receive medical care,
- all entities functioning in a spa resort participate in creating a spa product, however, its provision is possible only if all these entities cooperate, including local authorities.

Spa resorts cover certain space characterized by environment abundant in valuable natural resources and decide about their usability in carrying out tourism focused function. Intensive and uncontrolled development may result in spa attributes degradation. In order to preserve natural environment the development of spa resorts should follow sustainable development principles. It is assumed that the objective of spa resorts functioning is their long-term development resulting in better living standards of both individual citizens and overall contemporary society, but also of future generations.[12] Ongoing and intensive penetration of spa areas results in significant disturbances in the functioning of ecosystems, followed by shrinking or disappearance of the tourism function, since resources used by tourism economy remain renewable only to a small extend. It is an indispensable task to define the boundary for preserving resources which could guarantee that a spa resort will preserve its attractive and lasting profile. Natural boundaries for tourism industry taking advantage of natural environment are expressed by the absorption and capacity indicators of a spa resort and also specify leisure quality level. Ecological limitations, on one hand influence adversely the right for economic freedom and violate ownership rights, and on the other protect the area of enterprise functioning against overinvestment, but most of all allow preserving natural attractiveness, in tourism

[12] See: A. Niezgoda, *Obszar recepcji turystycznej w warunkach rozwoju zrównoważonego*, Academy of Economics Publishing House, Poznań 2006, pp. 39–40.

terms, of the area.[13] On the other hand they facilitate creating an attractive tourism product of a spa resort.

Awarding a group of communes with a spa resort status is neither an easy nor transparent task in terms of obtained results. The resource criterion referring to deposits of brine, therapeutic or thermal waters, as well as other therapeutic minerals, is met by 70 Polish locations and 50 communes.[14] However, some of these resources are not exploited, but only occasionally excavated and used therapeutically somewhere else. In order to render therapeutic and spa type of services it is indispensible to have due resources at the disposal, but it is not a sufficient condition. Climate properties and therapeutic minerals may be used if infrastructure facilitating such services provision is in place. Having assumed that due institutions and therapeutic facilities have been established, it may be concluded that the conditions and spa resort functions are present in at least 100 locations and about 90 communes.

In the understanding of International Spas & Fitness Association (ISPA) natural springs and therapeutic minerals do not constitute an indispensable condition for establishing spas. A spa resort is defined as the "place where in certain time and in friendly environment natural therapeutic resources and health improving factors are applied". ISPA also offers a broader definition which promotes holistic concept of a human being and defines a spa resort as a destination where a visitor arrives to spend time on relaxation, reflection, rejuvenation and enjoyment. It combines within one entity such components as mind, soul, energy and body the harmony of which offers a prescription for beauty and health.[15]

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[13] See: I. Jędrzejczyk, *Nowoczesny biznes turystyczny, ekostrategie w zarządzaniu firmą*, PWN Publishing House, Warszawa 2001, p. 100.

[14] They are listed in the Regulation by the Board of Ministers dated 14.02.2006 on underground water deposits specified as brine, therapeutic or thermal waters, as well as other therapeutic mineral deposits, and also on including common minerals from defined deposits or geological units into basic minerals; Journal of Laws of 2006, No. 32, item 220 with later amendments.

[15] www.ispa.org, 10.7.2010.

2. NATURE OF A SPA RESORT PRODUCT

Spa resort, as a destination, may be viewed as an amalgam of individual products and experience opportunities that combine to form a total experience of the area visited. Y. Hu and J.R.B. Ritchie conceptualised the tourism destination as a "package of tourism facilities and services, which like any other consumer product, is composed of a number of multi-dimensional attributes".[16]

In a narrow understanding of the term a spa resort product represents everything which can be offered to clients (tourists, spa patients) for consumption, usage or further processing[17] and in consequence will result in improving their health. Such approach is frequently referred to in literature as a structural or componential one. In tourism focused texts there are offered many definitions of a tourism product. It results from its complexity and diversity, as well as broad understanding of its nature. G. Gołembski[18] defines a tourism product (including a spa resort one) as all goods and services created and purchased in relation to the process of leaving the location of permanent residence, whether it occurs before the trip, while travelling or during the stay away from home. According to J.Ch. Holloway[19] tourism product is a set of goods and services encouraging a tourist to come to the location providing tourism attractions, stay there for a period of time and take advantage of them. Therefore a tourism product includes such components as location (tourism destination – in this case a spa resort), a service (single one or a package including a few services) and material products. It is also important to notice that a tourism product in a tourism destination covers all attractions, benefits and services used or visited while staying in the destination, that is to say the tourism product for each prospective traveller is very subjective. Nevertheless, the tourism product for a region consists of

[16] Y. Hu, J.R.B. Ritchie, *Measuring destination attractiveness: A contextual approach*, "Journal of Travel Research" 1993, vol. 32, No. 2, pp. 25–34.

[17] Based on H. Mruk, I.P. Rutkowski, *Strategia produktu*, PWE Publishing House, Warszawa 1999, p. 34.

[18] G. Gołembski, *Przedsiębiorstwo turystyczne w gospodarce wolnorynkowej*. Academy of Economics in Poznań Publishing House, Poznań 1998, p. 89.

[19] J.Ch. Holloway, *Podstawy turystyki*, Polish Agency for Tourism Promotion, Warsaw 1996, p. 26.

the entire range of facilities and services offered locally, plus all socio-cultural, environmental resources and public goods.[20]

Ph. Kotler, D. Heider and I. Rein define destination product (i.e. spa product) differently and describe it as an offer composed of practical, usable values perceived by a client.[21] A spa product is influenced by numerous entities which leads to a conclusion that it is made up of many individual, partly similar, partly heterogeneous components which should be of complementary nature, however, from the perspective of higher usability of a spa resort offer it may also serve as a substitution. It results in the need of active involvement in a spa product creation by all economic entities, tourism organizations, other institutions, public authorities and inhabitants active in its area (creating the atmosphere and the climate of hospitability).

T. Oliver and T. Jenkins emphasize that product components should not be offered "by coincidence" in one place, but should follow a uniform concept which is possible only by introducing some coordination instruments resulting in the establishment of a local spa product.[22]

3. CHANGES IN A SPA RESORT PRODUCT – POLISH PERSPECTIVE

Holiday taking in spa resorts has a very long history and their definition was subject to numerous changes. A spa resort, depending on the stage of its development may be defined in terms of three aspects:[23]

1. historical – as the place for mineral water from natural springs, drinking which brings relief and treats different ailments,
2. traditional – as the treatment and rehabilitation centre based on hydrotherapy and other treatment methods which take advantage of physical properties characteristic for therapeutic minerals, climate and performed

[20] D. Buhalis, *Marketing the competitive destination of the future*, "Tourism Management" 2000, vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 97–116.

[21] P. Kotler, D. Heider, I. Rein, *Marketing Places. Attracting Investment, Industry and Tourism to Cities*, The Free Press, New York 1993, p. 35.

[22] T. Oliver, T. Jenkins, *Integrated Tourism in Europe's Rural Destinations*, in: *Tourism SMEs, Service Quality and Destination Competitiveness*, ed. E. Jones, C. Haven-Tang, CABI, Wallingford 2005, p. 30.

[23] www.spaassociation.org.uk, 20.04.2002.

under medical supervision. Recreation, relaxation and entertainment are of secondary significance in this case and, apart from their basic functions, they play encouraging role by stimulating tourists to visit and take advantage of spa resorts,

3. contemporary – as facilities based on using therapeutic waters and other natural therapeutic resources aimed at improving patient's physical and emotional condition. A spa resort takes advantage of nature as basic factor for therapeutic or preventive treatment. Natural therapeutic resources are used to bring relief in suffering from different illnesses, in rehabilitation and treating ailments by means of the whole spectrum of integrated and complementary medical care, as well as other services focused on relieving stress and resulting in overall relaxation, rejuvenation, more attractive looks and even spoiling clients. Spa resorts create unique environment which has to respect its natural assets.

The condition and development of Polish spa resorts, as well as external factors (related to spa communes) influence certain changes regarding a product offered at the market.

Among the most important factors of internal and external nature the following are listed:

1. More efficient management of spa communes resources, including marketing (the task for public authorities and economic entities, as well as social organizations);
2. Intensification of cooperation between entities representing different sectors functioning in spa communes – cooperation of these entities in the area of particular spa communes is at present evaluated as insufficient, however, quite significant activity of numerous Polish nationwide organizations gathering spa communes or enterprises seems to be improving, but their activities are quite dispersed;
3. Change in a spa commune function – it refers to transforming the traditional treatment function of a spa resort into a tourism-health oriented function, including the establishment of health, tourism, recreation, sport and culture centres;
4. Privatization of spa enterprises in Poland – the process commenced in 2001 privatization of Nałęczów Zdrój and intensified in 2009–2010 resulting in the privatization of operators in spa resort: Ustka, Swoszowice (Kraków) and Bochnia. The following companies are at

the stage of finalizing their privatization processes: Cieplice Zdrój (Jelenia Góra), Kłodzko Spa Resorts Complex, Połczyn Zdrój, Świeradów – Czerniawa Zdrój, Inowrocław i Szczawno Zdrój;

5. Competition intensification – the effect of Polish participation in EU structures and the freedom of uniform European market, as well as Schengen Treaty, which manifests itself in the establishment of new tourism entities in spa resorts (growing interest of investors in Polish spa resorts which have become attractive places for capital investment) and free tourist traffic;
6. Decreasing level of financing from public means – privatization will result in government subsidies limitations which is accompanied by the tendency towards ongoing expenditure cutting for spa resort services financed from health insurance contributions;
7. Diversity of product financing sources – means from EU funds, from social and health insurance, PFRON (State Fund for Rehabilitation of the Disabled), free decision funds of potential acquirers, earmarked funds, budgetary means, means at the disposal of enterprises or social organizations;
8. Social-cultural trends – facilitate changes in the attitude to health which results in higher life quality;
9. Greater attention focused on broadly understood environment – natural, social and economic – sustainable development principles should be applied in spa communes.

Table 1 presents the above factors and the resulting changes in Polish spa resort product.

Table 1

Indications of changes in a spa resort product

Major factors	Consequences – indications of changes in a spa resort product
Resources management	Effective management of natural, human, material, financial, information resources to create a spa resort product
Cooperation in spa communes	Facilitates creating a cohesive spa resort product
Changed function of a spa commune	Facilitates product extension – higher attractiveness
Privatization of spa resort companies	Higher effectiveness in creating a product and its competitiveness
Intensification of competition	Higher product innovation, including product quality
Limited public means	Investigating new opportunities for creating packages consisting of goods and services
Diversified financing sources	Higher product diversification
Social-cultural trends	Extended experiences resulting from product usage: fun, entertainment, recreation, health problems prevention and treatment, life balance
Attention focused on environment	A product is created following sustainable development principles

Source: authors' compilation.

Table 1 illustrates synthetic changes occurring in a spa resort product, while Table 2 presents more detailed considerations having applied 10 criteria differentiating two basic types of spa resort products. The division into two types of spa resort products results from changes in a spa resort function and also shows peculiar evolution in both nature and structure of a product.

Table 2

Differences between therapeutic and health-tourism product of a spa resort

Criterion	Spa therapeutic product	Spa health-tourism product
Main infrastructure of the product	Spa resort hospital, sanatorium, physiotherapy treatment institution, spa resort outpatients' clinic, spa resort parks, spring water pump-rooms, twig towers, etc.	Collective accommodation facility, physiotherapy treatment institution, spa resort outpatients' clinic, spa resort parks, spring water pump-rooms, twig towers, etc.
Additional infrastructure	Swimming-pools for therapeutic purposes, rejuvenation facilities, pharmacies, restaurants, relaxation facilities	Casino, sport and recreation facilities e.g. aqua park, restaurants, leisure and entertainment centers
Product offering entity	Spa resort enterprise*, other health care institutions, and other entities	Spa resort enterprise and other entities providing tourist offer located in a spa resort
Basic services	Therapeutic and spa treatment services	Tourist and spa treatment services (health care)
Additional services	Therapeutic services	Tourist oriented services
Utility for a client	Improves and supports good health (narrow meaning), professional knowledge, relaxation	Improves, enhances good health (broad meaning), prevents diseases, atmosphere, relaxation, experiences, professional knowledge
Culture components	Tradition based on therapeutic spa resorts model**	Tradition based on Roman spa resorts model***
Social aspect of the product	Facilitates social development since it is only a healthy society which is capable of further development	Spa tourism product facilitates social development as the result of better health, improved knowledge about the world, sustainable consumption, advancement through enriched culture
Major advantage	Natural therapeutic minerals and climate	Natural therapeutic minerals, climate and other tourism oriented values

* Other entities are understood as manufacturing, excavation, designing, trade enterprises which directly create a spa resort product. It has to be emphasized that Tourism Satellite Account, which was accepted as the basis for entities differentiation due to its universal nature, does not take into account spa tourism specific properties, ** going back to 13th century when the idea behind establishing and developing spa resorts was to treat diseases, *** in ancient times the main idea underlying establishment of spa resorts was hygiene, entertainment, social meetings, relaxation.

Source: authors' compilation.

The criteria illustrated in Table 2 reflect basic issues related to product analysis from the perspective of tourism economics, while the presented differences show transformations occurring in Poland.

Conclusions

On the basis of the above discussion results, it may be concluded that Polish spa resorts are not limited to accepting guests arriving for purely treatment purposes, but also (and even mainly) host groups of clients visiting them for tourism reasons, among which broadly understood health becomes the main motive. Such changes offer more extensive opportunities for the establishment of a strong market position and meeting the expectations of both domestic and foreign guests.

The presented spa product changes and distinguishing both treatment oriented product and tourism-health oriented one do not offer a thorough overview of the discussed problems, however, it may constitute a starting point for a discussion over transformations occurring within the space of Polish spa resorts, as well as for performing international comparisons focused on competitiveness analysis issues.

ZMIANY W PRODUKCIE UZDROWISK

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest identyfikacja zmian w produkcie uzdrowiska, które spowodowały możliwość wyróżnienia dwóch kategorii produktu, obecnie oferowanego w Polsce. Artykuł jest wynikiem analizy literatury polskiej i zagranicznej, a także obserwacji własnych, które pozwoliły na dokonanie syntezy zmian w produkcie. Zidentyfikowano główne przejawy zmian w uzdrowiskach i w produkcie (tabela 1), co pozwoliło na wyodrębnienie dwóch podstawowych kategorii oferowanego produktu w uzdrowiskach polskich (tabela 2).

CHANGES IN TOURISM PRODUCT OFFERED BY A SPA RESORT

Summary

The objective of the article is to identify changes occurring in a spa resort tourism product which resulted in distinguishing two product categories offered at present in Poland.

The article is based on Polish and foreign literature analysis, as well as the authors' individual observations which allowed for performing the synthesis of product changes. Major manifestations of changes were identified in spa resorts and in the product (Table 1) which facilitated distinguishing two basic categories of the product offered by Polish spa resorts (Table 2).

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SERVICE QUALITY IN THE TRICITY HOTELS: MANAGERS' PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

Service quality of products has become crucial condition for market development in many branches of the economy including service sector. Some researchers suggest that unexpected events in the world have forced tourism companies to change their strategies for improving competitive power in the global market. According to Mulvaney, O'Neil, Cleveland and Crouter "The recent recovery in business tourism after September 11th […] has forced hotel and other types of tourism companies to critically examine operations and performance and to reassess strategies for gaining competitive advantage in this economic sector".[1] On the other hand, there have been many positive changes in market environments which have provided a stimulus for tourism enterprises, including hotels, to take new approaches to product and process management. However, taking into account that "in the turbulent environment of the

[1] R.H. Mulvaney, J.W. O'Neil, J.N. Cleveland, A.C. Crouter, *A model of work-family dynamics for hotel managers*, "Annals of Tourism Research" 2007, vol. 34, No. 1, p. 66.

post-Internet era, situations arise that are incomparable with those in the past",[2] hotel managers have to be pro-active in predicting many future processes in the market. This requires the improvement of service quality and knowledge management on the one hand[3] and an understanding of internal relationships with and between employees on the other.

All aspects of the hotel management involve a necessary change in insight on the part of the hotel and can lead to improvement of service quality, which may be an extremely important factor in shaping what the hotel provides. In view of the finding that "…from a demand perspective, the most popular tactics for reducing yearly peaks and troughs have been the organization of special events and festivals, the identification of new market segments, and promotional pricing",[4] changes in a hotel's product could intensify demand for services other than overnight stays. Improving a hotel's product quality it is necessary to focus on both product and process management[5] because of the specific character of a hotel service, in which production and consumption overlap and the quality of the product depends on customer service.

The purpose of the research is as follow:

- to assess customers' expectations of service quality and the way these are interpreted by hotel managers,
- to identify discrepancy between guests' expectations and managers' perceptions of those expectations (if any).

[2] F.J. Garrigos-Simon, D. Palacios-Marques, Y. Narangajavana, *Improving the perceptions of hotel managers*, "Annals of Tourism Research" 2008, vol. 35, No. 2, pp. 374–375.

[3] B. Marciszewska, *Kreowanie wiedzy warunkiem racjonalnego wykorzystania potencjału turystycznego Pomorza*, in: *Usługi a rozwój gospodarczo-społeczny*, ed. B. Marciszewska, S. Miecznikowski, Wyd. Gdańskie 2004, Gdańsk, pp. 24–31.

[4] J.C. Parrilla, A.R. Font, J.R. Nadal, *Accommodation determinants of seasonal patterns*, "Annals of Tourism Research" 2007, vol. 34, No. 2, p. 433.

[5] B. Marciszewska, *Emotional arts marketing – creating tourist value*, "Tourism Review" 2005, vol. 60, No. 3, pp. 29–34.

1. *PROBLEMS OF THE SERVICE QUALITY FOR THE HOTEL MANAGEMENT*

The quality of hotel services is an important factor determining demand and shaping the success of a hotel business. The hotel industry is unusual because of customers "live" experience during their stay at a hotel.[6] It is characterized by continuous operation and involves a high degree of interaction between employees and customers.[7] Managers and employees should therefore ensure that all instances of contact between a hotel and its customers result in a positive experience for the tourists.[8]

Currently, hotel managers often face major obstacle. They don't exactly know which aspects of the hotel services are the most important to their customers in their evaluation. In view of this, there is an urgent need to convince managers to undertake research into service quality. This should include identifying not only gaps, between customers' expectations and their perception of service quality in reality (defined in the literature as a "Gap 5") but also gaps in management perception (Gap 1), defined as the difference between customers' expectations and managers' perception of those expectations.[9] This should be regarded as one of the most important managerial task.

Hotel managers should be aware of the factors that constitute quality from a customer's perspectives and be able to transform these crucial attributes into service standards that are consistent with customers' expectations. Knowing what customers expect therefore turns out to be a crucial issue in delivering a satisfactory level of service quality. Customer satisfactions seems to be crucial for a success in hotel business. If customers are satisfied purchase is more likely. Moreover satisfaction is the most inexpensive form of publicity.[10] There-

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[6] T.D. Juwaheer, D.L. Ross, *A study of hotel guest perceptions in Mauritius*, "International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management" 2003, vol. 15, No. 2, p. 112.

[7] B.R. Lewis and P. McCann, *Service failure and recovery: evidence from the hotel industry*, "International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management" 2004, vol. 16, No. 1, p. 6.

[8] T.D. Juwaheer, D.L. Ross, *A study of hotel guest perceptions…*, p. 112.

[9] V.A. Zeithaml, A. Parasuraman, L.L. Berry, *Delivering Quality Service: Balancing Customer Perceptions and Expectations*, The Free Press, New York 1990, pp. 37, 39.

[10] A. Pizam, T. Ellis, *Customer satisfaction and its measurement in hospitality enterprises*, "International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management" 1999, vol. 11, No. 7, p. 326.

fore managers should be genuinely involved in building up quality and taking a pro-active approach towards dynamically changing and evolving hotel guest's expectations.

2. *RESULTS AND DISCUSSION*

It has been argued that the success of a hotel business depends on understanding the customers' needs and preferences and also on how well the hotel management meets or exceeds these needs, simultaneously keeping customers satisfied. This creates the challenge of gaining a competitive position in relation to other hotels on the contemporary market. It is therefore important to obtain a clear view of customers' needs and desires and to deliver the services expected.

Identifying customers' expectations and being aware of them appear to be crucial for setting managerial tasks and taking decisions towards improving the quality of hotel services. With regard to managers' perceptions of the customers' expectations it was found that generally hotel managers overestimated customers' actual expectations, and the difference between overall mean scores is statistically significant ($t = 2.401$, $p \leq 0.05$). Overestimation of guests' expectations is noticeable with respect to all five quality dimensions.

Similar results were achieved in the work of Saleh and Ryan who found that for all of the quality dimensions managers overestimated customers' expectations[11] and Ingram and Daskalakis, who conducted research in hotels in Crete; it was found that for three of the five dimensions (empathy, reliability, responsiveness) managers overestimated customers' expectations.[12] The results of the current study do not correspond to the work of Douglas and Connor, who found that managers underestimated customers' expectations for four of the five dimensions.[13]

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[11] L. Douglas, R. Connor, *Attitudes to service quality – the expectation gap*, "Nutrition & Food Science" 2003, vol. 33, No. 4, p. 169.

[12] H. Ingram, G. Daskalakis, *Measuring quality gaps in hotels: the case of Crete*, "International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management" 1999, vol. 11, No. 1, p. 27.

[13] L. Douglas, R. Connor, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

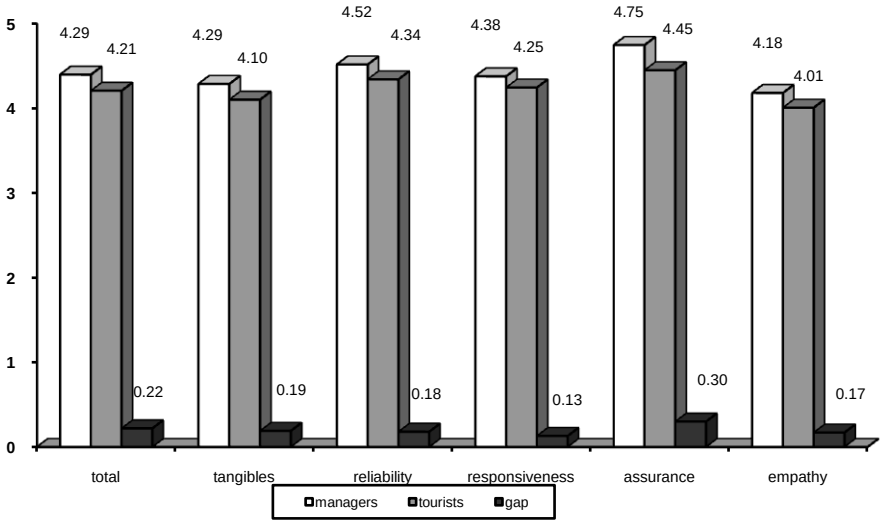

Fig. 1. Managers' perception of tourists' expectations and real expectations of tourists
Source: based on own research.

The data was presented on a single grid with each variable plotted according to its perceived importance by tourists and its interpretation by managers.

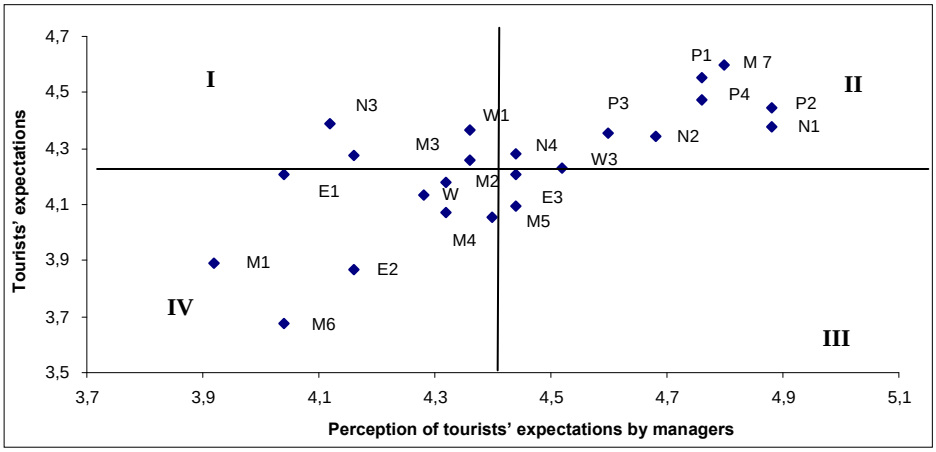

Fig. 2. Matrix of attributes expected by tourists and the perception of these expectations by managers
the symbols used above are defined in Table 1
Source: based on own research.

The placement of the dividing lines (4.39; 4.21) reflected the overall mean of managers' interpretation of tourists' expectations and real expectations of tourists.

Table 1

SERVQUAL dimensions and the features associated with them used to evaluate the quality of hotel services in the Tricity

SERVQUAL dimensions	Symbol	Items
Tangibles	M1	Attractiveness of the exterior of the hotel
	M2	Functional surroundings of the hotel (parking, entrance, approach, etc.)
	M3	Modern hotel equipment and conveniences
	M4	Visual appeal of rooms and other spaces inside the hotel
	M5	Neatness of appearance of hotel employees
	M6	Visual appeal of materials associated with hotel services
	M7	Neatness and cleanliness of the hotel
Reliability	N1	Keeping promises given to customers
	N2	Making sincere efforts to solve customers' problems
	N3	Faultless and undisturbed performance of services
	N4	Optimum performance of services on every occasion
Responsiveness	W1	Prompt performance of services to hotel customers
	W2	Informing customers exactly when their requests will be performed
	W3	Care for the interests of hotel customers regardless of how busy employees are
	W4	Willingness of hotel employees to help customers
Assurance	P1	Care for the safety and sense of confidence of hotel customers
	P2	Courtesy and politeness of hotel employees towards customers
	P3	Ability to answer customers' questions correctly and fully
	P4	Professionalism of hotel employees
Empathy	E1	Convenience to hotel customers of the operating hours of services
	E2	Flexibility of hotel services in meeting individual customers' needs
	E3	Understanding by hotel employees of individual customers' specific needs
	E4	The giving of personal attention to customers by hotel employees
	E5	Communication skills of hotel employees

Source: based on V.A. Zeithaml, A. Parasuraman, L.L. Berry, *Delivering Quality Service…*, pp. 180–186 and own research.

In some cases tourists' expectations are placed very high (above mean scores), while management was not aware of the importance of these aspects of services to their users. These included such service aspects as:

- faultless and undisturbed performance of services (N3),
- modern hotel equipment and all conveniences (M3),
- prompt performance of services to customers (W1),
- convenience to customers of the operating hours of services (E1),
- willingness of hotel employees to help customers (W4).

From the management point of view, these attributes were placed below the overall mean for management research. However, some of these attributes (M3, W1, E1) were simultaneously identified as priorities in service quality improvement, clearly demonstrating that the managerial viewpoint may be reflected in the standard of service set and the standard of performance. This probably lies behind the fact that customers' expectations were not met in these areas.

Conclusions

The general result of the present study demonstrated that there is gap between the expected and perceived hotel service from the customers' standpoint; there is also discrepancy between customers expectations and management's perception of those expectations. Moreover some attributes identified as improvement priorities were simultaneously placed by managers as of less importance than they were for tourists.

The hospitality business today recognizes that high-quality services constitute one of the crucial factors that can add value to its product and simultaneously lead to customer loyalty and commitment.[14] Providing superior service depends on accurately identifying customers' expectations.[15] It is argued, therefore, that hotel managers should focus on the following issues:

- knowing customers' requirements, especially those quality aspects that are the most expected;

[14] S.Ch. Lee, S. Barker, J. Kandampully, *Tlogy, and customer loyalty in hotels: Australian managerial perspectives*, "Managing Service Quality" 2003, vol. 13, No. 5, p. 423.

[15] E. Atilgan, S. Akinci, S. Aksoy, *op. cit.*, p. 420.

- fulfilling customers' expectations, especially those that are consider as very important;
- taking appropriate action to correct or improve those areas where quality is poor.[16]

This will help managers to take actions more effectively and efficiently and focus on improvement quality priorities leading to a better allocation of the hotel resources.

JAKOŚĆ USŁUG HOTELARSKICH W TRÓJMIEŚCIE
PERSPEKTYWA MENEDŻERSKA

Streszczenie

Optymalne zaspokojenie potrzeb gości hotelowych wymaga od przedsiębiorstw hotelowych posiadania aktualnej i kompletnej informacji o potrzebach, oczekiwaniach i preferencjach klientów. Szczególnego znaczenia nabiera w realizacji tego celu obserwowanie zmian w otoczeniu, trendów w konsumpcji społecznej, ale także umiejętne wykorzystanie tej wiedzy w strategii firmy i jej działalności operacyjnej, tak by w rezultacie świadczenie usługi dostarczało jej nabywcom oczekiwanych korzyści, emocji i doświadczeń. Realizacja tego zadania wymaga jednak od menedżerów proaktywnej postawy, autentycznego zaangażowania w problematykę badania, kształtowania i doskonalenia jakości usług hotelarskich.

Niniejszy artykuł podejmuje próbę analizy oczekiwań gości hotelowych w percepcji kadry zarządzającej. Celem opracowania było zidentyfikowanie rozbieżności pomiędzy oczekiwaniami gości trójmiejskich hoteli względem jakości usług a interpretacją tych oczekiwań przez kadrę zarządzającą badanych obiektów. W literaturze przedmiotu rozbieżność tę definiuje się jako lukę pierwszą w modelu doskonalenia jakości usług, a jej wystąpienie może stanowić przyczynę dostarczenia zupełnie odmiennej usługi, niż oczekiwałby tego gość hotelowy. Głównym wnioskiem wynikającym z analizy wyników badań jest to, że istnieje pewna rozbieżność między oczekiwaniami gości hotelowych względem usług a interpretacją tych oczekiwań przez usługodawcę. Generalnie menedżerowie przewartościowali oczekiwania gości hotelowych na poziomie wiodących wymiarów jakości. Jednakże szczegółowa analiza na poziomie cząstkowych wyróżników jakości dowiodła istnienia takich aspektów jakości, które

[16] Ch.Ch. Yang, *Establishment and applications of the integrated model of service quality measurement*, "Managing Service Quality" 2003, vol. 13, No. 4, p. 310.

będąc szczególnie ważne dla gości zostały odmiennie zinterpretowane przez kadrę zarządzającą.

SERVICE QUALITY IN THE TRICITY HOTELS: MANAGERS' PERSPECTIVE

Summary

This article attempts to analyze guests' expectations in perception of managers in the Tricity Hotels. The aim of the study was to identify differences between hotel guests' expectations towards service quality and its interpretation by the management of those hotels. In the literature, this discrepancy is defined as the first gap in the model of service quality improvement. Occurrence of this gap may be the cause of providing a completely different service than expected by hotel guests. The main conclusion is that there is discrepancy between hotel guests' expectations and the way how they are interpreted by the service provider. Generally, managers have overestimated the real expectations of hotel guests, and it is visible both at a general level and the leading dimensions of service quality. However, detailed analysis proved the existence of such quality aspects that are particularly important for visitors and simultaneously have been differently interpreted by the management.

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OF BUSINESS HOTELS' OFFER

Introduction

One of the negative effects of socio-economic development is the devastation of the natural environment, which may have a pejorative effect on well-being of future generations. Therefore, more attention is paid to sustainable development, whose immanent feature is to respect the natural and social environment and ensuring long-term preservation of natural and cultural values. This also applies to tourism, which has an impact on the organization and operation of the whole economy and marks the implementation of domestically and internationally accepted principles of sustainable development, including resource management in tourism. Tourism, called balanced in the scientific literature, is the one whose infrastructure and form reflect a concern for the state and preservation for future generations of clean, natural environment.

The development of modern tourism, based on respect for natural environment, is integrally associated with ecology that refers to the structure and functioning of nature, the study of interactions between organisms and their environment, the impact of human activities on the environment, and above all to looking for methods to prevent destruction of the environment.

This article presents the theoretical aspects of the hotels operating in the field of business tourism and examines offers of the facilities from the perspective of environmental protection.

1. BASIC ISSUES RELATED TO BUSINESS TOURISM

In the literature, business tourism is defined very heterogeneously. According to G. Gołembski business tourism are professional trips, during which the person takes advantage of basic tourist services, whereas in his/her free time satisfies the needs of leisure, knowledge, entertainment, etc. using the tourist database.[1] Another definition of the business tourism says that these are arbitrary, non-routine business activities that usually take place in a group, that consist of group meetings (conferences, seminars), incentive trips, fairs, exhibitions and corporate tourism or the broadly understood corporate business trips in professional work.[2] According to some theorists, business tourism is also a journey for commercial purposes, as well as other broad business purposes. During such a trip, all the participants take up recreational and tourist activity in their free time.[3] Business tourism is a very broad notion, which contains many faces of business related to traveling and meetings, mainly financed by companies and organizations.[4] Business tourism, therefore, is not only business trips, but primarily the organization of training courses, seminars and meetings of managers, that are in the vast majority commissioned by "business".[5] The scope of business tourism is interrelated in large part with the scope of the meetings industry, and therefore both terms are often used interchangeably.

In the tourism business there are a large number of forms, such as conference tourism and congress tourism, incentive and corporate tourism as well as industry exhibition, the boundaries of which often overlap, creating complex conglomerates. In consequence, any form of business tourist movement is variously defined, which favors the existence of many names and different con-

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[1] *Kompendium wiedzy o turystyce*, ed. G. Gołembski, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa–Poznań 2002, p. 31.

[2] K. Celuch, *Definicje i interpretacje pojęć*, in: *Turystyka biznesowa. Produkt i promocja*, Warszawa 2005, publikacja w formie CD.

[3] T. Łobożewicz, G. Bińczyk, *Podstawy turystyki*, Wyższa Szkoła Ekonomiczna, Warszawa 2001, p. 181.

[4] *Nowy Incentive w Polsce*, ed. A. Świątecki, Wydawnictwo ELEKT Business Service & Travel, Warszawa 2005, p. 51.

[5] *Badanie pilotażowe rynku turystyki biznesowej (MICE) (województwo wielkopolskie). Metodologia oraz raport z badania*, Polska Organizacja Turystyczna, Warszawa 2008, p. 6.

cepts, and some discretion to interpret the processes of creating business tourism.

An important issue when discussing the basis for business tourism is its consumers. Definitions of tourism exclude from a group of tourists people who travel to earn money, however, citing the World Tourism Organization, from the standpoint of economic impact in the sphere of tourist services, such travelers can be counted as tourists.[6] Continuing the subject matter, the tourists creating business tourism recipients are a group of people with high expectations, benefiting mostly from the services of high standard, whose trips are financed by the institutions that sent them to the business trip. The participants of business tourism are mostly professionals from various fields, members of professional organizations, sport, economic and cultural organizations, scientists, politicians who take part in events and meetings held throughout the world.[7]

Group movement of business tourism is characterized by brevity and elitism. It brings significant economic benefits, hence the growing interest in handling this type of tourism. It requires specific forms of service and tourist development to conduct such events.

Business tourism is also the site of tourism, which is characterized by profitability and specialization. In promotion and service efficient management is necessary as well as specialized service possibilities. Business tourism is also distinguished because of its presence in certain places. Destinations of most business trips are cities. The main seats of companies, factories, conference and exhibition centers are located in metropolitan areas; there is also most of the infrastructure essential in the business trips market, as exemplified by business hotels used by a person traveling on business.[8]

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF BUSINESS HOTELS

Business hotels in the literature of the subject matter are also known as city hotels. They are located primarily in large and medium-sized cities, their sub-

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[6] T. Łobożewicz, G. Bińczyk G., *op. cit.*, p. 181.

[7] *Wybrane aspekty obsługi ruchu turystycznego*, ed. B. Meyer, Fundacja na rzecz Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego, Szczecin 2004, p. 50.

[8] R. Davidson, B. Cope, *Turystyka biznesowa. Konferencje, podróże motywacyjne, wystawy, turystyka korporacyjna*, Polska Organizacja Turystyczna, Warszawa 2003, p. 10.

stantial part is situated near railway stations. The vast majority of business hotels is located in great agglomerations, where due to the seats of various government and international institutions, scientific organizations and enterprises, as well as because of the numerous shows and entertainment halls, as well as sports and trade fair ones, business tourism events take place most often. In large cities, hotels with meeting and convention halls are usually located in the center of the city or its outer part, in the vicinity of the fair or exhibition facilities or shows and entertainment halls.[9] Business hotels are sometimes located by motorways and major highways and near major international airports. Then they fulfill a function similar to transit hotels. An important feature of business hotels is their equipment with a number of telecommunications links, conference rooms, catering facilities and equipment for biological renewal.[10] Most of the rooms in business hotels is for one person, which also results from the categorization regulations of the facility. Business hotels[11] are prestigious places, often of a high category, which legally obliges them to possess a given structure of rooms, where single rooms or maximum double rooms are a standard,[12] i.e. a mandatory actual state at the hotel.

In accordance with categorization requirements, the provision of services related to business tourism movement by hotel facilities is an optional service, however, in the hotels classified and categorized as four- and five-star, offering such services is defined as mandatory. The Regulation of Minister of Economy and Labour of 19 August 2004, as amended in 2006, on hotel facilities and other facilities in which hospitality services are provided, shows clearly that such facilities must have a number of multi-function rooms, adapted to the nature of a facility – conference rooms, club rooms, training rooms, etc.[13] In today's hotel

[9] A. Kowalczyk, *Geografia hotelarstwa*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego 2001, p. 88.

[10] *Ibidem*, pp. 71–72.

[11] Hotels – facilities having at least 10 rooms, with the majority of places in single and double rooms, providing a wide range of services connected with the stay of clients; Source: Ustawa z 29 sierpnia 1997 r. o usługach turystycznych, DzU 2004, nr 223.

[12] Standard – set of norms, practices, requirements and quality characteristics adopted for a specific target group: E. Mitura, E. Koniuszewska, *Ekonomika i organizacja pracy w hotelarstwie*, Difin, Warszawa 2006, p. 42.

[13] Załącznik nr 1 do Rozporządzenia Ministra Gospodarki i Pracy z dnia 19 sierpnia 2004 r., DzU 2006, nr 6, poz. 29.

industry the role of multifunction rooms is very important, because it affects the use of hotel service capacity. A multifunction room is a set of multipurpose rooms and premises, which can in principle be combined or divided using mobile partitions. These rooms are designed for banquets, meetings, conferences, training courses, lectures, seminars, congresses, shows, exhibitions or presentations.[14] Hotels with multifunction rooms are such popular venues for a variety of business meetings, because it is good and convenient to have everything in one place, make arrangements with one trading partner (in the case of the meeting organizer) and receive full service at the level of the hotel's standard. Possession of a conference room is for virtually every hotel a indispensable part of infrastructure, as it allows to accommodate business customers.[15] Those hotels that do not have such meeting rooms, adapt other facilities to strengthen their position on the market. Another solution for hotels, where the technical conditions do not allow to handle MICE[16] events, is cooperation with other hotels in providing various types of services.

Requirements for multifunction rooms that are most important when it comes to handling mass business events are as follows:[17]

- good access to other teams areas of the hotel (logistics in the building realized through communication channels),
- easy division of space,
- the existence of lobbies, to enable participants to take breaks and organize events such as exhibitions,
- proximity of sanitary and hygienic facilities and sufficient number of them,
- the possibility to organize the catering service,
- the possibility of variable arrangement, by means of appropriate furniture and having room for storing such furniture,
- good ventilation, air conditioning, acoustics,

[14] Cz. Witkowski, *Hotelarstwo. Część I. Podstawy hotelarstwa*, Wyższa Szkoła Ekonomiczna, Warszawa 2002, pp. 70–71.

[15] I. Sokołowska, *Turystyka biznesowa – polska specjalność w ocenie Stowarzyszenia Konferencje i Kongresy w Polsce*, in: *Turystyka biznesowa. Produkt i promocja…*

[16] Acronym for meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions.

[17] Cz. Witkowski, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

– availability of audio and audiovisual equipment, adjustable light intensity.

A specific type of hotels common on the business tourism market and somewhat similar to city hotels and at the same time to transit hotels are business and conference hotels located near major airports. They handle a growing number of visitors who sometimes do not even use accommodation and, coming for a one-day meeting, are content just to use the possibility of catering facilities and conference premises. This occurs primarily at airports which are important hubs of international communication.[18]

3. ECOLOGY IN THE OFFER OF BUSINESS HOTELS

Increased interest in ecology and contact with nature is evident in the activities undertaken by the entities operating in the meetings industry. First of all, this concerns the conference and congress sector, which is largely related to market of hotels. Statistics show that on average, during a three-day meeting, which involves 500 people, 6 tons of waste are produced and 100 000 kilowatts of electricity and 200 000 liters of water are consumed.[19]

Therefore, to reduce the negative environmental impact, hotels,[20] while creating an offer made for business travelers, are trying to eliminate those elements which have a pejorative impact on the natural environment. An example may be an offer for organization of conferences, during which a business hotel offers:[21]

– preparation of a place with stationery, instead of notebooks and pens distributed to each participant,
– the use of reusable boards instead of charts with large sheets of paper,
– the use of daylight only during the meeting, instead of artificial lighting,
– turning on air conditioning only at the request of participants and encouraging guests to open windows,

[18] A. Kowalczyk, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

[19] www.e-konferencje.pl, 20.07.2009.

[20] Hotels of the *Starwood* chain can be taken as examples: *Sheraton* hotels in Warsaw, Krakow and Poznan as well as *The Westin Warsaw* and *Le Meridien Bristol*.

[21] A. Róg-Skrzyniarz, *Ekologia decyduje o wyborze hotelu*, www.e-hotelarz.pl, 15.01.2011.

- serving mineral water from a large distributor, instead of small bottles,
- serving cream and milk in jugs instead of disposable packaging,
- preparation of ecological coffee breaks with natural fruit juice and biscuits made in the hotel prepared with organic products,
- preparation of ecological lunch menu based on local seasonal produce,
- use of fewer napkins and tablecloths during the meeting,
- encouraging the organizers of meetings to send conference materials via e-mail instead of printing them, which is intended to protect the environment.[22]

In addition, a so-called *Green Meeting Concierge* is at the disposal of the participants of the conference, that is a person who prepares the conference room and ensures observance of the principles of ecology.

Offer of hotels in the context of environmental protection is also related to the elements of typical hotel accommodation that applies to residential units. Ecological aspects are related to the following services of the hotel:[23]

- fresh bed linen and towels at the request of guests,
- the use of mild detergents by the hotel, which are safe for the environment,
- the possibility for visitors to sort waste,
- use of energy saving lighting solutions,
- saving water by installing water and air mixers on the taps and upgrading water treatment systems.

In addition, hotels segregate hazardous waste (fluorescent lamps, batteries, electronic equipment), including such waste also being collected from the employees, collect recyclable materials (glass, paper, oil, etc.). and carry out monitoring and scheduling of the work of ventilation devices depending on demand. In addition, some hotels try to participate in the action "Earth Hour", during which the lights are turned off in all public locations and only candles are used.

Another practical and quite common example of an ecological trend in the hospitality industry is the segregation of waste and its proper management. In the backstage conversations with the industry also indicated are the reconstruc-

[22] www.e-konferencje.pl, 20.07.2009.

[23] A. Róg-Skrzyniarz, *op. cit.*

tion projects of facilities in the context of the use of energy from alternative sources (solar panels).

Conclusions

The current ecological trend, associated with changes in modern tourism, is in accordance with the concept of sustainable development (environmental sustainability) According to its assumptions, in the environment human activities that provide socioeconomic development should also guarantee the preservation of order at the ecological, social, economic and spatial level. In the case of tourism (including hospitality), its basis is the achievement of harmony between the needs of tourism, the natural environment and local communities.[24] Following the same approach, the development of tourism should therefore be integrated with local economic development and conservation objectives.

The essence of environmental sustainability is slowly being noticed by the representatives of the hospitality industry because it is precisely with this industry's activities that the negative impact on the environment is associated in terms of tonnes of rubbish and waste of energy. Hence, taking into account the current trend of environmental protection, hoteliers, while creating a market offer, should take this fact into account to a greater extent. Ecology, in fact, may soon be a decisive argument in the choice of potential hotel to host a business meeting.

EKOLOGICZNE ASPEKTY W OFERCIE HOTELI BIZNESOWYCH

Streszczenie

Rozwój współczesnej turystyki, opartej na poszanowaniu środowiska naturalnego, jest nieodzownie związany z ekologią, która odnosi się do struktury i funkcjonowania przyrody, badania oddziaływań pomiędzy organizmami a ich środowiskiem, wpływu działalności człowieka na środowisko, a przede wszystkim poszukiwania metod zapobiegania wyniszczeniu środowiska.

[24] B. Meyer, *Kształtowanie układów przestrzenno-funkcjonalnych przez turystykę*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego, Szczecin 2008, p. 84.

Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie teoretycznych aspektów hoteli prowadzących działalność w zakresie turystyki biznesowej oraz przeanalizowanie oferty obiektów przez pryzmat ochrony środowiska naturalnego. Artykuł składa się z trzech części merytorycznych, wstępu oraz zakończenia. Pierwsza część referatu dotyczy podstawowych zagadnień związanych z turystyką biznesową, druga natomiast – charakterystyki hoteli biznesowych. W ostatniej części referatu opisano ekologiczne aspekty w ofercie hoteli świadczących usługi na rzecz turystów biznesowych.

ECOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF BUSINESS HOTELS' OFFERS

Summary

The contemporary tourism based on the principles of sustainable development is indispensably connected with ecology. The scientific scope of ecological research comprises structures of surrounding wildlife together with their functions, the correlation between organisms and their habitat, the influence of human activity on the environment. The main focus of the science, however, is placed on seeking new methods of protecting and preserving the environment.

The article presents theoretical aspects of the hotels that cater to business travelers and analyses business hotels' offers with regard to the concept of sustainable development and environment protection. The paper consists of three theoretical parts, introduction and conclusion. The first part introduces basic terms and concepts connected with business tourism. The second part characterizes business hotels. Finally, in the last part of the article the author discusses offers of business hotels focusing on their incorporation of principles of environmental responsibility.

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PERSONNEL AS ONE OF THE SOURCES OF RISK IN HOSPITALITY ENTERPRISES

Introduction

The fundamental problem in the operation of modern hotel companies is the lack of reliability. Risks occurring in business activity may lead to bankruptcy, and the list of its factors is long and varied. Their common feature is that they directly shape the financial situation of the entity. Facilitating the generation of certain types of expenses or an increase of the revenues from sales, they imply efficiency level of the decisions taken in staff and investment fields, which is reflected in the condition of the company. It is therefore extremely important to identify risk factors that may affect the operation of the entity.

The increasing turbulence of the market environment makes it necessary for hotel businesses to be different from other parties involved in the market game and to consolidate their own unique position in public awareness. That is not provided by the financial or tangible resources, at the disposal of hotel businesses, because they are easy to imitate by competitors. The only organization subsystem, characterized by the uniqueness in both individual and team dimension is created by people. Giving the company their knowledge, skills, abilities, their own value systems, the people contribute to the creation of a specific culture and organizational climate, which determines the diversity of the whole system, which is the hotel business. Staff at the hotel serves a special role, de-

cides on the culture of service and the atmosphere and impression the guest will have. On the other hand, the same staff of the company can be a source of risk.

The aim of this article is to diagnose risk factors in the implementation of the personnel function in the hotel business. This article is a result of literature studies and analysis of available secondary data concerning the described problem.

1. AREAS OF PERSONNEL RISK IN HOTEL BUSINESS

Personnel risk is "a function of the probability that an adverse event will occur as a result of personnel decisions (both subjective and forced by the conditions) and the scale of the negative effects of this event for the proper functioning of the organization."[1]

There are several types of personnel risk in the hotel industry, namely:

1. recruitment risk – maladjustment of demand and supply of labor in terms of quantity and quality;
2. selection risk – it is a situation of decision-making, carrying the opportunities and risks arising from the fact of employment of a given person on the basis of the criteria adopted for selection;
3. evaluation risk that is associated with the process of formation, formulation and expression of opinions of an employee's personality traits, his behavior at work and the results obtained by him;
4. risk of investing in employees' development, that includes the following sub-types of personnel risk: the risk of lack of staff's willingness to develop; the risk of lack of return on investments in human capital; the risk of outflow of workers who have been invested into, the risk of gaps in knowledge and skills of staff;
5. risk of incentive – the consequences for the company that result from a particular selection of motivation tools in relation to individual employees;
6. risk of pathological behavior, including conduct contrary to professional ethics;

[1] M. Rutka, M. Czerska, *Ryzyko ewaluacyjne w zarządzaniu personelem w badanych urzędach miasta*, in: *Doskonalenie systemów zarządzania w społeczeństwie informacyjnym*, ed. A. Stabryła, Tom 2, Akademia Ekonomiczna w Krakowie, Kraków 2006, p. 201.

7. de-recruitment risk (of dismissal) may be associated with such processes as restructuring, privatization, merger or division of a company (costs of severance pay, of re-recruitment, of training a new employee).

Staff activities at a hotel are burdened with **recruitment risk**, resulting from fluctuations of phenomena in the labor market. These phenomena are growing due to the increasing mobility of society and the emergence of migration risk, thus personnel risk becomes more and more multi-dimensional, and changes dynamically in function of time. Extension of the labor market due to Polish membership in the European Union gives more opportunities to look for an attractive job by employees and increases emigration. For Polish companies it constitutes a challenge of competition growth that goes beyond national borders, it also creates the need for openness to immigrants from other countries.

Selection risk involves lack of certainty as to the relevance of the choice of particular workers as people who should enrich human resources of hotel business. It therefore contains a danger that instead of qualitative multiplying of human capital, it comes to its impoverishment with all the consequences. In addition to the use of outsourcing, which can be treated as a method of risk transfer, to ways of dealing with selection risk belong: avoidance (which, however, does not resolve the problem, i.e. does not fill the vacancy), or prevention, that is reflected for example in the careful choice of selection methods.

A special type of risk, because of the difficulty in choosing appropriate evaluation techniques, is associated with another function of human resource management, namely the **evaluation**. However, the abandonment of evaluation in order not to make mistakes is not an appropriate solution, since the outcome of the evaluation is – as it is known – the starting point for various personnel decisions. While specifying a level of evaluation risk, first of all, one must take into account the degree of objectivity of the type of evaluation procedures realized in the company, including evaluative conversation.

Function of incentive is also connected with risk. Both excessive, insufficient and inadequately focused managers' effort which serves to shape the attitudes and behaviors of employees could turn out to be harmful. Incentive system should not only be consistent with the company's overall strategy (including the substrategy of cost formation), but also compatible with the requirements of the company's environment (i.e. allowing the attraction of suitable employees) and this system should form a coherent whole. Failure to meet any

of the above requirements that must be fullfilled by modern systems of incentives increases the risk of motivation, and thus the risk of hotel businesses.

Taking into consideration the service aspect of the hotel product, it is of great importance for the functioning of the company to measure **social dysfunction** and preventive actions possible to be taken in this scope. These social dysfunctions have certain financial implications that denote decrease in work efficiency, increase in the number (cost) of errors and loss of confidence to the service provider, from both corporate and individual customers. If one takes into account the possibility of reducing the negative phenomena in a variety of pathological behavior, the possibility to achieve both social results (e.g. improved work atmosphere) and economic ones (higher level of motivation to work flawlessly and efficiently) becomes real.[2]

Another type of personnel risk is **de-recruitment risk** (of dismissal). Hotel business is a very time-consuming industry in which human labor cannot easily be replaced by an automaton or a machine. In a synthetic way, this truth is confirmed by the fact that the higher category the hotel has and the more complex its functional program is, the higher is the index of the number of people employed to the number of guests the hotel can accommodate. An example of this phenomenon may be the Orbis Group hotels, where the index value is, respectively, for selected 5-star hotels 0.63–0.69; for 4-star hotels 0.42–0.52; for 3-star hotels 0 0.37–0, 43, for 2-star hotels of 0.25, for Etap – 0.12.[3] It may be therefore particularly difficult to make a choice between the desire to reduce the employment rate for a room (reducing the level of fixed costs) and ensuring an adequate quality of service. Reducing the number of employees is especially difficult in the case of high standard hotels and hotels that focus on serving more demanding (wealthier) customers. Undoubtedly, it is easier to rationalize employment in large than small facilities, especially because in the latter it is not always possible to use outsourcing (external companies will not be interested in taking over the function, in which a small scale of operations does not provide an opportunity for adequate compensation of risk).

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[2] G. Broniewska, *Koszty społeczne w rachunku kosztów jakości*, "Problemy Jakości" 1998, No. 6, p. 23.

[3] A. Konieczna-Domańska, *Gospodarka turystyczna. Zagadnienia wybrane*, Wydawnictwo Kanon, Warszawa 2007, p. 63.

The risk is rarely associated with only a single function of human resource management. Typically – due to the high degree of interdependence of these functions – it is the rolling risk. It means that the failure incurred in carrying out one function entails a kind of automatic failure in accomplishing the other functions. For example, motivation failures lead to failures of functions: recruitment and selection (because the companies do not attract highly qualified specialists) and developmental function (because workers are not sufficiently motivated to develop). In turn, successes in motivating have their positive reflection in the implementation of these functions.

It does not seem possible to establish a universally valid hierarchy of sub-types of personnel risk, showing which of them should be particularly avoided, and which can be tolerated. In case of personnel risk, the value risked (prone to risk) may take both tangible (increased personnel costs, lower profits, loss of competitiveness) and intangible form (loss of a good image, reputation), but usually the latter also has financial implications.

People who define scenarios of development of a company's personnel situation should determine what level of risk they are willing to accept. In determining how to make personnel decisions, it must be borne in mind that the "degree of saturation of the risk" depends on the number of people responsible for those decisions. Depending on the size of the hotel facility and its organizational structure, responsibility for management of personnel risk can be assigned to: the owner of the hotel facility, management, personnel department, personnel manager, a particular employee or several entities simultaneously.

Conclusions

Increasing uncertainty of operating conditions necessitates the need to explore the risks in the process of hotel management, which requires a systematic analysis of the potential of the enterprise and its environment in order to identify sources of risk. The development of civilization, leading to increases of human labor costs creates an additional argument to draw attention to the status of personnel policy, and thus to the problems of personnel risk.

Sources of personnel risk may lie both inside and outside the company. The impact of the economic situation is particularly strong, including, among others the economic situation in the labor market. This results from the hotel business relationships with the environment, in both "input" (recruitment and

selection) and "output" (dismissal). Personnel risk grows together with the growth of pace, scope and unpredictability of changes in the environment and within the company.

Personnel risk management is the process of identification, measurement and control of personnel risk which enables its reduction and/or protection from its implications (minimizing negative effects of personnel actions taken and maximizing positive outcomes of adverse events) to ensure conditions for personnel policy realization.

Unfortunately, there are no methods that completely exclude personnel risk. However, it is advisable to try to manage this risk in order to withdraw the prospect of failure/loss and to bring closer the prospect of success/profit.

PERSONEL JAKO JEDNO ZE ŹRÓDEŁ RYZYKA W PRZEDSIĘBIORSTWIE HOTELARSKIM

Streszczenie

Narastająca niepewność warunków funkcjonowania wymusza potrzebę zgłębienia ryzyka w procesie zarządzania hotelem, co wymaga systematycznej analizy potencjału przedsiębiorstwa i jego otoczenia w celu identyfikacji źródeł ryzyka. Mogą one tkwić wewnątrz przedsiębiorstwa i na zewnątrz. Szczególnie silny jest wpływ sytuacji ekonomicznej, obejmującej m.in. tę na rynku pracy. Wynika to z powiązań przedsiębiorstwa hotelarskiego z otoczeniem, i to zarówno „na wejściu" (rekrutacja i dobór), jak i „na wyjściu" (zwolnienia).

Ryzyko personalne to funkcja prawdopodobieństwa wystąpienia negatywnego zdarzenia na skutek podjętych decyzji personalnych (subiektywnych i wymuszonych warunkami) oraz skali negatywnych skutków owego zdarzenia dla prawidłowego funkcjonowania organizacji. Można wyróżnić następujące rodzaje ryzyka personalnego w hotelarstwie:

- rekrutacyjne,
- selekcyjne,
- inwestowania w rozwój pracowników,
- motywacyjne,
- wystąpienia patologicznych zachowań,
- derekrutacyjne (zwalniania).

Zarządzanie ryzykiem personalnym jest procesem określania, pomiaru oraz controllingu ryzyka personalnego, umożliwiającym jego ograniczenie i/lub zabezpieczenie się przed jego implikacjami (minimalizowanie negatywnych skutków podejmowanych

działań personalnych oraz maksymalizowanie pozytywnych rezultatów zdarzeń niepomyślnych) celem zapewnienia warunków realizacji polityki personalnej.

Niestety, nie ma metod całkowicie wykluczających ryzyko personalne. Wskazane jest jednak podjęcie próby zarządzania nim, aby oddalić perspektywę niepowodzenia/straty, a przybliżyć perspektywę sukcesu/zysku.

PERSONNEL AS ONE OF THE SOURCES OF RISK IN HOSPITALITY ENTERPRISES

Summary

Human resources management contains a considerable and unavoidable risk potential. By taking this risk, however, the company may increase its chance not only for survival but for a steady development and human resources enhancement as well.

The paper presents and characterizes the main sources of risk in the human resources management in the hospitality sector. The considerations are theoretical. The article is the result of literature studies and analysis of available secondary data.

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THE MEANING OF COLOUR IN NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION AND IN THE SHAPING OF A TRAVEL AGENCY IMAGE

Introduction

The functioning of companies is to a large extent based on competing for clients. In order to achieve a better position than the competition, business entities attempt at being exceptional on the market. They usually do it by providing products or services that are more attractive for a potential client in respect of price, quality or image (emotional aspect). Consumers usually notice only a small part of stimuli which are provided by the surroundings. Thus it is significant to design particular elements that create the visual system of a company in such a way that they maximise their image among clients and stakeholders. The system of visual identification is an amalgam of various graphic elements allowing the recipients to recognise the company and distinguish it from the competition. A colour constitutes an integral part of this system. Being a component of products, services, packaging or a logo it may serve as an efficient tool for creating, sustaining and altering the image of a brand in clients' minds. It belongs to a group of manipulative tools since it informs, warns, draws attention, encourages and thus, it affects people strongly and is one of the elements of brand equity. A colour is a code which helps pass a message to surroundings.

More and more managers realise the need for creating a visual corporate identity by finding ways enabling the company to stand out and pass positive information to clients in a non-verbal way different from the competition. The

aim of the article is to explain the meaning of colour in various aspects which can be applied while building a relation with a client, to define the group of colours used most frequently for creating brand marks by travel agencies and to indicate features attributed to each of the six basic colours (red, green, yellow, navy blue, black and white) which are usually associated with them.

1. THE MEANING OF COLOUR IN MARKETING

The meaning of colour in marketing is confirmed in a wide range of studies having practical implications. Colour gives the advertiser an advantageous position over competitors who use only black and white advertisements. It simultaneously improves the status of the company, product and service in the eyes of the recipients of these advertisements.[1] Additionally, empirical results of the studies indicate clearly that the colour of the advertisement may influence emotions and attitudes. The effects differ depending on an optimal stimulation level (OSL) which a particular person has. In this context it is significant to measure "optimal stimulation level" which makes it possible to adjust the colour of the advertisement to the market. For instance, the use of dark red colour will exert positive influence on people with high OSL, while among people with a low level it will reduce the feeling of pleasure and favourable attitude to the advertisement.[2] There also exists a connection between the perceptible pace at which websites are opened and the colour of background which a person can observe during this process. The impression that the website opens quicker is higher when the background is blue than in the case of yellow or red colour. This effect is achieved owing to the feeling of deeper relax which is influenced by blue colour. It proves the intermediary role of feeling relaxed in perceiving the speed.[3] Colour is also an effective tool used for shortening the time devoted

[1] B.B. Gardner, Y.A. Cohen, *ROP Color and its effect on newspaper advertising*, "Journal of Marketing Research" 1964, pp. 68–70.

[2] M.Ch. Lichtlé, *The effect of an advertisement's colour on emotions evoked by an ad and attitude towards the ad. The moderating role of the optimal stimulation level*, "International Journal of Advertising" 2007, vol. 26, No. 1, pp. 37–62.

[3] G.J. Gorn, A. Chattopadhyay, J. Sengupta, S. Tripathi, *Waiting for the Web: How Screen Color Affects Time Perception*, "Journal of Marketing Research" 2004, vol. XLI, pp. 218–219.

to finding particular elements in a picture.[4] Basic colours such as red, blue and green are identified and found quicker than non-basic colours (turquoise, beige and peach).[5] Another proof for big significance of colours as distinguishing factors in the message is an experiment in which respondents were asked to mark places which they looked at during an advertisement presented for 10 seconds. During this experiment it was noted that the sight concentrated mostly on elements brighter than the surroundings and elements which had a more intensive colour.[6] Colours may be associated not only positively but also negatively. In a sports competition basketball teams playing in black outfits are considered by referees as more aggressive, brutal and playing a non-fair play compared to teams playing in red or white outfits.[7]

Previous research on colour with regard to its influence on clients and creating a relation with them concerned the following:[8]

- emotional reactions as some colours bring about higher anxiety than other colours. Each component of the colour (hue, saturation, lightness) influences such emotions as pleasure, arousal and domination,
- perception, the influence of colour on perceiving: the size, weight, temperature, taste, smell,[9]
- individual beliefs and assessments concerning, for instance: packaging, point of sale, advertisements,
- physiological reactions: warm colours have a stimulating effect while cold colours have a calming effect,
- behavioural intentions or reactions: the influence of colour on the selection of brand, the intention of purchase.

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[4] R.C. Carter, *Visual search with color*, "Journal of Experimental Psychology" 1982, No. 8, pp. 127–136.

[5] C. Jansson, N. Marlow, M. Bristow, *The influence of colour on visual search times in cluttered environments*, "Journal of Marketing Communications" 2004, No. 10, pp. 183–193.

[6] M. Milewski, *Na reklamę – okiem konsumenta*, "Marketing w Praktyce" 2008, No. 1, pp. 36–37.

[7] A. Bieleniewicz, *Perception of black colour of sport dresses and irrational decisions of basketball referees*, "Physical Education and Sport" 2007, No. 51, pp. 5–7.

[8] M.Ch. Lichtlé, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

[9] G. Morrot, F. Brochet, D. Dubourdieu, *The Color of Odors, Brain and Language*, "Brain and Language" 2001, vol. 18, No. 2, pp. 309–320.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The research consisted of two parts. The first one included the identification of colours and defining the appearance of each of them in the logos of 36 travel agencies.[10] Colours of particular symbols were arranged according to the domination in the brand mark. The second part of the research was devoted to establishing what positive features are associated with particular colours. The research included 72 women aged 19–21. Their task was to select six out of over eighty features for every colour (red, yellow, green, navy blue, white and black).

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

Most often logos of travel agencies consisted of three or two colours, which refers to ¾ of all the examined entities. There was no symbol which would include more than five colours (Fig. 1).

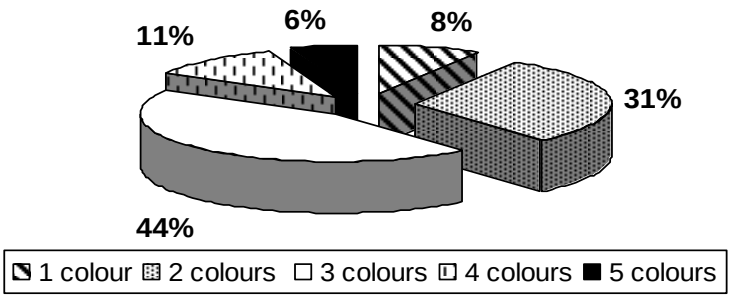

Fig. 1. Number of colours in the logos of travel agencies
Source: own research.

[10] Orbis Travel, Travel Time, Rainbow Tours, Triada, Ecco Holiday, Itaka, Exim Tours, Grecos Holiday, Best Reisen, Neckermann, Qasis Tours, GTI Travel, Alfa Star, Jet Touristic Poland, Sun&Fun Holidays, Olimp, Wezyr Holidays, Otium Travel, Logos Tour, Adriatyk, Logos Travel, Funclub, OK. Services, Trade&Travel Company, Tui, Scan Holiday, Bee Free Holidays, Fly.pl, Sky Club, Traveligo, Almatur, Sigma Travel, Delta Travel, Gromada, Mega Travel, Orka Travel.

White colour appeared in 22 marks and was the most common of all colours. Colours which were frequently used in logos included navy blue and red. A little over ¼ of marks included blue colour and every fourth mark included green colour. The least frequent colours used in creating a company symbol were purple, grey and pink (Fig. 2).

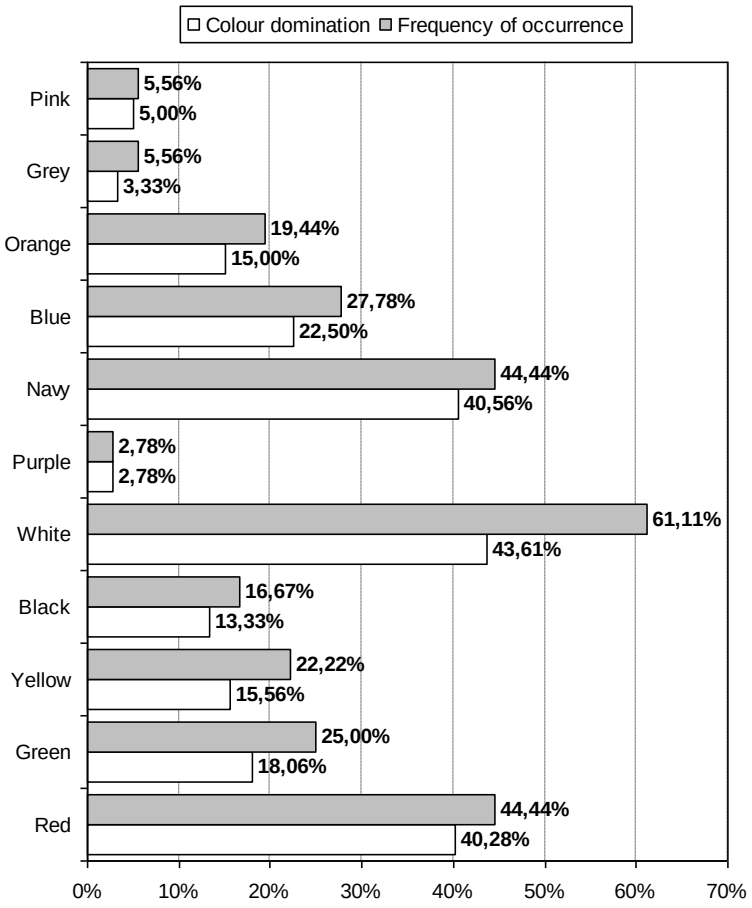

Fig. 2. Dominance and frequency of occurrence of colours in logos
Source: own research.

The colours dominating in logos, similarly to the frequency of occurrence, included white, navy blue and red. There are slight differences between these colours revealed in the study. It means that although white colour appeared

more often in logos, it was not the main colour in the symbol contrary to navy blue or red. The supplementary hues covering a small area in logos are the same colours which appear very rarely (Fig. 2). It should be pointed out that three major colours are not only the most common colours of travel agencies symbols, but also cover most of the area.

Table 1

Most frequent associations with a particular colour (in %)

Associations	R*	G*	Y*	N*	B*	W*
Desire	9.95					
Passion	7.41					
Warmth	6.48		9.26			
Strength	6.48				4.40	
Energy	5.56					
Power	5.56			2.78	4.40	
Extravagance	5.32				2.55	
Courage	4.86					
Hope		7.64				
Nature		7.41				
Harmony		6.02				5.79
Peace		5.79				4.40
Freshness		5.56	5.32			5.32
Naturalness		5.56				3.01
Trust		3.70				
Freedom		3.47				
Lightness			6.71			6.02
Optimism			6.02			
Joy			6.02			
Exoticism			5.79			
Youth			3.94			
Play			3.47			
Chill				6.94	8.10	
Discipline				5.09	3.47	
Sensibility				3.94		
Exclusiveness				3.01	5.09	
Reliability				3.01		
Consideration				2.78		3.01
Self-control				2.78		
Professionalism				2.78	3.47	
Simplicity				2.78	4.40	3.47
Elegance				2.78	6.48	
Consequence				2.78		
Conservatism					3.94	
Dignity					3.47	
Cleanliness						8.33
OTHER	48.38	54.86	53.47	58.56	49.77	60.64

*R – Red; G – Green; Y – Yellow; N – Navy; B – Black; W – White
Source: own elaboration.

The biggest number of the examined women associated red colour with desire, green with hope, yellow with warmth, navy blue as well as black with chill and white with cleanliness. Six features such as chill, discipline, exclusiveness, professionalism, simplicity and elegance were associated both with navy blue and with black. Harmony, peace, freshness and naturalness are features which connect green and white. Strength, power and extravagance are common for red and black colour (Tab.1).

Conclusions

Colour is an integral element of marketing communication. It evokes emotions and exerts influence on the perception and behaviour of consumers. It strengthens or weakens the reputation and image of a company and helps distinguish the company from among other entities providing the same type of services. This research allows for indicating the group of colours used in the process of creating brand marks by travel agencies and comparing them with the associations of the examined women. This helps to establish colour integrity of the company with the range of services provided and with a current image. The research enables the managers to select colours which suit the image strategy of a particular company best. The analysis of the results obtained revealed the need for carrying out further research in this area in order to search for and develop effective marketing strategies.

While building the system of visual communication managers should not forget that colours carry antagonist meaning. On the one hand, they are associated with positive features, on the other hand with negative ones. While creating an internationally recognised logo, attention must also be paid to the meaning and associations attributed to particular colours in various countries. White colour in East Asia symbolises sadness or death, whereas in Australia, New Zealand and the USA – happiness and cleanliness. Blue means high quality, reliability and trust in the USA, Japan, Korea and China while in Iran it is a colour symbolising death. Green is associated with threat or illness in Malaysia, with jealousy in Belgium and the USA and happiness and love in Japan. Yellow represents warmth in the USA whereas in France it is connected with infidelity and in Germany and Russia with envy and jealousy. Red is a colour of good

luck in China, Denmark and Argentina but it represents misfortune in Chad, Nigeria and Germany.[11]

The conducted research and analysis make it possible to formulate the following conclusions and observations:

- The majority of logos of travel agencies are created with the use of three colours (83%), i.e. white, navy blue and red. The research shows that while creating a logo the number of colours used should not be too high. A small number of colours enables a consumer to remember them better and makes it possible to create clear and explicit associations of such a logo with the company and its products.
- The comparison of the most commonly used and dominating colours in the analysed logos with the associations that they evoke among the subjects shows that the majority of entities wish to be associated with values and features combining the promise of reliable, elite and original services with harmony, clarity and such emotions as the feeling of fulfilment, passion and desire.

While creating logos as well as in other promotional activities travel agencies should make use of colours which are well adjusted to the type of products sold so that they are compliant with the accepted communication strategy and strongly associated with features and values which are expected by a client.

In conclusion, it must be stated that the diversity in colour perception and its influence leads to the fact that the process of selecting colours which will distinguish the company and draw attention but will also be easy to remember should include the following:[12]

- a psychological analysis of the meaning of particular colours,
- the analysis of the meaning of colours in the cultural surroundings (national, regional, global),
- the analysis of social, demographic and consumer trends represented in a particular lifestyle and shopping patterns,
- the meaning of colours for the particular target group.

[11] M.M. Aslam, *Are You Selling the Right Colour? A Cross-cultural Review of Colour as a Marketing Cue*, "Journal of Marketing Communications" 2006, vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 15–30.

[12] M. Styś, *Kod koloru*, "Marketing w Praktyce" 2005, No. 10, p. 41.

It results from the fact that people's perception of colours depends on experience, knowledge and socialisation.[13] These differences also result from their philosophical and religious attitudes and from the social process of learning.[14]

SYMBOLIKA KOLORU ELEMENTEM NIEWERBALNEJ KOMUNIKACJI Z KLIENTAMI I WAŻNY SKŁADNIK SYSTEMU IDENTYFIKACJI WIZUALNEJ BIUR PODRÓŻY

Streszczenie

Kolory stanowią jeden z głównych składników tworzących tożsamość firmy. Są ważnym elementem wizerunku i pozawerbalnym narzędziem komunikacji z klientem. W artykule dokonano przeglądu badań dotyczących znaczenia kolorów w marketingu. Wskazano zestaw skojarzeń oraz przybliżono rolę, jaką odgrywają w systemie identyfikacji wizualnej firmy. Wyniki przeprowadzonych badań dostarczają informacji na temat pozytywnych cech symbolizowanych przez sześć podstawowych barw. Praktyczny wymiar publikacji ma pozwolić zarządzającym dostosować barwy do atrybutów rynku turystycznego przed wprowadzeniem usługi lub rozpoczęciem kampanii promocyjnej.

THE MEANING OF COLOUR IN NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION AND IN THE SHAPING OF A TRAVEL AGENCY IMAGE

Summary

Colours constitute one of the major factors creating the identity of the company. They are a significant element of the image and a tool for the non-verbal communication with a client. The article includes the review of studies concerning the meaning of

[13] C. Taft, L. Sivik, *Stability and variability of colour meaning associations: across national comparison*, "Göteborg Psychological Reports" 1991, vol. 21, No. 1; C. Taft, L. Sivik, *Cross-national comparison of color meaning*, "Göteborg Psychological Reports" 1992, vol. 22, No. 3.

[14] C. Kaufman-Scarborough, *Accessible advertising for visually disabled persons: the case of colour-deficient consumers*, "Journal of Consumer Marketing" 2001, vol. 18, No. 4, pp. 303–318; W.R. Crozier, *The psychology of colour preferences*, "Review of Progress in Coloration and Related Topics" 1996, No. 26, pp. 63–72.

colours in marketing. A set of associations was shown and the role that they play in the system of visual identification of the company was explained. The results of the research provide information concerning positive features symbolized by six basic colours. A practical character of the publication is to allow managers to adapt colours to the attributes of the tourist market prior to introducing new services or commencing a promotional campaign.

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES OF TOURISM

SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL

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EVALUATION OF THE CONSUMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE PRODUCTS OF ALTERNATIVE TOURISM IN NATIONAL PARK "RILA"

Introduction

Over the past decades natural resources have been intensely exploited in different regions. It leads to balance disruption of the ecosystems. The negative processes in the environment are becoming faster and deeper as the environment disproportions reach a critical level. The level of air, water and soil pollution is increasing; the biodiversity is reducing; the non-renewable resources are increasingly being exhausted.[1] Consequently, we notice serious climate problems, that constitute new ecological problems. The ecological risk turns into a considerable economic, political and social problem.[2] In order to avoid any potential negative ecological consequences as well as social and economic after-effects, it is necessary that purposeful actions are taken at global, regional and

[1] Р. Гечев, *Устойчиво развитие: Системообразуващи фактори и регулативни механизми*, disertation, defended at University of National and World Economy (UNWE), Sofia 2005.

[2] Р. Мадгерова, Р. Димитрова, В. Кюрова, *Потребителски нагласи към туристическия продукт на екотуристическите посетителски центрове в контекста на устойчивото развитие*, in: *Управление и устойчиво развитие*, ЛТУ, 2008, pp. 3–4.

national level. The concept of sustainable development has started to evolve responding to that objective necessity. In accordance with the principles of this concept, the development of each economic sector has to fulfill the requirements for economic efficiency, social responsibility and ecological compatibility. Tourism is an activity that could have a great and significant influence upon the sustainable development. This is due to the fact that it has a unique dependence on the environment quality, cultural characteristics and social interaction, security and prosperity.[3]

Tourism ranks among "the priority branches of the Bulgarian economy".[4] Bulgaria is abundant in natural and anthropogenic resources. Therefore, the expert assessments and prognoses define tourism as one of the sectors determining the structure of the Bulgarian economy. In this sense the development of different alternative tourism forms (ecological, rural, mountain, balneological, ethnographical, etc.) holds great promise. Alternative tourism has been forecast to become one of the most dynamically developing types of tourism. That would make it possible to solve important social and economic problems, to enhance the well-being of the local people and the economic prosperity in preserved environment.

Along with the traditional tourism products, the alternative tourism products have been increasingly demanded in the market. They appear to be an important market niche with enormous potential of growth. For this reason it is required to conduct surveys, analysis and evaluation of the consumer attitude towards the alternative tourism products.

The territories of the nature parks provide optimal conditions for the alternative tourism development.

This paper has the objective to analyze and evaluate the consumer attitude towards the alternative tourism products available in Rila National Park.

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[3] *План за действие за по-устойчив европейски туризъм. Доклад на Европейската група за устойчив туризъм*, ДАТ, www.tourism.government.bg, 02.12.2010.

[4] В. Кюрова, *Изследване и анализ на хотелиерското обслужване*, in: *Управление и устойчиво развитие*, ЛТУ, 2006, pp. 1–2.

1. METHODS OF RESEARCH

For the purpose of this paper we have used survey information of prospective consumers of alternative tourism products offered in Rila National Park. Rila National Park is the biggest national park in Bulgaria. Its area of 81 046 hectares comprises territories of Blagoevgrad, Kyustendil, Pazardzhik and Sofia regions. There is a unique variety of plants, animals and habitats in this high-mountain nature park. The park also attracts tourists with preserved unique forms of the Ice Age; it has more than 100 lakes as well as Alpine and sub-Alpine habitats. Parts of the park are included in the boundaries of 11 municipalities having considerable economic potential. There is good tourist infrastructure. In Rila National Park there is also the Rila Monastery Architectural and Historical Reserve, which entices over 800 000 tourists per year, 300 000 of whom are foreign tourists.

The questionnaire-based survey for this paper was done among 459 respondents in the cross section (potential consumers of alternative tourism products) from May till August 2009.

The survey consists of questions regarding: consumer interest, consumer preferences and attitude towards the characteristics of the alternative tourism products. We have used statistical methods to analyze and evaluate the received results.

2. RESEARCH AND RESULTS

The result analysis and evaluation give an opportunity for outlining the basic issues in several trends.

There is a great consumer interest in the opportunities for tourism in Rila National Park.

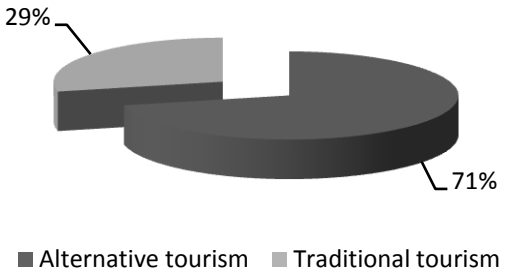

Fig. 1. Consumer preferences to the alternative tourism products
Source: own research.

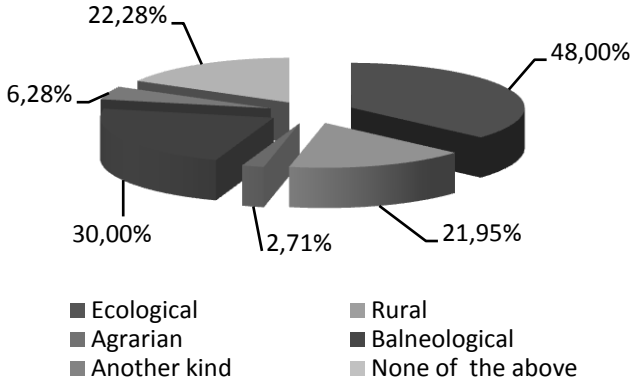

Fig. 2. Consumer preferences to the types of alternative tourism
Note: The percentage sum exceeds 100% as the respondents gave more than one answer.
Source: own research.

Over 45% of the respondents prefer to realize their holiday in the park. A large number of the respondents, 71.4%, have a preference for the diversity of alternative tourism products available in Rila National Park. Greatest interest is shown to the ecotourism products (48% of the respondents), followed by the balneological tourism products (30%) and rural tourism products (22%). An

essential feature of the consumer attitude is the fact that most of the respondents would use the alternative tourism products in a group – 69.14% with friends and 28% with their family.

The next group of questions included in the survey aim to define the motives of the potential consumers when choosing the alternative tourism products. The summarized results reveal that the main factor in the choice of alternative tourism is the variety of relaxation possibilities. 54.28% of the respondents state that an advantage of the alternative tourism is the fact that a holiday is made in preserved environment and 45.71% attach great importance to the peace provided by the holiday. A significant part of the respondents give preference to the knowledge aspect of the alternative tourism – 21.14% estimate highly the opportunity to become familiar with the culture, lifestyle and traditions of the local community and 18.86% wish to explore nature, plant and animal life. At this stage a small number of the potential consumers show interest to the agricultural production (3.43%) and to an active holiday taking part in agricultural work (2.86%). An important incentive when choosing the alternative tourism products for 19.43% of the respondents is the chance to eat environmentally sound food. Some of the answers in this group give a high assessment to the advantages of the available resources for balneological treatment in Rila National Park (18.86%).

The next trend of the survey involves the consumer attitude to participation in environment protection and conservation activities – 17.14% of the respondents are willing to take part. 77.14% of the prospective users would like to possibly take part in an educational program in environment conservation. A good number of the respondents (68.58%) would appreciate the opportunity to participate voluntarily in environment protection activities as an element of the alternative tourism product.

The consumer preferences to the available accommodation in Rila National Park are of a great importance for the analysis (Fig. 3).

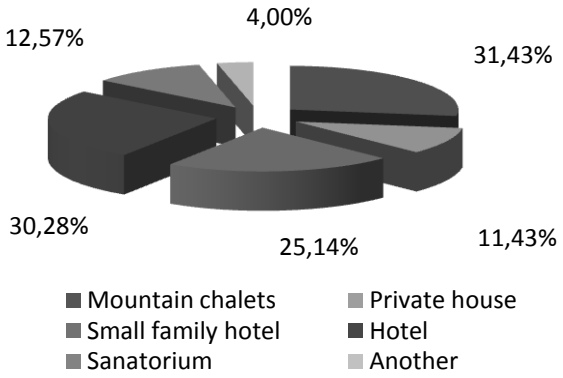

Fig. 3. Consumer preferences to the accommodation establishments
Note: The percentage sum exceeds 100% as the respondents gave more than one answer.
Source: own research.

Figure 3 shows that hotels are liked the best. The choice of accommodation is dependent on both conveniences and quoted prices for a week's holiday. 67.43% of the respondents prefer lodging establishments which offer modern facilities at relatively low prices for one-week stay (mainly from 100 to 150 leva – 24.57% of the respondents).

The examination of the preferred characteristics of the tourist product reveals that the prospective users of alternative tourism products want to have an amusement program during their holiday (67.43%). It is important that entrepreneurs satisfy this requirement when they create sustainable tourism products. Consumers expect to have various entertainments such as strolls close to nature, hiking, seeing nature attractions and the like (66% of the answers), visiting museums, cultural, historical and architectural monuments (48% of the answers) and different pastimes (36.14%). These are essential tourist product elements to offer and cater for the tourists' varied needs and wishes as well as to ensure the complex character of the product.

The analysis of the sustainability of the consumer disposition towards the alternative tourism products in Rila National Park is very important. The results show that 64.57% of the respondents have been to tourist sites and settlements within the park. A great number of them state firmly that they want to use different tourist products in the park again. The basic reasons for this choice are

the magnificent nature (58.29%), the culture, lifestyle, traditions, crafts of the local people (22.85%) and the cultural, historical and architectural monuments (28%) and others.

The last group of questions refer to the way and degree of information supply of the potential consumers about the alternative tourism products available in Rila National Park. It is significant for the sustainable development and economic efficiency of the alternative tourism that the required advertisement be created. The result analysis reveals that the promotion of the alternative tourism products and holiday opportunities in the park is insufficient – 60% of the respondents say that they haven't seen advertising materials about organized holidays or hotel stays in the examined territory. They have heard about the different holiday options chiefly from their friends (46.29%). The advertisement information of the tourist products and lodging establishments provided by the tourist agencies (13.71% of the respondents), by the TV, radio and newspapers (12% of the respondents) is extremely scanty. The advertising materials issued by the hotels are not enough either as it is evidenced by 8.57% of the answers. It has become clear from 9.14% of the answers that the Internet potential is not fully used.

Conclusions

The survey results provide grounds for drawing the following inferences:

1. The complex analysis of the nature, economic and anthropogenic factors shows that the area of Rila National Park has extremely attractive resource potential (natural, cultural, historical and social), which possesses high recreation capacity and therefore it should be fully used for the development of alternative tourism types mainly ecotourism, balneological and rural tourism. At the same time other types of tourism (knowledge, cultural, historical, etc.) could also be organized. Due to the rich resource variety more forms of alternative tourism could be developed and that ensures the complex character of the tourist product.
2. Potential consumers show great interest in the alternative tourism products available in Rila National Park. The tourist market segments of the various forms of alternative tourism have started to occupy a bigger part of the tourist product market.

3. Tourists have particular requirements to the characteristics of the alternative tourism products offered in Rila National Park.
4. Currently, very few of the potential users of the alternative tourism products are ready and willing to stay in properties with simple and authentic environment and they go to tourist sites of higher category.
5. There has to be a massive advertising and information campaign about the opportunities of the alternative tourism products in Rila National Park. Such campaign's goal is to include all possible ways of promotion and advertising. It would be very useful if data about the alternative tourism product opportunities in the park were merged in a uniform information system with the collaboration of the Ministry of Environment and Water, Bulgarian Association for Alternative Tourism, Bulgarian Association for Rural and Ecological Tourism, Directorate of Rila National Park, tourist organizations and municipalities.
6. It is necessary that a complex and varied alternative tourism product is developed on the basis of general evaluation of all the resources in Rila National Park and in conformity with the requirement for environmentally conscious use of the tourist resources.

OCENA STOSUNKU KONSUMENTÓW DO PRODUKTÓW TURYSTYKI ALTERNATYWNEJ W PARKU NARODOWYM „RIŁA"

Streszczenie

W ciągu ostatnich kilku lat obserwuje się wzrost zainteresowania turystyką alternatywną. Turystyka alternatywna staje się jedną z najdynamiczniej rozwijających się form turystyki. Celem artykułu jest analiza i ocena postawy konsumentów wobec produktów turystyki alternatywnej świadczonych przez Park Narodowy „Riła" w kontekście zrównoważonego rozwoju. Analizy i wnioski związane z badanym problemem opierają się na ankietach przeprowadzonych wśród potencjalnych uczestników turystyki alternatywnej na terenie Parku Narodowego „Riła".

EVALUATION OF THE CONSUMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE PRODUCTS OF ALTERNATIVE TOURISM IN NATIONAL PARK "RILA"

Summary

During the last several years, an increase in the interest towards alternative tourism can be observed. It is steadily becoming one of the most dynamically developing sorts of tourism. The goal of this project is to analyze and evaluate consumer attitudes towards the products of alternative tourism provided by the National park "Rila" in the context of sustainable development. The set of analysis and conclusions regarding the problem are based on a opinion survey conducted upon the potential consumers of alternative tourism in the territory of National park "Rila".

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TOURISM AND THE MUSEUMS IN NORTH-EASTERN BULGARIA DURING ECONOMIC CRISIS

Introduction

The material aims to explain the work of museums in north-eastern Bulgaria during economic crisis. Special attention is paid to the recession in the country in 1996, the followed overcoming and the increase in the stream of tourists in XXI century, the collapse of world economy in 2008 and the consequences for the tourism industry. The indicated data concern the stated years and apply to the Regional History Museums in Varna, Shumen, Targovishte and Ruse.

Besides, we try to make an exemplary model for crisis overcoming, to be used by the indicated culture institutions, which is not related to eventual visitors and tourist agencies, but with other measures of the local authorities, which would lead to greater economic results.

In the beginning of 21st century tourism wins recognition as one of the most dynamic business fields in the world and as one of the major sources of economic progress. The growing, not only profitable but also humanitarian, significance of the tourist activity brings forth a number of challenges to the modern society. Gaining a sustainable tourism development on a local, regional, national and international scale is most important amongst them.

The cultural tourism has a predominant role in this industry. The principles of the International Charter of Cultural Tourism of ICOMOS state, that it uses

the heritage – cultural and natural resources which preserve the collective memory of the community. Its annual growth is 15% and 37% of all international trips are related to cultural tourism.[1] There are new possibilities for the development of this phenomenon. The prognoses of the World Tourism Organization indicate that by 2020 it will be leading in the world.

This is the time to mention the museums as mediators, promoters and income resources in the field of the cultural tourism between the cultural and historical sites and the tourists. This is one of the definitions for a museum given by Rumyan Ganchev in 2006: "A museum is a permanent nonprofit institution, serving the community and its development, open to the public, making researches concerning all man-made objects and the environment. The museum acquires, preserves, exhibits and predominantly represents these artifacts with scientific and educational purpose, as well as for aesthetic relish".[2]

Another Bulgarian author that treats the above mentioned problems extends the definition and speaks about the cultural – historical heritage stored in museums and as a means ofincreasing the profits and incomes of both the institutions and the overall tourism industry: "The time we live in requires us to clearly and explicitly deal with theconcepts that we need – products and goods, market economy. We need to fill them with content – the so called cultural-historic heritage and to perceive it as a marketable product or commodity. It is not possible to talk about culture market and to exclude the cultural – historical heritage from it. In connection with this we should definitely start with the relationship between economics and cultural – historical heritage. Thus we will reach the economics of the cultural – historical heritage. For this reason, we now have to understand and realize that the market rules are valid in the management of cultural – historical heritage too".[3]

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[1] С. Милева, *Рекреация чрез специализиран туризъм*, Sofia 2004, pp. 62–63.

[2] Р. Ганчев, *Състояние, проблеми и перспективи пред българските музеи и галерии*, Report presented on the National Meeting of Directors of Museums and Galleries in Bulgaria, Sofia, 20 June 2006.

[3] Пл. Крайски, *Публичните комуникации и реализация на добрата идея*, in: *Добри практики на музеите с медиите*, Stara Zagora, 2008; Д. Руменов, *Музейните колекции като туристически продукт* in: *Сб. Есенни четения – Сборяново*, Varna 2011; М. Пенерлиев, *Културният туризъм и музеите – концепции и принципи*, "География 21" 2008, No. 1, pp. 42–46; Т. Чобанов, *Културен туризъм и регионално развитие – изследване подкрепено от Национален фонд "Култура"*, Sofia 2008.

1. MUSEUMS IN EUROPE

The world financial crisis that burst in 2008 affected many sectors of the economy and will certainly have its impact on the tourism and on the cultural tourism in particular – where the place of the museums is. On a world scale the recession is already having its adverse results. Traditional tourist destination such as Spain and Greece suffer the effects of the economic crisis – decrease in the tourist flow and in the fall of the financial revenues respectively. This has its bad effects on the museums in particular. It is illustrated by the Italian case – the Italian government plans to reduce the financing of the cultural branch to 1 milliard euro in the next three years. Furthermore, the former head-manager of the local McDonald's branch Mario Reska was appointed as a director of all Italian museums. He intends to save the museums from financial loss with good marketing. Namely, the museums could be more profitable if they take out their works of art from the repositories and exhibit them abroad.[4]

Another example is the Albertina Museum in Vienna which houses the works of art of many eminent artists as Picasso, Monet, and Renoir. For the first three months of 2009 it has lost 2 milliard euros from sponsors suffering the world economic crisis: "We have less than 100 major sponsors and certainly they are suffering the economic and financial crisis" said Klaus Albrecht Schröder – director of the museum. Now the Albertina Museum has to cover more than two thirds of its annual expenses equaling 18 million euro and it starts a massive campaign for their reduction.[5]

2. MUSEUMS IN BULGARIA

Happily, Bulgaria has not come to this stage yet – not in the field of tourism, nor in the museums in the state. Moreover, museums here are quite different from those in the economically developed states in Europe and the USA. They are still on full state allowance and just a few – on combined (state funds and private incomes). State subsidies are provided as part of the maintenance of a museum worker, including salaries, supplies (electric power, water, etc.) and

[4] www.bgvesti.com, 4.11.2008.

[5] www.neus.expert.bg, 4.04.2009.

part of the capital expenditure. The new point in the financing of the museums are the so-called "delegated budgets" that entitle museum institutions to use their own incomes (taxes from tickets for visits, consultations, rental of premises) for maintenance – capital expenditures, workers' participation in various forums, organized events, which in turn increase both the prestige and the income and other institutions. There are no specific amounts with regard to public funds because they are being periodically reduced, and on the other hand own revenues in every museum are different and can not be specified. Thus the Bulgarian museums are not dependent on businessmen and patrons supporting them. According to researches, the peak of the financial crisis in tourism, and in the cultural tourism in particular – where museums belong, is to be expected in April, 2009. Some of the experts reckon that it will have negative results in this sector of the economics, but others claim that this situation should be used for attracting more tourists. This could be attained with lower prices of the tourist services and a market policy oriented to the middle class of the tourist potential and not to the rich, pretentious customers. Thus they think that this is the right time to advertize Bulgaria as a cheap tourist destination.

Bulgaria has been in such a financial crisis before, though inspired not by external but rather by domestic factors. This was during the winter months of 1996 and 1997 when many companies bankrupted but tourism turned out to be competitive and able to increase its incomes. Speaking of this, we include Bulgarian museums, and in particular – those in the north-eastern part of the state.

To depict this statement, we will add some statistics about the visitors of the museums in Shumen, Varna, Ruse, Targovishte (all of them regional) and Kavarna for the years 1996, 2000 and 2008. They are all situated in north--eastern Bulgaria and are amongst the most visited places of this region.

Table 1

Number of visitors in the Regional Museum of History – Shumen in years

Year	Total number of visitors	Foreign visitors
1996	76 951	4 030
2000	67 880	7 105
2008	82 919	12 714

Source: Regional Museum – Shumen.

Table 2

Number of visitors in the Regional Museum of History – Varna in years

Year	Total number of visitors	Foreign visitors
1996	107 688	42 853
2000	64 157	27 355
2008	180 337	113 353

Source: Regional Museum – Varna.

Table 3

Number of visitors in the Regional Museum of History – Ruse in years

Year	Total number of visitors	Foreign visitors
1998	16 866	762
2000	13 435	1 149
2008	37 212	11 821

Source: Regional Museum – Ruse.

Table 4

Number of visitors in the Regional Museum of History – Targovishte in years

Year	Total number of visitors	Foreign visitors
1997	15 711	n.d.
2000	6 055	n.d.
2008	9 365	n.d.

Source: Regional Museum – Targovishte.

Table 5

Number of visitors in the Historical Museum – Kavarna in years

Year	Total number of visitors	Foreign visitors
1997	n.d.	n.d.
2000	50 559	n.d.
2008	209 918	169 203

Source: Museum of History – Kavarna.

There was no information about for some of the given years and some of the museums did not collect statistics about foreign visitors. This is why the

year 1996 is replaced by 1997 and 1998, but this does not change the overall analysis of the data.[6]

Comparing the numbers from the five museums, we see that in the course of these 10–12 years the number of visitors grows with only one exception – 2000. However, this does not concern foreign visitors – their number is increasing. The only decrease is in the Regional museum – Varna and one of the reasons for it was the Yugoslavian crisis from 1999–2000. It reflected on the advance bookings of foreign tourists visiting the Bulgarian Black Sea coast and our sea capital – Varna in particular. The drop of the visitors' number in the museums of north-eastern Bulgaria in 2000 is due to the Bulgarian tourist contingent. That is to be explained by the outcome of this domestic economical and financial crisis from 1996–97 which had its effects on the vacations and the cultural life of Bulgarians.

Table 6

Visitors of some cultural-historical sites in Bulgaria for 2010

Sites	Visitors (thousands)
Cape Kaliakra	500
RMH Veliko Turnovo (incl. Tzasevetz)	300
Perperikon	250
Ethnographic Museum Plovdiv	69
Madara National Historical Archaeological Reserve	50
Historical Museum Kurdzhali	43
Historical Museum Vidin	31
Yailata Archaeological Reserve	10
Monument 1300 Years Bulgaria, Shumen	10
Textile Museum – Sliven	7
Museum of History – Silistra	3

Source: D. Donchev, M. Penerliev, *Geografia na turizma na Bulgaria*, Veliko Turnovo 2011.

Table 6 concerns the state not only of museums in north-eastern Bulgaria but of some other in the country, and it also reflects particular sites of these institutions. This clearly shows that reduction of the tourist flow is not noticeable, on the contrary – there is a slight increase, which contradicts the

[6] The data is delivered by the museums referred to.

idea that 2009 is a year of a crisis. Another explanation is that the European countries are getting out of the crisis and thus their trips abroad are growing. However, in terms of the events in Europe in 2011 this is very unlikely. It is a fact that the revenues in the Bulgarian museums are mostly from foreign tourists during the summer, especially in northeastern Bulgaria, which, by its geographical location is near the Black Sea and the Danube and which are an important precondition for the development of cultural tourism, with the museum networks as parts of it. The quoted data may leave the impression that museums in Bulgaria have sufficient funds accruing from the visits of tourists, but against the backdrop of ever-increasing prices, reducing government subsidies and rising inflation, they are absolutely insufficient for their maintenance and support.

What is the purpose of this data? Tourism and museums during financial or some other crisis could overcome the situation. Although in 1996–97 Bulgarians could not afford winter or summer vacation in a resort or to indulge in cultural entertainment, they are replaced by foreign visitors whose number in the years is constantly growing. On this basis we could assume that even if the number of visitors from economically well developed states, which are now suffering a financial crisis, decreases, they could be replaced by Bulgarians who would be offered discounts when visiting Bulgarian resorts. Such is the policy undertaken by the Romanian government to safe the tourist branch. Naturally, this could be assigned to the museums as a part of the cultural tourism.

3. MEASURES TO INCREASE THE REVENUES OF MUSEUM INSTITUTIONS

In relation to that, the regional museums in north-eastern Bulgaria during a recession should call their attention to potential Bulgarian tourist. How is that going to happen? All the cultural institutes have the potential to develop itineraries – one or two-day trips for students which are amongst their most regular visitors all the year round. This activity is to be associated with educational tourism – poorly developed in Bulgaria. Here are some suggestions for such trips: in Shumen – *Old Bulgarian Capitals*, *Eminent Residents of Shumen*, *Thracian Tombs*, etc.; in Varna – *The Museum of Varna*, *The Museum of Natural History – Varna*. There are a number of such trips developed in Ruse and they proved profitable – *Architectural Sights, Religious and Cultural Places of*

Interest, etc. The situation in the Regional Museum – Targovishte is not that easy, but the medieval town Missionis there, could be a destination for a one-day trip. Of course such tours could be organized not only for pupils but for adults too. However, all these things should be concerted between tour operators and institutions – state and municipal. Advertising, for certain, should be up to standard, and taking into consideration the economical conditions – even aggressive.

Another way for attracting visitors is to take the artifacts out of the repositories and to display them as temporarily short-term exhibitions. Thus museums will be promoted and they will gain the attention of the community. This could have even a long-term results. All of the above mentioned museums have the potential to develop such activities. If these exhibitions are accompanied with relative to the subject attractions, the results will be even better. Such examples are *The Motley World of the Cinema* and *The Reenactment of a Bulgarian Revival Café* in Shumen, annual summer thematic exhibits *The Treasures of Bulgaria* in Varna, and in Ruse – *The Village is a Maiden, the Town – a Debauchee*. These steps should be complied with more adequate working time of the museums, considering tourists coming from other parts of the country particularly for a given event or exhibit, or those who are just passing by but would like to go sight-seeing. As far as students are concerned – the cultural institutes should be akin and more cooperative.

So far we have mentioned only methods of work during crisis connected only to potential tourists or visitors. However, there are other means of overcoming the recession that is at hand.

One of the methods is related to the repositories. In particular, these are specific collections that for some reason or another are seldom at display. They could be arms – firearms and cold steel, national costumes, post cards, movie posters, antique figurines and many more. They have always been of interest to connoisseurs but there is a slender chance of seeing them. Therefore it is necessary, not only during crisis but at any other time, to classify these artifacts in luxury catalogues – bilingual if possible, and respectively more expensive. Their sale would be really profitable for the museums in north-eastern Bulgaria, which have great resources of such materials at their disposal. The reason is that there are many connoisseurs and the demand of such issues is constant. On the other hand it is a kind of advertisement for the institutes that publish them, and even for the whole region. This is the practice of great European museums and

is a source of additional incomes. Therefore, a relevant comply of the Ministry of Culture and the municipalities that control these institutes is needed because as we have mentioned before, they do not dispose of private financial funds. Investment is needed but afterwards, taking into consideration the high prices of these issues, it will be profitable.

The educational museums (museum schools) in the summer are another method of raising funds. They are not connected to tourists but to children from the area of the given museum. In the Regional Museum of History – Shumen in the period 11–18 of May thematic (related to history) workshops for children from the kindergartens are held. These workshops could be developed – pupils and students from all around the state could be involved. In Varna, summer schools for pupils are organized – they take a first-hand look at the historical heritage. This could be used as a model by other museums – the Regional Museum of History – Shumen for instance. Under the conditions of market economy these are extra incomes and it is a way of acquainting children with the history of the Bulgarian state.

Study tours are another method of expanding the museum budgets. In Shumen and Targovishte these tours could be to the historical places (some of the fortresses for example) and in Varna and Ruse could be related to the sea and the river, respectively. However, it is necessary that they must be organized by museum institutions, of course at adequate prices. In this reference, the possibilities of the towns near rivers and the sea are greater than those in the interior. Such a week stay will be long enough and at the same time it will be useful for the students. A priority of this activity is the fact that regional museum institutions are not dependent on higher instances but on their own skill to offer, promote and realize the product of their enterprise.

Another method is related to the properties that the museums are managing – shops, studios, cafes, etc. During such a severe economical crisis they could be rented to organizations related to the idea of the museum – souvenir shops, book stores, cafés, expected to advertise the museum. This way, museums will solve part of their financial problems. The souvenir industry will be supported too because it is poorly developed in these regions. The best example for this is the town of Veliko Tarnovo. Naturally, it is a matter of cooperation and must be realized with the municipalities controlling these cultural institutions. Only their assistance is needed, given that they will have no overhead expenses (for the maintenance of the buildings for instance). There are such premises in all the

five museums in north-eastern Bulgaria that we referred to and it is a question only of time and will to solve the problem in favor of all the parties concerned.

Another source of income for the museum is the opening of stores that sell retail goods even online.

Charges for granting of licenses for production of replicas of artifacts – single charges, deliveries for the museum shop, etc are also a means of increasing the incomes of the museum institution.

There are premises in almost each of the museum that can be rented for the organization of other events (conferences, symposia, meetings of private clubs and the like). This will have certain benefits. In order to be most effective, the prices of course must be relevant to the economic realities at the moment.

Having in mind the capacity of the museum institutions it is quite possible to be used for giving advice to private and legal persons who have similar interests with those of the museums, but do not have this experience and capacity. Given the topic this work must be financially assessed, dislike the situation – the practice in almost all museums in the country, is not to charge it.

For the realization of museum projects for which funds are provided in the budget is good and logical to seek external sponsors who support the single relevant event for services that are within the capabilities of the museum.[7]

Probably this is the place to refer to the way the Museum of American Finance in New York uses the crisis to increase its incomes. It opened an exhibit documenting the global economic crisis. It is called "Tracking the Credit Crisis" and displays not only the timeline of the events that lead into the world recession but provides the attendees with definitions of all those economic terms that entered our everyday life like "securitization", "liquidity" and "derivative". The exhibit records the events on Wall Street from February 2007 to February 2009 and reveals not only the serious effects of the crisis as the crash of Wall Street but curious ones too – like the announcement by "The Concise Oxford Dictionary" that it would include the terms "credit crunch" and "subprime" in its next edition.[8]

Within the bounds of such a report it is not possible to outline a wholesome program for development of tourism and museums, but, all in all,

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[7] T. Ambrose, C. Paine, *Museum Basics*, New York 2006, pp. 262–267.

[8] www.dnevnik.bg, 29.03.2009.

the precautions that we gave could support the partial solving of the financial problems of the museums in Bulgaria and in particular – those in its northeastern parts, taking the Museum of American Finance and the other world museums as a model.

TURYSTYKA I MUZEA W PÓŁNOCNO-WSCHODNIEJ BUŁGARII W CZASIE KRYZYSU

Streszczenie

W artykule przedstawiono charakterystykę pracy muzeów w czasie kryzysu z roku 1996 i 2008. Badania dotyczą czterech muzeów historycznych znajdujących się w Warnie, Shumen, Targovishte i Ruse. Na podstawie badań oraz analizy praktyk muzeów w Europie i Ameryce Północnej wypracowano model działań dla muzeów w czasie kryzysu.

TOURISM AND THE MUSEUMS IN NORTH-EASTERN BULGARIA DURING ECONOMIC CRISIS

Summary

This article examines the state of tourism and museums as part of north-eastern Bulgaria during the economic crisis. Comparisons are made with some museum institutions in Europe. At the same time offer and measures to increase financial revenue of museums in Bulgaria, which are tailored to local conditions, but are valid for any of the world.

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CHALLENGES OF MANAGING AND MARKETING SMALL ACCOMMODATION UNITS – EVIDENCE FROM A GREEK DESTINATION

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to explore a number of marketing and management issues concerning the tourism industry in Chalkidiki, Northern Greece. The tourism industry in Greece including Chalkidiki is dominated by a myriad of micro tourism and hospitality businesses. Seasonality, low pay, un-sociable working hours are some of the key features of the accommodation sector in this destination. Another feature is that Small Accommodation Units (SAUs) in Chalkidiki rely on family members for labour. Employees often lack training and are expected to be 'multi-skilled' in the delivery of the tourist product. Research also shows that SAUs are less likely to invest in marketing and prefer to adopt a 'DIY approach'.[1]

Much has been written on the management of small tourism enterprises (STEs) at destinations. Any discussion concerning the STEs in the tourism do-

[1] A. Seaton, M. Bennett, *Marketing Tourism Products: Concepts, Issues, Cases*, Thomson Learning, London 2001.

main necessitates a conceptual clarification of what exactly is meant by a 'small tourism enterprise'. Although there is no single definition, STE is often conceptualised as one which employs a small number of employees, fewer than fifty people.[2] Morrison et al.[3] state that they are small, 'in terms of physical facilities, production/service capacity, market share and number of employees'. According to the same source, a small business is 'financed by one individual or small group and is directly managed by its owner(s) in a personalised manner and not through the medium of a formalised management structure'. This definition is useful for the purposes of this study in that it is flexible to incorporate a range of businesses including self-catering accommodation units found in Kalimeria, Chalkidiki. By focusing primarily on the small accommodation units (SMUs) the paper attempts to shed some light on the challenge of managing and marketing a micro-business. The paper commences with a discussion of the assumptions underlining the arguments concerning the management and marketing of small businesses in tourism and hospitality. It then proceeds with the discussion of the evidence from one resort/village in Chalkidiki. The paper concludes that SMUs lack the marketing knowledge that would allow them access to the international market and need institutional support if they are to continue to provide a quality product and achieve a sustainable competitive advantage.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature often suggests that STEs play a vital part in the economy, enhancing the socio-cultural life of a destination.[4] STEs' contributions to the creation of employment and community stability are well documented.[5] There is also a large body of literature on the 'income multipliers' as an indicator of

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[2] S. Page, P. Forer, G.R. Lawton, *Small Business Development and Tourism*, "Journal of Tourism Management" 1999, vol. 20 (4), pp. 435–459.

[3] A. Morrison, M. Rimmington, C. Williams, *Entrepreneurship in the Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Industries*, Butterworth Heinemann, Oxford 1999, p. 400.

[4] *The Economic Geography of the Tourist Industry*, ed. E. Ioannides, K. Debbage, Routledge, London 1998, pp. 235–255.

[5] H. Dahles, *Small Businesses in the Indonesian Tourism Industry: Entrepreneurship or Employment*, in: *Tourism and Small Entrepreneurs, Development, National Policy and Entrepreneurial Culture: Indonesian Cases*, ed. H. Dahles, K. Bras, Cognizant, 1999, pp. 20–34.

economic development within the host community. Within this context, small locally-owned businesses are viewed as a 'passport' to socio-economic development.[6] However, a number of analysts have expressed reservations about STEs' image as a 'passport' to socio-economic development. It is argued that micro-businesses lack the 'economic muscle' of the large tourism enterprises, and are often the 'victims' of an economic environment characterised by intense competition and unpredictability. Moreover their survival and success is hindered by a number of factors including access to finances, government policies, and management practices of owners. There are several studies which show that STEs are managed in a 'personalised' way by its owners who lack management and marketing skills.[7] As McKercher and Robbins[8] point out "small businesses will not be successful simply because the owner/operator is good at the core activity (…) Small businesses need to be much more sophisticated in the way they are managed".

Managers need to acquire knowledge on how to manage their business in a more effective way. What is also interesting to note is that personnel including management tend to have little formal training or previous business experience in the tourist industry. Buhalis and Cooper[9] confirm that in many STEs, personnel seldom have training in specific duties. They also found that low pay, unsociable working hours and high staff turnover are some of the key features of STEs. Similarly, Dahles[10] observes that small tourism entrepreneurs lack basic skills needed to manage an enterprise successfully. Tourism entrepreneurs need to equip themselves with the necessary skills that would ensure the long term survival of the business. Moreover a literature review reveals that the marketing

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[6] *Tourism Passport to Development? Perspectives on the Social and Cultural Effects of Tourism in Developing Countries*, ed. E. de Kadt, Oxford University Press, 1984.

[7] *Embracing and Managing Change in Tourism – International Case Studies*, ed. E. Laws, Routledge, London 1998, pp. 324–346.

[8] B. McKercher, B. Robbins, *Business Development Issues Affecting Nature-based Tourism Operators in Australia*, "Journal of Sustainable Tourism" 1998, vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 173–188.

[9] D. Buhalis, C. Cooper, *Competition or Co-operation? Small and Medium Sized Tourism Enterprises at the Destination*, in: *Embracing and Managing Change in Tourism – International Case Studies*, ed. E. Laws, Routledge, 1998, pp. 324–346.

[10] H. Dahles, *Tourism and Small Entrepreneurs in Developing Countries: A Theoretical Perspective*, in: *Tourism and Small Entrepreneurs, Development, National Policy and Entrepreneurial Culture: Indonesian Cases*, ed. H. Dahles, K. Bras, Cognizant, 1999, pp. 1–19.

function in STEs is often overlooked by the owners/managers because they are primarily concerned with operations.

What emerges from the preceding discussion is that researchers tend to treat STEs as being a homogenous entity and in so doing, intra and inter sectoral differences with respect to management and marketing practices are obscured. Conclusions about the nature of STEs' operations and marketing activities are based on empirical research conducted primarily on tour operators, travel agencies, tourist attractions, souvenir shops, restaurants and hotels. It would seem that despite an extensive literature devoted to the STEs, few studies have looked at issues facing managers/owners of self-catering apartments and studios. The weakness of many of these studies arises because they are grounded within traditional methodological single paradigm frameworks, rather than the more appropriate multi-paradigm approach adopted by the present study.

2. STUDY: METHODS AND CONTEXT

The locus of the present study was Kalimeria (a pseudonym) a resort in Kassandra, Chalkidiki. Kalimeria is reasonably representative of the village resorts found along the coasts of Chalkidiki. Because of its size and the level of tourism development, it provided an ideal location for the study. Methods employed included participant observation (PO) and semi-structured interviews. Participant observation involved talking to the owners/manager of SHUs at opportune times about their operations, their guests and marketing activities. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 18 managers/owners of SHUs (six small hotels and twelve self catering apartments). This technique allowed having control over the research agenda, because it provided some structure and direction to the interviews, enabling to cover the main topics. At the same time, it allowed participants some freedom to talk in their own terms about management and marketing practices. This mode of interviewing proved particularly useful, for talking to families in joint interviews. However, before discussing the case study some background information is necessary in order to better understand the context.

3. CHALKIDIKI AS A TOURIST DESTINATION

Chalkidiki is now a well-established destination for inbound visitors. The region of Chalkidiki has undergone extensive and rapid development since the 1970s. It has a number of thriving beach resorts with extensive modern accommodation, including several small family-run hotels and lots of self-catering apartments and studios. Self-catering apartments known also as 'no-frills' accommodation cater specifically for the price–conscious visitors. In addition, there are a number of large hotel complexes. These resort hotels are aimed at both business and leisure markets and provide the visitor with all amenities. Chalkidiki is marketed as an area of 'genuine unspoilt beauty', 'a hidden paradise', 'the cleanest sea in the world', 'mild climate throughout the year', and 'beach bars and clubs'. It seeks to attract people looking for long golden beaches and unspoilt Greek villages. Kalimeria (a pseudonym) lies towards the foot of Kassandra, the most western of three peninsulas. It is approximately one hour's drive (ca. 105 km) from Thessaloniki airport, a main arrival point for tourists. Research shows that over the last thirty years Kalimeria has experienced a radical transformation from a quiet fishing and farming village into a cosmopolitan seaside resort. This was triggered initially by the commercialisation of domestic tourism, but it was accelerated by the arrival of West European tourists in the 1980s and, more recently, from Eastern European countries. Thus the transformation is a direct consequence of the increased demand for small, affordable accommodation units (i.e., self-catering apartments and studios) close to the beach.[11]

4. KALIMERIA: TOURISTS AND STES

Official statistics indicate that the majority of inbound tourists arrive in Chalkidiki including Kalimeria as part of a package holiday organised by tour operators. The package often includes air transport, accommodation and transfers to/from the airport. These charter holidaymakers arrive at the airport in Thessaloniki and from there, are transferred by coach to their allocated accommodation. British, Germans and Austrians constitute the majority of these tour-

[11] E. Wickens, *The Sacred and the Profane: A Tourist Typology*, "Annals of Tourism Research" 2002, vol. 29, No. 3, pp. 834–851.

ists. Kalimeria has historically branded itself as a 'sun, sea and sand' destination. It is not surprising, therefore, that Kalimeria, becomes congested during the summer months with both inbound and domestic visitors. Extreme peaks occur between mid-July and mid-August. This particular period places stresses and strains upon the transport system, which has to cope with a sudden and enlarged volume of motor car traffic. The exodus of domestic holidaymakers from Thessaloniki to Kalimeria, for long weekend breaks, compounds traffic congestion. The main coastal road, which is the artery of Kassandra, becomes congested with cars both moving and stationery. This problem stems from the fact that there are no parking facilities available in or out of the village.[12] Hence, it is important to note that in addition to the inbound visitors, there is also a large number of Greek holidaymakers mainly from Thessaloniki.

Due to the 'black economy' in tourism it is difficult to estimate the number of visitors. The tourism industry in Kalimeria is dominated by a myriad of STEs all with their own characteristics and needs. According to the President of the village, there are some 250 tourism enterprises, including hotels, self-catering apartments/studios, tavernas, restaurants, fast food eating places, bars, souvenir and jewellery shops, and bicycle and/or car rental companies. In addition, there are some other small businesses including tailoring, metalwork and carpentry, which have expanded due to the influx of tourists. Research shows that STEs are operated either by the indigenous population or by 'xenoi' (mainly by affluent people from Thessaloniki or returning Greeks from Germany). In many cases these enterprises are operated by families. In this way overheads are kept to a minimum and profits are maximised. STEs in Kalimeria are open seven days per week for approximately five months of the year (May – September). Un-sociable working hours, low pay and poor working conditions are some of the key features of STEs in Kalimeria. There are some eighteen hotels in the village/resort. The majority have less than 50 beds and the largest hotel unit has a capacity of 120 beds.

[12] E. Wickens, *Being not Looking: Beyond the Tourism Brochure for Greece*, in: *Niche Tourism: Current Issues, Trends and Cases*, ed. M. Novelli, Elsevier, 2004.

5. *MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING ISSUES: FINDINGS & DISCUSSION*

The study reveals that many SHUs employ less than ten people. More importantly they prefer to employ economic migrants mainly from Albania, Poland, Bulgaria, Russia and Turkey. The majority of respondents reported that 'employee training' (on personal hygiene and customer care) usually consists of 'on-the–job training' because of 'lack of resources'. However, on the job-training may be no sufficient if managers/owners of SHUs do not possess suitable knowledge and skills. Furthermore, recruitment of people who have limited knowledge and understanding on how to deal with tourists poses serious questions about the survival and growth of businesses. Employees that come into contact with customers should be well-trained, because satisfied customers will make positive recommendations to friends and/or relatives. The study supports past research that SHUs are associated with little or no training and low wages.[13]

An interesting finding from Kalimeria is that owners/managers of SHUs are unwilling to invest in marketing and lack marketing expertise and knowledge that would allow them access to the international market. Respondents of these SHUs often reported that they 'can't see the point in investing in marketing'; 'we know the market, there is no need to spend any money'; 'my son knows all about marketing, he can get us customers'; 'we know how to run the business'; 'marketing is waste of time and money'; 'our customers are mainly Greeks from Thessaloniki'; 'we get many Greek holidaymakers in August'; 'people from Thessaloniki always come asking for a room'. The evidence clearly shows that SHUs rely on: the 'casual independent Greek traveller'; 'coming to my door for a room'; 'Greeks looking for a short stay'. This evidence supports the consensus found in the literature that many SHUs tend to have a passive attitude to the market. When respondents were asked if they make use of the internet for marketing, the study found a relatively low level of use of the internet. Owners of small hotels reported that they use the internet for business purposes. Although studies[14] show that the internet has become

[13] H. Dahles, *Small Businesses…*, pp. 20–34.

[14] M. Friel, *Marketing Practice in Small Tourism and Hospitality Firms*, "International Journal of Tourism Research" 1999, vol. 1, pp. 97–109.

a popular medium for marketing products in the tourism industry, the Kalimeria study shows that self-catering units (in particular those that rely on family members for labour) are not aware of the advantages of the internet as a marketing tool. The majority of respondents reported that they 'do not use the internet at all'; while a small number of SHUs reported a 'minimal usage'.

Moreover, fieldwork shows that SHUs use tour operators to access the international market. The study's participants reported that 'hotel beds are contracted' often on a 'guarantee basis'. This arrangement is seen as 'beneficial' in that they receive 'payments for beds regardless of whether or not they are sold'. However, a number of SHUs and unregistered accommodation units, operated by family members, are rather reluctant to enter into such contractual arrangements with tour operators and prefer to adopt a 'DIY approach' to marketing. While there have been some success stories (a number of small hotels have been able to grow and prosper), fieldwork shows that the continuing existence of some SHUs is precarious. Three SHUs were victims of an economic environment which is characterised by intense competition.

The study suggests that STEs need institutional support either from the government or local authorities if they are to continue to provide a quality tourist experience and achieve a sustainable competitive advantage.

6. *CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS*

Drawing upon evidence from a case study the paper considered the marketing and management of SHUs. The study's findings confirm previous researches results.[15] The evidence indicates that the tourism industry is dominated by a large number of small-scale enterprises. SHUs depend heavily on inputs from entrepreneurs and family members. A key finding is that managers/owners of STEs often lack management and marketing skills to access the market.

[15] N. Dritsakis, *Co-integration analysis of German and British Tourism Demand for Greece*, "Journal of Tourism Management" 2004, vol. 25, pp. 111–119; G. Lazaridis, E. Wickens, E. Us, and the others, *The experiences of different ethnic minorities in the Greek cities of Athens and Thessaloniki*, "Annals of Tourism Research" 1999, vol. 26, No. 2, pp. 632–655; A. Morrison, M. Rimmington, C. Williams, *Entrepreneurship in the Hospitality, Tourism, and Leisure Industries*, Butterworth Heinemann, 1999; S. Page, P. Forer, G.R. Lawton, *Small Business Development and Tourism*, "Journal of Tourism Management" 1999, vol. 20, No. 4, pp. 435–459.

There is some evidence that the continuing survival of some SHUs is questionable.

However, more research is needed to investigate the factors that contribute to the survival of STEs in the accommodation sector. This study does not make any claim to generality beyond the temporal and geographical location of the study itself. Nor is it claimed that the conclusions drawn from the qualitative data gathered from 18 SHUs is representative, in a statistical sense, of all STEs in all locations. Hence considerable caution is required when attempting to extrapolate from the findings of this study. Hopefully, however, this study has enhanced our understanding of SHUs and will provide a stimulus to, and a platform for further research.

WYZWANIA MARKETINGU I ZARZĄDZANIA W MAŁYCH PRZEDSIĘBIORSTWACH HOTELARSKICH

ANALIZA PRZYPADKU GRECJI

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie problemów marketingu i zarządzania ruchem turystycznym Chalkidiki (północna Grecja). W regionie dominują małe i średnie przedsiębiorstwa hotelarskie, a ruch turystyczny charakteryzuje się dużą sezonowością. Poziom zarobków w branży turystycznej jest bardzo niski, czas pracy jest długi, a znaczna część przedsiębiorstw opiera się głównie na pracy rodziny. W artykule dokonano analizy funkcjonowania reprezentatywnego przedsiębiorstwa Kalimeria. Jako metody badawcze wykorzystano obserwację oraz wywiady z pracownikami. W wyniku badań stwierdzono, że małe i średnie przedsiębiorstwa turystyczne korzystają z narzędzi marketingu jedynie w bardzo ograniczonym zakresie.

CHALLENGES OF MANAGING AND MARKETING SMALL ACCOMMODATION UNITS – EVIDENCE FROM A GREEK DESTINATION

Summary

The purpose of this paper is to explore a number of marketing and management issues concerning the hospitality industry in Chalkidiki, a Greek destination. Tourism industry in Greece including Chalkidiki is dominated by a myriad of micro tourism and hospitality businesses. Seasonality, low pay, unsociable working hours are some of the key features of the accommodation sector in this destination. Another feature is that Small Accommodation Units (SAUs) in Chalkidiki rely on family members for labour. Employees often lack training and are expected to be 'multi-skilled' in the delivery of the tourist product. Research also shows that SAUs are less likely to invest in marketing and prefer to adopt a 'DIY approach' (Seaton and Bennett, 2001). The paper concludes that SAUs, such as self catering units, lack marketing knowledge that would allow them access to the global market and need institutional support if they are to continue to provide a quality product and achieve a sustainable competitive advantage.

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MODERN TENDENCIES OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN KAZAKHSTAN

Introduction

Tourism – one of promptly developing branches of economic. Tourism renders three positive effects on state economy: provides inflow of foreign currency and positive impact on economic indicators as the balance of payments and cumulative export, provides population employment. Despite the crisis characterising economic last years, the measures undertaken by the country leaders on stabilisation of situation, allow to hope for preservation of preconditions for attraction of foreign and internal investments into development of the tourist industry, formation of modern tourist management, maintenance of coordination of actions of the central and regional levels of the power in conformity with the Government program of tourism development in Republic Kazakhstan on 2007–2011.[1]

By 2011 it is planned to increase stream travelling on internal routes to 4.5 million tourists, entrance visitors – to 9.5 million. Expected receipts in the budget from foreign tourists during program realization will make 603 250 mil-

[1] *Government program of development of tourism in Republic Kazakhstan for 2007–2011*, Astana 2006.

lion tenge (about 4 865 million USD). In 2011 it is supposed that only at the expense of entrance tourism employment of 550.0 thousand people of local population will be provided. Measures on creation of information field, working out of effective system of advancement of the Kazakhstan tourist's product on the external and internal markets, preparation of necessary standard legal certificates concerning investment and the taxation are undertaken.

The series of measures provided by state program is directed to maintenance of growth both internal, and the international tourist streams, increase of appeal of national tourist's product, creation of conditions for transformation of Kazakhstan into the centre of tourism of Eurasia.

Primary goals are defined:

1. tourism infrastructure development;
2. creation of the effective mechanism of state regulation and tourism support;
3. formation of attractive tourist image;
4. increase of tourist potential;
5. formation of zones with recreational economic specialisation.

The last has concrete character and, in our opinion, is rod as allows to realize principle of development of tourism, without which it is impossible to achieve the effective decision of other tasks.

In the end of April in Almaty has passed the Kazakhstan international tourist fair – K1TP, hundreds of tour operators from more than 30 countries of the world have taken part.

Within the limits of development tourist cluster in republic priority directions of development of tourism have been allocated: business, ecological, cultural-informative, and also adventure rounds. Experts motivated it as presence of competitive advantages of Kazakhstan connected with uniqueness of culture, the rich and various natural potential, increasing business activity, and also possibility of development of the recreational employment connected with active kinds of rest and tourism.

Results of the marketing researches of tourist potential of Kazakhstan finished in 2006, executed by the German consulting company, have shown that foreign tourists prefer to visit several places during one trip. Moreover, demand for transboundary routes across Central Asia and Kazakhstan is predicted. In this connection it is planned to work on the organisation of joint tourist routes and introduction of the simplified procedures of the frontier and customs control

for tourists within the limits of frontier cooperation with the adjacent states that is especially actual for tourism development on the Silk Way.

Stimulus of development of tourism along the Silk Way could be activization of process of interstate negotiations, including within the limits of activity of the Shanghai organisation of cooperation, the Euroasian economic community and creation of uniform economic space, under the decision of questions of mutual recognition of tourist visas and introduction of the uniform tourist visa to the countries-participants in the organisations in question.

Considering natural tourist potential and historical and cultural objects of Kazakhstan, foreign tourists are offered the combined rounds with unique natural landscapes, flora and fauna, monuments of historical and cultural heritage of nomads and cultures of the people of ancient cities. Thus the basic prospects of exit on the international tourist market are connected with the rounds constructed on contrasts of the Kazakhstan nature, conditionally designated by the motto «From boundless steppes to the snow-covered mountain tops “and” the Steppe safari» on jeeps with residing at “yurtas”, or specially equipped trailers. Development of beach and cruise tourism on Caspian Sea connected with arrangement of zone of rest Kenderli and formation of the industry of tourism and entertainments in city Aktau. In Southern region development of this direction is provided by national project of building tourist centre “Zhana Ile”, on the coastline of Kapchagai water basin, including complex of medical-improving, cultural-entertaining and other objects of tourist infrastructure. Special priority for Kazakhstan, is the organisation of national kinds – horse, camel routes, hunting with golden eagles – promoting acquaintance of foreign tourists with history and culture of the Kazakh people and the nature of Kazakhstan. Activity of sports tourism is of special attention. In our opinion sports tourism should be considered not as a separate kind of sports, namely as school of preparation of professional experts for alternative commercial tourism, and sports part – as stimulus for playing sports.

According to the official statistics since 2000 stable growth both internal, and the international tourist streams is observed. Thus, internal tourism is developing that defines character of infrastructure development of the Kazakhstan tourism as a whole. Development of tourist territories, first of all, creates base for local population to realise international projects in purpose of attraction of foreign visitors. Experience of recognised tourist powers – the USA, Italy, the

United Arab Emirates, Turkey, etc. testifies the correctness of such approach in which basis development of local communications and sphere of services lies.

The requirement for the organisation of high-grade rest of the population is especially sharply felt in republic business centres where demand for services of recreational character as travel and excursions, promptly grows.

In these regions in prime order the Program provides creation of conditions for development of tourism infrastructure and sports within the limits of general layouts of development and master plans of creation and development tourist cluster.

So, since 2007, in Almaty area (Kapshagaj) have been working out the technical-economic basis and the design-budget documentation for maintenance of building objects of the tourism industry and entertainments as Disneyl-ands-parks and Las Vegas.[2] In Akmola area the similar measures directed on creation of conditions for high-grade functioning of sphere of tourist-recreational services, including show business in the Shchuchinsko-Bohr resort zone are provided. For Kazakhstan population and foreign tourists the ethnographic complex «Sheber» with the exhibition centre «Palace of masters», showing nomadic life and original Sak culture will be interesting, to their tradition by analogy to Village Pharaohs (Egypt), complex “Ot-bos” (Canada). Complex building is planned in 30 km from the capital.

During the last years popularity of the ecological tourism, which is the important factor of sustainable development of suburban territories, has considerably increased. Acknowledgement to that is growth of quantity of visitors of especially protected natural territories. So, in 2005 national natural parks and other especially protected natural territories has visited almost 400 thousand persons.[3] Half of them are foreigners. Thereupon natural development of ecological tourism infrastructure in national natural parks “Burabai”, “Ilealatau”, “Altyn Emel” and others, provided by the state program and corresponding master plans.

Stimulus of recreational development of suburbs Almaty is preparation for VIII winter Asian games, 2011.

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[2] *Tourism of Kazakhstan in 2005. The statistical collection*, Agency RK on the statistican, Almaty 2006.

[3] Zh. Alchimbayeva, V.V. Ezhikova, *The methodical grant concerning tourism development (the collection of standard legal certificates)*, Taldykorgan 2007.

Now government of Almaty area forms investment portfolio for realisation of the project of development of the Kapshagai tourist-recreational zone.

Similar schemes of dispersal of the population and development of accompanying infrastructure are considered in western ("Kaskelen") and east ("Talgar") directions from Almaty. From the point of view of complex development of new territories, including maintenance of employment of the population and the organisation of recreational employment, considerable interest represent projects of the tourist maintenance. In Talgar direction it is the modern sports complex "Akbulak" put recently into operation and ski stadium under construction, and mountain resort of "Tabagan". In Kaskelen – highway of Almaty – lake Issyk Kul with the corresponding modern tourist infrastructure which building should begin this summer. One more large-scale project started in 2007 – reconstruction of the most popular among visitors of "southern capital" vacation spots – high-mountainous skating rink of "Medeu" and mounting skiing resort of "Chimbulak". It is planned to finish building of base stations of pendant rope-way which will connect "Medeu" and "Chimbulak", after updating of terms, in first half of 2009.

Certain interest is represented by the indicators characterising structure of the Kazakhstan tourist market and the characteristic of financial turn. Despite growth of demand for internal travel and excursions, in structure of tourist streams outbound tourism prevails. However, if to consider dynamics and tendencies of preferences of the country population, which steels are appreciable last years, more perspective direction of tourist activity internal tourism (Tab. 1) is represented. Certainly, statistics can't give yet exhaustive picture of current state of the Kazakhstan tourism for more or less long period, but, since 2000, the specification necessary for the current analysis, collected under the form recommended by UNWTO, allow to apply them in researches of tourism and recreation problems.

Table 1

Indicators of tourist activity

Years	In total served tourists, Thousand people	The entrance Tourism, Thousand people	Exit Tourism, Thousand people	Internal Tourism, Thousand people
2000	146.9	23.9	67.3	55.7
2001	154.5	2.5*	38.0	114.0
2002	171.4	29.8	74.7	66.9
2003	229.0	45.0	94.7	89.3
2004	292.7	34.4	154.8	106.5
2005	434.9	39.9	210.6	184.4
2006	521.0	56.2	255.6	209.1
2007	541.9	62.1	286.7	193.1

Source: *Statistics of Republic Kazakhstan*, Agency of Republic Kazakhstan on the Statistic, 2008.

Apparently from the data resulted in Table 1, appreciable growth of indicators is in 2004–2006. However, in 2007–2008, “thanks to” crisis, rates of increase (according to statistics of Republic Kazakhstan) have decreased. Nevertheless, the total amount of the served visitors is high enough. In many respects it is merit of Agency of Republic Kazakhstan on the statistic an, at last prepared the statistical nomenclature of kinds of activity and services in the field of tourism for introduction of the auxiliary bill of tourism in system of national bills. The given step has allowed to expand the list of registration indicators of tourist activity that has given the chance more accurately and in large volume to define economic parametres of influence of tourism on other sectors of economy, showing total effect from tourism and drawing of attention of the Government and potential investors.

According to the Ministry of tourism and sports of Republic Kazakhstan, in the market of tourist services of Kazakhstan work about 3.2 thousand persons, 1.5 thousand professional guides. 98.3 percent of all organisations of the tourist market are presented by small enterprises. The average enterprises with number of the personnel to 250 persons make 1.3%, and large – 0.4%. Apparently from the resulted data, the majority of the tourist organisations is made by the small and average enterprises which in many countries of the world are the

effective generator of the economic growth based on innovations. The Kazakhstan tourist organisations co-operate with seventy countries of the world.

Annually volumes of exit tourism grow. If in 2000 67 360 tourists have been sent by tourist firms abroad, the results of 2007 the quantity of the left citizens of Republic Kazakhstan has made 286.7 thousand persons. From the abroad states of the greatest popularity among inhabitants of Kazakhstan are Turkey – 63.1 thousand persons (30%), China – 48.6 thousand persons (23.1%), the United Arab Emirates – 23.8 thousand persons (11.3%).

Prospective expenses on Government program realization in 2007–2011 will make 59 318 221 thousand tenge of the republican budget, including: in 2007 – 2 329 668 thousand tenge; in 2008 – 20637405 thousand tenge; in 2009 – 30 635 357 thousand tenge; in 2010 – 2 774 656 thousand tenge; in 2011 – 2 941 135 thousand tenge. Besides, attraction of means from other sources which have been not forbidden by the legislation of Republic Kazakhstan is supposed.

Researches of condition of tourist business of Kazakhstan show that without support from state it can't become profitable branch of economy. Weak state regulation of tourist activity – one of the principal causes, disturbing to development of sphere of tourism. And artificial connection of tourism with budgetary sports not absolutely clear neither with organizational, nor with economic points of view.[4] Thus, there is necessity to make tourism uniform system for creation of the powerful industry, capable to accumulate money resources for deduction of considerable incomes in the budget of the state and the further intensive development of national tourism.

WSPÓŁCZESNE TENDENCJE ROZWOJU TURYSTYKI W KAZACHSTANIE

Streszczenie

W artykule przedstawiono współczesne działania władz państwowych Kazachstanu ukierunkowane na rozwój turystyki. Do najważniejszych, omówionych w artykule

[4] S.R. Erdavletov, *Tourism geography: history, the theory, methods, practice*, Almaty 2000.

przedsięwzięć należy zaliczyć: projekt wykorzystania historycznego szlaku jedwabnego, rozwój infrastruktury turystycznej, budowę wizerunku turystycznego Kazachstanu oraz budowę wyspecjalizowanych regionów turystyki przyjazdowej. W wyniku badań stwierdzono, że rozwój turystyki w Kazachstanie charakteryzuje się dużą dynamiką wzrostu. Od 2005 roku parki narodowe tego państwa odwiedziło 400 tys. osób, z których połowę stanowili cudzoziemcy.

MODERN TENDENCIES OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN KAZAKHSTAN

Summary

Article presents most important tourism undertakings of Kazakh authorities. Among others silk route project, the development of tourist infrastructure and creation of tourist image of Kazakhstan are mentioned. Article presents tourist statistics for Kazakhstan that indicate a dynamic growth of tourism flow both inbound and outbound.

ISSUES OF TOURISM SERVICE MARKET

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THE ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE PROGRAMME IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CITIES AND REGIONS

Introduction

The aim of this article is to present the role of a European Union programme, entitled The European Capital of Culture (ECC),[1] in the promotion and development of cities and regions. First the authors describe the origins and history of the ECC programme, and following that they present the marketing communication tools, which can be used for promoting cities and regions. Next, they present some examples of the role which the ECC programme plays in promoting cities and regions, as well as in tourism development.

[1] The authors of the article used primary sources, such as materials obtained at Łódź Art Centre – an institution preparing the Lodz application for the ECC 2016 and interviews with its workers. The authors also used secondary sources, such as European Union information, literature and Internet websites.

1. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE PROGRAM

In January 1985, during a meeting of the EEC ministers of culture held in Greece, the Greek Minister of Culture, Melina Mercouri conceived an idea to use culture in order to enhance the European integration. She suggested that a series of cultural events should be held annually in a chosen European city, presenting the culture of a given country, region and the city, as well as its role in the European integration. That suggestion was based on the assumption that no two cities or countries are the same. Each of them has its own tradition, customs, cultural events, language, cuisine and all these elements are found in cities. They are the main cultural centres, preserving the tangible and intangible cultural heritage, which is an extremely important element of the identity of the country, region and city, as well as its population. Cultural heritage includes all the tangible immovable resources (e.g. buildings, rivers, or natural areas), tangible movable resources (e.g. museum exhibits, documents in archives), as well as intangible assets, such as values, customs, lifestyles and events (festivals, artistic and cultural events).[2]

The aim of the ECC programme is to choose a city which will present the cultural heritage of a given country and its connections with the cultural heritage of whole Europe, through cultural events organized in this city for a period of one year.[3] Initially, the choice was made by the representatives of the EU member states. The candidate from a given country was then presented to the Council of the European Union. In 1999 this procedure was changed and the European Parliament, the European Commission and the EU Committee of the Regions became involved in the selection process. When a programme entitled Culture 2000, defining the European Union's contribution to culture development, was introduced, European Cities of Culture were changed to European Capitals of Culture. Like before, every year only one city was chosen to hold

[2] J.T. Dallen, S.W. Boyd, *Heritage Tourism*, Pearson Education, Harlow 2003, p. 3.

[3] In 1990, in the European Economic Community (later European Union), another project was launched, entitled European Cultural Month. It is similar to the ECC programme but last shorter (one month) and is addressed first of all at the countries in Central and Eastern Europe. In 1992 the European Cultural Month was held in Krakow.

the title of the European Capital of Culture, except 2000, when nine cities were chosen to celebrate the Millennium year. One of them was Krakow.[4]

In 2004–2007 twelve countries became new members of the European Union. The new situation required a change in the rules of selecting the ECC. Starting from 2009, every year two European Capitals of Culture have been chosen – one from an old and one from a new member country. The countries interested in participating in the programme advertise the competition among their cities at least six years in advance. The application must include an agenda of events, prepared especially for the occasion. Next, in a given country a selection committee is appointed, consisting of 13 members.[5] At the first stage of the competition, a small group of cities which pass to the next stage is chosen. In the second part of the selection procedure, the committee evaluates the applications of these cities and recommends one for the title.[6] Next, the recommended city is officially nominated by the country for the ECC title. The decision is passed to the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Union Committee of Regions. The Council formally designates given cities as European Capitals of Culture for the period of one year. The designated city can join the ECC celebrations in the region or euroregion in which it is situated.[7] The ECC programme is also open to the cities in the countries which are not EU members. Therefore in 2000 it was possible to choose Krakow and in 2010 – Istanbul.

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[4] J. Sanetra-Szeliga, A. Etmanowicz, *Europejska Stolica Kultury. Polska 2016*, The Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, Warsaw, pp. 3–9, www.mkidn.gov.pl/esk2016, 1.1.2011.

[5] The selection committee consists of seven members appointed by European institutions and six members appointed by the country which is subject to selection.

[6] There are two elements taken into consideration in the selection procedure: the European dimension, showing the role of the city, region and country in United Europe, and the city and its inhabitants – an aspect which highlights the assets of a given city and engages its inhabitants.

[7] The selected city is granted a subsidy of 1.5 million euros (Melina Mercouri Award). The remaining financial resources, which often amount to several dozen or hundreds of millions of euros, are received from the local and regional funds, government subsidies and private investors and sponsors. The organization of the celebrations is supervised by the European Union; the process of control requires proper organization. After they finish, a report is prepared, assessing the results of the ECC celebrations in a given city. The European Parliament and The European Union Council's Resolution No 1622/2006/WE of 24 October 2006, sanctioning the Union's cooperation in support of the European Capital of Culture programme for 2007–2019; http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/other/l29005_en.htm, 1.1.2011.

So far only one Polish city has been chosen as the ECC. It was Krakow, which had been given the title even before Poland joined the European Union. Another chance for a Polish city to be chosen appeared after 2004. In 2016 one Polish and one Spanish city[8] will be granted the ECC title. In order to take part in this ambitious project, Polish Council of Ministers signed a special resolution regarding Poland's participation in the ECC programme. The resolution states that the ECC activity in Poland is the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, which is also responsible for collecting the applications, designating Polish candidates for the selection committee and supervising the realization of the programme.[9]

In autumn 2009, the Minister of Culture and National Heritage invited Polish cities to enter the competition for the title of the European Capital of Culture 2016. The candidates were Białystok, Bydgoszcz, Gdańsk, Katowice, Lublin, Łódź, Poznań, Szczecin, Toruń, Warsaw and Wrocław. In October 2010, at the first stage of the selection, Gdańsk, Katowice, Lublin, Warsaw and Wrocław passed to the second part of the procedure. The committee based their choice on their strong belief that the cultural programs of these five cities reflect the objectives and criteria of the ECC programme best and have the best chances for success.[10] The final choice of the ECC city will be made by the Polish Selection Committee in the middle of 2011.

2. *THE BENEFITS OF HOLDING THE TITLE OF THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE*

The article largely refers to the issues related to tourist services, which results from the fact that most of the events connected with the ECC celebrations take the form of services for the tourists visiting a given city. Tourist services should be understood here as all the socially useful activities satisfying all kinds of tourist needs.[11] As the events are organized first of all for people arriving

[8] The selected Spanish cities included Burgos, Cordoba, San Sebastian, Las Palmas, Segovia and Saragossa (the second stage of selection to the ECC 2016).

[9] Resolution No. 172/2009, the Ministers' Council of Poland, 2 October 2009.

[10] *Raport Komisji Selekcyjnej z selekcji wstępnej do projektu Europejska Stolica Kultury 2016*, Warszawa, 12–13 October 2010; website: www.mkidn.gov.pl, 1.1.2011.

[11] W. Gaworecki, *Turystyka*, PWE, Warsaw 1997, p. 230.

from outside the city, they must be properly advertised. Appropriate promotion has a strong and positive influence on the tourist traffic and the income of the city and region. Promotion is then a necessary element of the marketing communication while organizing the ECC programme.[12]

The aim of tourist promotion is to persuade tourists to visit a given city. Beautiful architecture, the variety of interesting cultural events, comfortable hotels and good restaurants, and a well-developed system of roads are not always enough. In order to make a decision to visit a particular city, people need appropriate information about its exceptional character and a good justification of their choice. Promotion of tourism, including the cultural tourism practiced part of the ECC celebrations, consists in providing the potential visitors with information about the assets of a given destination and in persuading them to choose this one and no other.

Another aim of tourist promotion is to create a long-term image of countries, cities and regions as attractive areas from the tourist point of view, to present their assets, guarantee the functioning and development of the tourist information system, as well as to assess and support the tourist infrastructure development and modernization. In this case, a particularly valuable promotion tool, often used when organizing the ECC celebrations, is the public relations (PR). PR can be defined as a widely understood method of communication between the city and its surroundings, but is can also be viewed as a set of tools used by the city to increase the sale of its services. For the authors, it is most interesting to treat PR as a process of communication between the city and the recipient of the tourist service, in order to:

- create and control the image of the city,
- defend the city from the competition in order to protect its interests,
- use a set of techniques of winning social acceptance,
- create marketing promotion, very often based on the culture of a given region,

[12] The classic promotion tools are: advertising, sales promotion, personal sales and public relations. Other tools include: sponsoring, direct marketing, promotion through exhibitions and fairs, spectacular and multimedia promotion, internet promotion. These instruments are sometimes referred to as mixed, due to the fact that elements of classic promotion tools are used in them. The relatively recent promotion tools are relatively similar (product placement, product publicity and marketing events, more and more frequently treated as the basic promotion tools).

– prepare the city to meet the tourists' expectations.[13]

In 1985–2014 the title of the European Cities, later he European Capitals of Culture was granted to 50 European cities. The fact that a given city is granted the ECC title improves its image, economy and population. It is an extremely powerful element of promotion, the ECC logo is used, the city attracts sponsors and investors and in this way is able to use the financial resources for the promotion of its cultural offer. As a result of the investments related to the ECC programme, the city starts to appear in the national and foreign media. Moreover, it launches a series of cultural and entertainment events, which are widely commented in the media (television, the Internet, press). Information materials regarding the ECC celebrations are published. The city is associated with the European Union, which is positively perceived in Europe. The promotion of the ECC is done through Union activities, such as placing information on the European Union Internet websites. Similarly, at the national level, government agencies will run an information-promotion campaign related to the ECC 2016 in Poland. It is also extremely important that famous public figures become involved in the organization of the ECC: artists, politicians and journalists. Their involvement is used as an element of PR. As we can see, giving the ECC title to a city brings a number of benefits, one of which is intensive promotion. It should be stressed that it is long-term promotion, because all the activity related to competing for the ECC title begins at least six years before the celebrations.

All these elements are additionally linked with a number of investments in infrastructure, cultural and entertainment facilities, revitalization of a considerable part of the city and in international co-operation. Furthermore, many cultural events are organized, such as concerts, theatre performances or happenings. An added value is also the mobilization of the local community, which becomes involved in the preparations to the ECC competition. All this brings a lot of measurable benefits to the city. One of them is the increased tourist traffic and higher income resulting from the tourists' stay and participation in the cultural and entertainment events. It should be stressed that tourist trips re-

[13] K. Wójcik, *Public relations od A do Z*, Placet, Warsaw 2001.

lated to the ECC events should be treated as cultural tourism,[14] which is currently one of the fastest developing types of tourism.

According to the European Union data, tourism in the city which has been granted the ECC title grows significantly. Sometimes this growth is very dynamic, like it was in the case of Weimar, Thessaloniki or Bologna (Tab. 1). A good example of the positive influence of becoming an ECC is Liverpool, which was granted the title in 2008. Over the year, 276 large events were organized, accompanied by numerous smaller ones, such as exhibitions, workshops or happenings. As a result, in 2008 Liverpool attracted 9.7 million guests, who visited the city for the ECC events, which was bout 35% more than in 2007. The visits generated an income of about 753.8 million pounds.[15]

Table 1

Foreign tourists in selected European Capitals of Culture

City	No of tourist in the year before ECC celebrations (ECC–1)	No of tourists in the year of ECC celebrations	Change ratio between ECC–1 and ECC
Copenhagen	2 462 095	2 589 063	5.2
Thessaloniki	210 608	242 142	15.0
Weimar	44 958	78 760	75.2
Helsinki	1 362 966	1 500 859	10.1
Reykjavik	862 433	890 229	3.2
Bologna	212 621	238 395	12.1
Total	5 155 681	5 539 448	7.4

Source: A. Zygierewicz, *Europejskie Stolice Kultury*, "Infos" 2004, Wydawnictwo Sejmowe dla Biura Analiz Sejmowych, No. 24, p. 4.

As far as the whole Merseyside County is concerned (where Liverpool is located), it recorded a 20% increase in the number of visits, compared to 2007.

[14] Cultural tourism is a journey based on cultural assets (or closely related to them), which includes learning about new places, communities and cultures, being interested in art, architecture and history, taking part in cultural and art events, sentimental and ethnic reasons, as well as religious aspects; A. Jagusiewicz, *Dziedzictwo kulturowe w turystyce polskiej*, "Problemy Turystyki" 2002, No. 1–2, pp. 105–117.

[15] B. Garcia, R. Melville, T. Cox, *Impacts 08: The Liverpool Model. European Capital of Culture Research Programme*, University of Liverpool, Liverpool 2010.

The benefits gained due to receiving the ECC title are also noticed by the inhabitants of the cities where the celebrations were organized in the past. For instance, 77% of the respondents in Krakow believe that the ECC events in 2000 promoted Krakow all over the world and attracted more tourists to the city. The positive results of holding the ECC title are confirmed by the statistical data, which show that the number of persons visiting Krakow increased by 20%, compared to the previous year.[16]

3. *THE EFFORTS OF ŁÓDŹ TO WIN THE TITLE OF THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE 2016 – CASE STUDY*

Łódź was one of the Polish cities which tried to win the ECC 2016 title. The motto devised by the authors of the application was "from the Promised Land to the Transformed Land". On the one hand, this slogan bears a direct reference to the title of the book by W. Reymont and film by A.Wajda, about the industrial history of the city. On the other hand, the expression "Transformed Land" referred to the transformation which took place in Łódź after 1989 and its positive effects (development of entrepreneurship, revitalization of some areas, cultural development). Activities related to the ECC 2016 competition began in Łódź in 2007. The city authorities, the Łódź Province Marshall and the representatives of Łódź Art Centre (ŁAC)[17] signed a letter of intent regarding co-operation. Officially, ŁAC took the responsibility for the efforts to gain the ECC 2016 title in 2010, when an agreement was signed with the city authorities.

The first moves included choosing the project logo, starting co-operation with the local media as regarded promotion, creating the project website, accounts on popular social network services, such as Facebook, Nasza-Klasa, Blip.pl and Tweeter.com. In 2008–2010 a number of social campaigns were launched, whose aim was to promote the ECC 2016 project among the inhabitants of Łódź and engage them in the preparations. A meeting was held with

[16] A. Zygierewicz, *op. cit.*

[17] Łódź Art Center is a culture and art centre, established in 2005 at historical post-industrial complex at Tymienieckiego Street in Łódź. It organizes two well-known festivals: Łódź Design and Foto Festival, as well as many other cultural events. It also hosts individual exhibitions, conferences and educational workshops.

representatives of the European cities which had received the ECC title before. A billboard campaign was launched (outdoor advertising) in large Polish cities, several short programs were broadcast on TVP1. Short TV commercials were also presented on the BBC. A promotional film was made, entitled "Łódź – a City of Culture", which was presented abroad. It won a number of awards at European tourist film festivals. The city took part in many tourist fairs (e.g. in Berlin, Chemnitz, Vienna, Stuttgart, Zurich, Milan and Brussels). The preparation of the ECC application was supported by the university circles, reports of the situation in Łódź were prepared, regarding culture, tourism and infrastructure, workshops for people working in culture-related professions were run.[18]

The application project of Łódź included the following main groups of objectives:

- developing technical infrastructure and cultural facilities,
- revitalizing considerable parts of the city centre,
- developing culture by supporting the main events and initiating new ones,
- stimulating local community,
- improving the image of Łódź,
- developing the international cultural cooperation.

The provisional costs of carrying out the investments were huge and amounted to about 1.2 billion euros.[19]

Unfortunately, the political crisis of the local authorities in December 2009 badly affected the city's efforts to win the ECC 2016 title. President Jerzy Kropiwnicki represented the right-wing parties, while the majority of the city council belonged to left-wing and centrist parties. They had been criticizing President Kropiwnicki and his way of administering the city for many years. The left-wing councillors (SLD) put forward a motion to hold a referendum, as

[18] Some works originally initiated to win the ECC 2016 title are in progress (January 2011). They concern the Cultural Development Program for the Łódź Voivodeship (Pol. *Program Rozwoju Kultury Województwa Łódzkiego*) advertised by the slogan *Łódzkie in the centre of culture* (Pol. *Łódzkie w centrum kultur*). This initiative is to combine activities in the field of culture and national heritage protection in Łódź voivodeship. Long-term cultural development plans were also stressed in the special Resolution of the City Council in Łódź, of 7th July 2010, regarding the significance of culture and creative industries for the socio-economic development and the image of Łódź.

[19] *Łódź Rewolucja Wyobraźni. Europejska Stolica Kultury 2016. Wniosek Aplikacyjny*, Łódź Art Center, Łódź City Hall, Łódź 2010.

a result of which the president was ousted. Until the next elections in 2010 the city was governed by a commissary appointed by the Prime Minister. One of the consequences was the suspension of some projects, such as building the Festival Centre, which was to serve the purposes of the most famous Łódź festival – Plus Camerimage.[20] This in turn was the cause of a conflict with the organizers of the event, who moved it to another city. Another conflict appeared at the turn of 2009 and 2010 between the new authorities of Łódź and the organizers of another large cultural event, the Dialogue of Four Cultures Festival. As a consequence, it was replaced with a new festival, entitled Łódź of Four Cultures. The authors of the application for the ECC 2016 title had to take these problems into consideration in their efforts.

In summer 2010 a survey was conducted in Łódź, regarding the Plus Camerimage Festival.[21] It included a question about the conflict between the city authorities and the festival organizers. About 54% of the respondents believed that as a result of this conflict the festival would be moved to another city (the survey was run still before the decision was taken). About 64% said that it would badly affect Łódź and make it difficult to win the title of the European Capital of Culture. As it turned out later, the respondents predicted further events correctly. Camerimage was moved to Bydgoszcz (autumn 2010) and Łódź did not pass to the next stage of the competition. The report prepared by the international experts' commission states that among the reasons why the candidature of Łódź was rejected were the conflicts and the loss of the key cultural events. Another important reason was the inability to specify the financial sources for the investments that had been planned.[22]

[20] Plus Camerimage Festival and the Dialogue of Four Cultures Festival were the largest cultural events organized in Łódź. They were a key element of the city's efforts to win the ECC 2016 title.

[21] The survey was conducted by W. Cudny; it included 150 questionnaires distributed among randomly chosen respondents in the city centre. 75% of them were inhabitants of Łódź, while the remaining ones came from outside the city.

[22] *Raport Komisji Selekcyjnej z selekcji wstępnej do projektu Europejska Stolica Kultury 2016*, Warsaw, 12–13 October 2010. The report from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, www.mkidn.gov.pl, 1.1.2011.

Conclusions

It should be stressed that the ECC programme described in the article has a very positive influence on the development of cities and the regions surrounding them, offering them a great opportunity to develop. The activities connected with the programme are the best promotion of the city. On the other hand, the celebrations require new cultural proposals, which are tourist products based on the cultural heritage of the city and the region. Moreover, participating in the ECC programme involves a number of new investments. The Capitals of Culture chosen so far invested in developing transport infrastructure, building cultural facilities (theatres, performance halls, museums) and new hotels. As a result, the number of visitors significantly increased. We may then talk about an increase in tourist traffic, which is often a long-term effect of the ECC celebrations. Furthermore, the city's income gained from the visitors' service also grows. Apart from the city itself, the profits also go to the whole region. Following the EU directives, it may even become officially involved in organizing the celebrations.

It must be stressed that the procedure of choosing the ECC is very complicated and the candidate cities fiercely compete with each other. The procedure engages state and city authorities, an international experts' committee and a number of EU institutions. The application for the title must be thoroughly prepared, without any faults. The financial sources must be clearly stated and the organizational support of different institutions must be guaranteed. Unfortunately, some examples show that the mistakes made while competing for the ECC title, as well as conflicts lead directly to the loss of such a chance. They may also negatively affect the image of the city. The authors attempted to point to such problems, using the example of Łódź and its efforts to win the title.

ROLA PROGRAMU EUROPEJSKA STOLICA KULTURY W ROZWOJU MIAST I REGIONÓW

Streszczenie

Niniejszy artykuł przedstawia zagadnienia wpływu programu Unii Europejskiej znanego pod nazwą Europejska Stolica Kultury (ESK) na promocję i rozwój miast

i regionów. Program ESK ma na celu wybór miasta, które poprzez odbywające się na jego terenie przez cały rok wydarzenia kulturalne prezentować będzie dziedzictwo kulturowe danego kraju i regionu oraz jego związki z dziedzictwem całej Europy. Fakt przyznania danemu miastu tytułu (ESK) wpływa pozytywnie na jego postrzeganie, gospodarkę, turystykę, ludność. Stanowi to ogromny element promocyjny, miasto zyskuje nowych sponsorów i inwestorów. Przeznacza uzyskane w ten sposób środki finansowe m.in. na promocję swojej oferty kulturalnej. Dzięki projektom inwestycyjnym realizowanym na potrzeby ESK, rozwija się infrastruktura. Z uwagi na spektakularne inwestycje o mieście tym zaczyna być głośno w mediach krajowych i zagranicznych. Ogromne znaczenie ma także zaangażowanie znanych osobistości, m.in. twórców, polityków różnego szczebla, dziennikarzy w organizację ESK, co ma istotny wymiar promocyjny. Wszystkie te czynniki powodują, że w roku obchodów ESK zwiększa się w danym mieście ruch turystyczny, rosną dochody z turystyki, a te dobroczynne skutki utrzymują się często w kolejnych latach. Autorzy przedstawili w artykule szereg przykładów pozytywnych oddziaływań ESK na rozwój turystyki, gospodarki i kształtowanie pozytywnego wizerunku miast. Opisali także dotychczasowy (styczeń 2011) proces wyboru polskiego kandydata do ESK 2016. W tym przypadku autorzy zwrócili szczególną uwagę na przykład Łodzi. Miasto to uzyskało szereg pozytywnych efektów związanych ze staraniami o tytuł ESK w 2016 roku, jednak z drugiej strony napotkało na swej drodze wiele problemów. Skutkiem nawarstwienia się wewnętrznych konfliktów i słabo sprecyzowanej jednolitej koncepcji ESK było odrzucenie wniosku Łodzi w pierwszym etapie eliminacji.

THE ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE PROGRAMME IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CITIES AND REGIONS

Summary

This article presents the impact of the European Union Programme, known as the European Capital of Culture (ECC) on the promotion and development of cities and regions. ECC programme is aimed at selecting a city that, will present for the period of one year the cultural heritage of the country and the region where the city is located and its relationship to European heritage. The fact that the selected city is given an ECC title has many positive effects on city perception its economy, tourism and its inhabitants.

The ECC title is a great promotional item, the city gets new sponsors and investors. There is also a financial grant from European Union for the realization of ECC programme. Thanks to investment projects carried out for the ECC, the city can also develop its cultural and technical infrastructure. Because of these sometimes very spectacular investments the city is promoted through the domestic and foreign media. In the

project of ECC very often the celebrities are also involved. These are famous politicians, journalists and artists. The involvement of celebrities is a very important promotional element. All these factors together with events ongoing in the city increase the tourist movement during the ECC year. As a result also the revenues from tourism are growing, and these benefits are often maintained in subsequent years.

The authors presented in the article several examples of positive effects of ECC programme on the development of tourism, economy and creating a positive image of the cities. They also described the current (January 2011) Polish candidate selection process for the ECC 2016. In this case, the authors paid particular attention to the example of Lodz. The city received a number of positive effects associated with efforts for the title of European Capital of Culture in 2016. On the other hand it also encounter many difficulties connected with this program. Accumulated result of internal conflicts in the city and poor ECC concept was the rejection of Lodz in the first stage of ECC elimination.

SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL
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COOPETITION AS THE BASIS FOR THE FUNCTIONING OF TOURISM CLUSTERS

Introduction

The phenomenon of competition in tourism can be seen at regional and interregional level. In a tourist region, they are primarily tourism businesses that compete over a potential customer, but there is also strong competition between the regions themselves. In the competitive battle, the winner is the one who will offer a product that better meets the needs and expectations of consumers. However, to create an attractive tourist product, the cooperation of many entities is required, such as providers of tourist services, managers of tourist attractions, local governments, tourist organizations, research and development centers. It seems that the most effective form of cooperation in tourism is the tourism cluster, whose activity is based on mutual cooperation and competition of affiliated entities.

The aim of this paper is to show the importance of the phenomenon of coopetition in the activities of tourism clusters.

1. COOPETITION AS A RESULT OF COMPETITION AND COOPERATION

The phenomenon of competition occurs in many areas of daily life: social, political, economic, cultural, etc. Competition can be understood as

a phenomenon, whereby participants (both sellers and buyers) compete with each other in the pursuit of similar objectives, which means that the actions taken by one side to achieve certain goals, make it difficult (and sometimes even impossible) to achieve the same goals by others.[1] In the economic sphere, there is competition primarily between companies that are struggling with each other to best meet the needs of consumers. Therefore, they try to gain new markets and access to the cheapest sources of supply. However, this is not the only aspect of economic competition. There is also competition between different sectors.[2] Sectors have different growth prospects, and their fate in many cases depends on whether other sectors will prove sufficiently effective in meeting the needs of buyers, in development of product and technological innovation, in increasing exports, attracting employees, gaining cheap sources of raw materials, etc.[3]

Competition can be also analyzed between national economies, whose growth rate is variable. Another aspect of competition, which is often met in economic life is the struggle which takes place between the buyers for the purchase of a given product under the most favorable terms, or between workers for better jobs, higher wages and social prestige. Competitive struggle may be in different scales: local, regional, national and global.

Organizations and enterprises on the market, in addition to competition, willingly use various forms of cooperation which give a guarantee for achieving the desired objectives. The term cooperation means the activities carried out jointly, in consultation with someone else.[4] Cooperation between enterprises is also referred to as "formal or informal agreement between organizations to cooperate in order to achieve common or new goals more efficiently or more effec-

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[1] M.J. Stankiewicz, *Konkurencyjność przedsiębiorstwa. Budowanie konkurencyjności przedsiębiorstwa w warunkach globalizacji*, Dom Organizatora, Toruń 2005, p. 18.

[2] The notion of sector in the literature of the subject means industry as a whole, a particular industry branch, a particular area of business activity, both production and service, or a group of companies producing goods that are substitutes see: M.E. Porter, *Strategia konkurencji. Metody analizy sektorów i konkurentów*, PWE, Warszawa 1992, p. 9 and 23.

[3] T. Przybyciński, *Konkurencja i ład rynkowy – przyczynek do teorii i polityki konkurencji*, Szkoła Główna Handlowa w Warszawie, Warszawa 2005, pp. 13–14.

[4] *Słownik współczesnego języka polskiego tom V*, ed. B. Dunaj, Wydawnictwo SMS, Kraków 1996, p. 235.

tively".[5] The range of cooperative relationships is quite broad, since it can cover such areas as cooperation in obtaining resources for production, cooperation in obtaining new technologies, cooperation in production or provision of services, cooperation in the field of distribution and marketing, as well as the common representation of business interests of enterprises.[6]

Operators interacting with each other expect the benefits of jointly conducted promotional campaign, reduction of costs of actions taken, the use of resources at the disposal of a partner or obtaining market advantage over other entities by joining forces. The main reason for cooperation is also the desire to reduce the negative effects of the impact of competition on a given market entity. Cooperation allows to supplement resources and competencies with those held by other market participants (suppliers, customers, competitors), thus increasing the competitiveness of the exchange partners, both at a given moment and in the longer term.

Meanwhile, market mechanisms reveal that the process of rivalry among firms is accompanied by the creation of cooperative relations between competitors. More complex relationships become possible, in which the partner in cooperation is a competitor and cooperation has become a way of gaining advantage over him. The above-described market phenomena have led to the emergence of a new concept, which is a combination of cooperation and competition, i.e. coopetition. It is an activity that involves agreements between companies, in order to compete more effectively on the market.[7] Coopetition therefore means cooperation with a competitor in a selected area.[8]

The essence of coopetition is expressed in the fact that the companies seek to acquire a competitive advantage thanks to specific resources, competences and specific market position, while trying to integrate their strengths with the advantages of rivals, suppliers, customers and other business partners. On the one hand, coopetition is the joint use of competitive potentials by companies

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[5] *Biznes. Słownik pojęć ekonomicznych*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, vol. 10, Warszawa 2007, p. 171.

[6] W. Popławski, A. Sudolska, M. Zastempowski, *Współpraca przedsiębiorstw w Polsce w procesie budowania ich potencjału innowacyjnego*, Dom Organizatora, Toruń 2008, p. 15.

[7] *Ibidem*, p. 63.

[8] W. Grzywacz, I. Jaźwiński, *Współczesne uwarunkowania i tendencje polityki ekonomicznej*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego, Szczecin 2007, p. 96.

– coopetitors, on the other – a continuous rough competitive struggle for the leadership of cost or market shares, and stimulation of technological change in the industry.[9]

Coopetition can occur at different levels in the hierarchy of economic systems (Tab. 1).

Table 1

Coopetition types

LEVEL	COOPETITORS
global	national economies, integration groups
macroeconomic	clusters, industries, economy sectors
mesoeconomic	companies in industries (horizontal relations), entities in clusters (horizontal and vertical relations)
microeconomic	functional departments in the company, branches, strategic organizational units
micro-micro	employees in the enterprise

Source: B. Jankowska, *Konkurencja czy kooperacja?*, "Ekonomista" 2009, No. 1, p. 80.

Coopetition can be indicated at the global level, when the relationships of cooperation and competition take place, e.g. between integration groups or whole national economies. Coopetition at the macroeconomic level is focused on co-competition between clusters or individual industries, while at the mesoeconomic level, the phenomenon of coopetition occurs within clusters or industrial systems. Microeconomic and micro-micro levels concern processes between subsystems of an individual company.

One advantage of coopetition is reduction of costs through production realized in cooperation with a competitor . Moreover, coopetitors gain access to the necessary resources and knowledge, experience, relationships or competences, which improves quality and efficiency. At the same time, due to the fact that there is the simultaneous phenomenon of competition, a company must continually improve its competitive potential, e.g. through the introduction of innovations.

[9] B. Jankowska, *Konkurencja czy kooperacja…*, p. 78.

2. *THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF TOURISM CLUSTERS*

The definition of a cluster in economic terms was proposed by M.E. Porter, according to whom clusters are "geographical concentrations of interconnected companies, specialized suppliers, service providers, firms that are active in related industries and affiliated institutions (e.g. universities, standardization bodies and industry associations) in particular fields, competing, but also cooperating, with one another".[10] A similar definition is presented by the Institute for Market Economy Research, according to which a cluster is "a spatial concentration of enterprises, institutions and organizations that are mutually bound with an extensive network of formal and informal relationships based on a common trajectory of development (e.g. technological, common target markets, etc.) simultaneously competing and cooperating in certain aspects of their activities".[11]

The main feature of a cluster structure apart from geographical concentration is that the entities that operate within its frames perceive themselves not only as competitors but also as partners for cooperation in certain areas (e.g. new product development, joint investment in specialized infrastructure, joint marketing, participation in fairs, trainings, etc.).[12] Moreover, membership in a cluster is not based on a formal contract and is usually open to interested parties who see their profits mainly in access to suppliers, services and the labor market.

The above-mentioned determinants of clusters appear to be met with regard to tourism as well. Tourism clusters are distinguished by geographical concentration, because they usually operate around valuable tourist attractions, which are a major reason that attracts tourists to the region. Surrounding the tourist attractions, there are providers of tourist services, which allow the use of tourist attractions. In this way, tourist infrastructure is created that is essential for the consumption of tourist attractions. In a given area, there are both strictly tourist entities (collective accommodation facilities, catering facilities, tour or-

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[10] M.E. Porter, *Porter o konkurencji*, Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, Warszawa 2001, p. 246.

[11] *Klastry. Innowacyjne wyzwanie dla Polski*, ed. S. Szultek, Instytut Badań nad Gospodarką Rynkową, Gdańsk 2004, p. 13.

[12] *Ibidem*.

ganizers and agents, transport companies, managers of tourist attractions) and paratourist entities complementing and supporting the activities of tourism companies (telecommunications, postal, banking, insurance companies, etc.).

The specific nature of the tourist product makes it possible for another condition of the cluster definition to be met, namely overlapping of competition and cooperation. Tourism businesses providing partial services such as accommodation, meals, guiding, transport compete with each other for potential customers. However, many entities participate in developing the tourist product of the region (local government, businesses, residents, tourist organizations) that work together to create a single, comprehensive tourist product. Thus, a tourism cluster is formed by an active network of contributors of tourist products who interact with each other within the framework of a specific geographic brand (branded tourist product – an area) and at the same time compete by means of the quality and uniqueness of tourist services offered.[13] Every tourism firm has its own aims and interests. For that reason, as J. Jackson and P. Murphy underline, it is not easy to convince them to participate in tourism cluster. For same reason coordination of their activities is also complex to achieve.[14]

Operation of a tourism cluster is beneficial both for the region in which the cluster operates, and for tourism enterprises (Fig. 1).

Among the potential benefits for companies, growth of innovativeness should be mentioned above all. Entities that form a cluster simultaneously compete and cooperate with each other. The presence of rivals in the market forces them to distinguish themselves from others and to introduce innovation, resulting in widening of their product range. This results in increased sales of services and products, increase in the number of customers, and thus a better financial standing and employment growth.

[13] J. Kaczmarek, A. Stasiak, B. Włodarczyk, *Produkt turystyczny. Pomysł, organizacja, zarządzanie*, Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, Warszawa 2010, p. 403.

[14] J. Jackson, P. Murphy, *Tourism Destinations as clusters: Analytical experiences from the New World*, "Tourism and Hospitality Research" 2002, vol. 4, No. 1, p. 37.

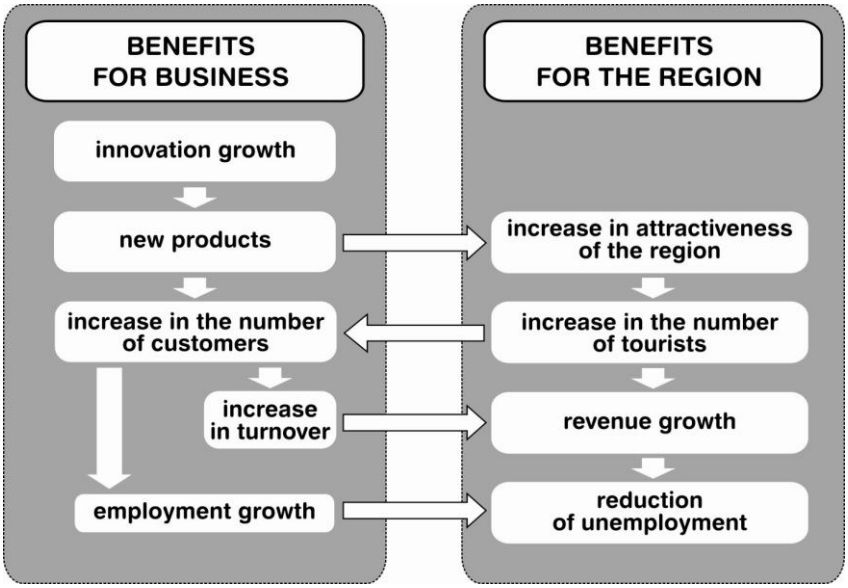

Fig. 1. Benefits that result from the cluster's operation

Source**:** R. Kusa, A. Peszko, *Małopolski klaster turystyczny – perspektywy rozwoju w świetle badań własnych*, in: *Koncepcje i narzędzia zarządzania strategicznego*, ed. M. Romanowska, P. Wachowiak, Szkoła Główna Handlowa. Oficyna Wydawnicza, Warszawa 2006, p. 182.

The benefits achieved by companies also affect the situation in the region. New products created by the companies increase tourist attractiveness, which is associated with an increase in the number of tourists. The more tourists visit the region, the higher revenues from tourist services. In addition, employment growth in businesses related to the growing number of customers means reduction of unemployment in the region.

Discussing the benefits of the operation of a tourism cluster, it is also worth noting that an increase in the attractiveness of a region also raises the attractiveness of neighboring regions. Activity of tourists and enterprises willing to meet their needs is not limited by borders.[15]

[15] A. Peszko, R. Kusa, *Klastry jako stymulatory konkurencyjności przedsiębiorstw i regionów turystycznych*, in: *W kierunku gospodarki opartej na wiedzy: innowacyjność, konkurencyjność, współpraca w regionie*, ed. J. Kot, Akademia Świętokrzyska, Kielce 2006, p. 286.

Members of tourism clusters should be entities providing tourist services, managing tourist attractions, entities from related sectors (e.g. trade, insurance, recreation, construction) that support tourism and the local authorities, scientific and educational centers. Then, those entities will benefit from the effects of coopetition. On the one hand, competition will spur companies to introduce innovation, on the other hand, members will enjoy all the advantages of cooperation (rapid communication, collaborative decision-making, the possibility of cooperative learning and implementing best practices, etc.).

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF SELECTED TOURISM CLUSTERS

Increased interest in clusters in Poland was related to Polish accession to EU structures. At that time it became possible to obtain sufficient financial support for measures to promote clusters as innovative market solutions. A major role in this regard was also played by the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development, which manages funds from the state budget and the European Union aimed at promoting entrepreneurship and innovation and development of human resources as well as the Institute of Market Economy Research, which undertook preliminary research on the subject matter of clusters.

Tourism clusters in Poland belong to a group of very young clusters. Many of them have only been operational for a short time, and some clusters are only at the design stage. Information about the functioning tourism clusters are fragmented and inconsistent. There is no consolidated list of tourism clusters. Tourism clusters can only be identified by analyzing the projects of the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development, or the activity of regions in the field of networking .

For the purposes of this article the websites of selected tourism clusters have been examined (Tab. 2).

Table 2

Activities of selected tourism clusters in Poland (part 1)

Cluster name	Cluster specifics
1	2
Cluster of Tourism and Regional Development "Słońce Regionu" (Skarżysko, Świętokrzyskie Province)	cluster was created as part of ZPORR measure 2.6 "Regional innovation strategies and transfer of knowledge"; under an agreement concluded in Kielce on 10.09.2007, the cluster is coordinated by the Institute for Regional Development of the Association of European Initiatives; the cluster's mission is to promote the computerization of tourism enterprises, information exchange, training, promotion and marketing, raising funds for the development and current activities of the cluster; cooperation of entrepreneurs, government, R & D (no data on the number of entities); no own website
Tourism cluster e-KOLOT Kraina Miodu i Mleka (Opolskie Province)	established on 18.11.2008 in Kluczbork, operates within the framework of Kluczbork-Olesno Local Tourist Organization; cooperation of tourism companies from Opolskie Province, Opole Science and Technology Park, University of Opole as well as the poviats of Kluczbork and Olesno, cluster members are listed on the website of the cluster; cluster has its own logo; activities of the cluster focus on residence tourism, mainly agritourism
Tourism cluster „Bory Tucholskie"	the cluster has its own website which contains e.g. a list of participants in the cluster and information about the attractiveness of the Tuchola Forest; on the website there is no information about the activities or the history of the cluster; the initiator of collaboration is the Poviat Starosty in Tuchola
Cluster of Restaurateurs and Hoteliers (Lubelskie Province)	the cluster was established on 23.12.2008 and is an association of the hotel and gastronomy industry in the region; the main objective of the cluster is to support initiatives and joint undertakings in the field of restaurant, hotel and tourism services for the benefit of the region's economy; the cluster has its own logo and a website which contains information about members of the cluster and its product portfolio

1	2
Cross-border Tourism Cluster of Bieszczady (Podkarpackie Province and Ukraine)	the cluster has been created within the project "Polish-Ukrainian strategy of tourism development as an essential element of joint undertakings", which received funding from the Neighbourhood Programme INTERREG IIIA / Tacis CBC Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine; cooperation between agritourism farms, hotels, convention centers and poviat authorities of Ustrzyki Dolne, Stary Sambor and Turke – on the Ukrainian side, only three farmhouses; the cluster has its own logo, but does not have a website, information about entities representing the cluster is available on the website of the poviat of Ustrzyki Dolne
The Beskid 5 (Beskid Śląski region)	the cluster brings together the municipalities of Brenna, Istebna, Szczyrk, Wisła and Ustroń (and tourism operators operating in the member municipalities); the cluster has its own logo and website; the cluster has executed many projects, including "Power flows from the mountains – a nationwide promotional campaign of the Beskid 5", "The development and promotion of cultural and tourism products of the Beskid 5", "Green Book of the Beskid 5"

Source: own work based on: www.wrotaswietokrzyskie.pl, www.klaster.tucholski.pl, www.e-kolot.pl, www.bieszczdzki.pl, www.beskidzka5.pl.

Analysis of selected tourism clusters showed that their formation is largely enforced. Tourism clusters are mainly formed through the involvement of entities that promote tourism clustering (such as regional development institutions and agencies), or the action of local authorities. Only the Cluster of Restaurateurs and Hoteliers is the result of a business initiative.

Most tourism clusters cease to operate actively after the end of the initiating projects that led to their creation. It is difficult even to find information about the activities of the Cluster of Tourism and Regional Development Sun of the Region, which is mainly due to the fact that it does not have its own website. Brief information about the cluster is presented only on the website www.wrotaswietokrzyskie.pl. A similar situation occurs in the case of the Bieszczady Cross-Border Tourism Cluster. Information about the cluster is available only on the website of the Bieszczady disctrict and is limited only to presentation of the characteristics of municipalities with a brief description of the tourist attractions and modest information about the associated entities. There is no information about current activities of the cluster.

Website of the Tourism Cluster Land of Honey and Milk was created under a grant from the program for the development of international cooperation with foreign partners in research, technological development or innovation – Innovation Express, financed from the national budget. The Project was to promote tourism services in innovative ways, e.g. through an online tourism portal, virtual panoramas of facilities of cluster members, setting up mailboxes for cluster members in a common Internet domain, creating a mobile guide to the areas of cluster members, creating a system of signs identifying the members. However, the information published on the website about the activities of the cluster is out of date. Latest entries are dated May 2010 and relate to events associated with the cluster in 2009 (when the project was ongoing).

Among the analyzed tourism clusters, it seems that the most advanced are the activities of the Cluster of Restaurateurs and Hoteliers and the Beskid 5. Their websites contain all the information concerning their current activities. The name and website of the Cluster of Restaurateurs and Hoteliers shows its strictly business character. On the other hand, the website of the Beskid 5, in addition to maps of the associated municipalities, contains updated information about tourist attractions, accommodation, tourist services provided by members of the cluster, organized events, local products, weather and the current situation on the slopes.

Conclusions

In the era of globalization and the European single market, the competitiveness of a given region is no longer determined by a single company but by the innovativeness of the entire region, institutions, municipalities and businesses. Entities of the tourism industry should therefore seek measures, which on the one hand will allow them to preserve competition among enterprises, and on the other hand – to enjoy the benefits of cooperation. The ideal form seems to be a tourism cluster, whose nature is inseparably connected with the phenomenon of coopetition, allowing to achieve synergies and to strengthen the competitive position and innovative potential of the cluster members.

Among the analyzed tourism clusters, the phenomenon of coopetition occurs between affiliated entities. This phenomenon concerns primarily the tourism business. Associated enterprises on the one hand compete for potential tourists, and on the other hand, enjoy a wide range of benefits of cooperation which

guarantees greater effectiveness in attracting potential customers. Local authorities that are members of the analyzed clusters, often initiate and coordinate cooperation within the cluster and provide support for the development of tourism in the area. Not all clusters highlight links with research institutes and universities, and it is the R&D entities that should develop concepts for the development of new tourism products within the cluster, and conduct research of the tourism market.

It seems that the results of the activities of clusters in tourism will be noticeable in a longer term than in other sectors of the economy. This is due mainly to the mentality of entrepreneurs, which opposes cooperation, and the still low level of knowledge about the possibilities of creating such structures. Experience gathered on the basis of the presented examples indicates the weakness of the cluster structures in tourism in Poland and their ad hoc nature. Most tourism clusters arise in the implementation of EU programs, however, after their completion, there is a lack of ideas for their long-term operation. It may be pointed out that collaboration with scientific institutions would allow for the construction of an idea for a long-term functioning of the cluster and would lead to the emergence of a leader.

KOOPETYCJA JAKO PODSTAWA FUNKCJONOWANIA KLASTRÓW TURYSTYCZNYCH

Streszczenie

W dobie globalizacji i jednolitego rynku europejskiego konkurencyjność danego regionu nie jest już determinowana przez pojedyncze firmy tylko przez innowacyjność całego regionu, instytucji, gmin, przedsiębiorstw. W walce konkurencyjnej zwycięża podmiot, który zaoferuje produkt najlepiej zaspokajający potrzeby i oczekiwania konsumentów. Jednakże do wykreowania atrakcyjnego produktu turystycznego niezbędna jest współpraca wielu podmiotów, tj. oferenci usług turystycznych, zarządzający atrakcjami turystycznymi, samorząd terytorialny, organizacje turystyczne, jednostki naukowo-badawcze. Podmioty turystyczne powinny zatem poszukiwać takiej formy działania, która z jednej strony pozwala zachować konkurencję między przedsiębiorstwami, a z drugiej strony korzystać z zalet współpracy. Idealną formą wydaje się być klaster turystyczny, którego natura nierozerwalnie łączy się ze zjawiskiem koopetycji, pozwalającej osiągnąć efekty synergii oraz wzmocnić pozycję konkurencyjną i potencjał innowacyjny członków klastra.

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest ukazanie znaczenia zjawiska koopetycji w działalności klastrów turystycznych.

COOPETITION AS THE BASIS FOR THE FUNCTIONING OF TOURISM CLUSTERS

Summary

In the era of globalization the competitiveness of tourist destination is determined not by actions undertaken by one firm but by the region as a whole. Market competition wins an organization that may offer a product that fulfils in most efficient way expectations of customers. To create an attractive tourist product a cooperation between various actors is required. Tourist organizations should therefore seek to cooperate and compete simultaneously. Ideal form of such seems to be a cluster, which enables coopetition between various organizations.

The main purpose of this paper is to show the importance of tourism clusters.

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GROWTH TRENDS OF THE NORTH AMERICAN SEA TOURISM MARKET

SELECTED ASPECTS

Introduction

Sea tourism, defined for the purpose of this article as sea voyages from port to port aboard seagoing passenger ships (the so-called cruisers), is presently one of the most rapidly growing segments of the world tourism. Average annual dynamics of growth in the number of travelers using the offer of sea tourism, in the period 1997–2009, according to the data published by Shippax, an organization involved in surveys of the world sea tourism market, amounted to nearly 7.6%, and the total number of people using the offer of sea cruises in the world reached in 2009 the value exceeding 19.5 million.[1]

The main areas of conducting navigation activities by shipowners of cruise ships are regions of the world with favorable climate conditions, attractive in terms of tourism, located near markets-emitters of sea tourist traffic. A dominant role in this respect is performed, in particular, by North American bodies of water (Caribbean Sea, Atlantic Ocean, Pacific Ocean), whose participation in

[1] *ShipPax Market:10 Statistics. Shippax Information*, Halmstad 2010, p. 55; *ShipPax Market:09 Statistics. Shippax Information*, Halmstad 2009, p. 56; R.K. Dowling, *Cruise ship tourism*, CABI Publishing, Oxfordshire 2006, p. 171.

service of the global sea tourism market reached, in 2009, the level of as much as 43%. Within the North American market, most often three subregions (submarkets) are distinguished, i.e.:

- Caribbean Islands and Bahamas;
- Eastern Coast of North America;
- Western Coast of North America.

At the same time, particular areas of this market have different specific character, in terms of both quantity and nature of offered voyages, which requires a separate description and analysis.

The purpose of this article is, thus, to present a detailed characteristics of the region and its particular subregions as an attractive area of performing sea tourism activities. The basis for the conducted analysis are data relating to the volume of sea tourist traffic in particular subregions of the market and seaports taking part in the service of seagoing cruisers.

1. SUBREGION OF THE CARIBBEAN ISLANDS AND OF THE BAHAMAS

In 2009, the subregion of the Caribbean Islands and of the Bahamas was travel destination for 33%, namely approximately 6.4 million of passengers[2] travelling aboard cruisers in the world and is currently most often chosen destination of sea voyages. In the subregion in question, as many as 8 among 10 world greatest seaports involved in providing services to cruisers are located (see Tab.1). Favourable natural conditions, including climate, landscape attractiveness and cultural diversity make that it is there where the greater number of sea tourist cruises are organized. This area is the basis for activities of both the largest shipowners of cruisers in the world and smaller entities operating fleet consisting of two, three mid-size vessels. Additionally, after the end of navigation season on European bodies of water (October, November), the majority of units is directed to perform cruises within the Caribbean Islands and the Bahamas, which results in a substantial tonnage oversupply in this area. It is nothing else but owing to a high congestion of ports of the Caribbean Sea and of the Bahamas over the past twenty years, this region was characterized by a regular decrease in share in the total number of sea voyages organized worldwide: in

[2] *Shippax Market: 09 Statistics…*

1991 it reached 60.4%, in 1996 – 57.2%, in 1998 – 51.2%, in 1999 – 49.1%, in 2005 – 41.7%, and in 2009 only 33%.[3]

Table 1

Number of passengers in the biggest cruise ports of the world in the period 2005–2009

Port	Market	Passenger traffic in the period				
		2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
Miami	North American	4 100 100	4 137 531	3 787 410	no data	no data
Nassau	North American	3 288 848	no data	no data	2 756 321	2 356 669
Port Canaveral	North American	3 192 757	2 48 7704	4 275 923	4 600 693	4 363 536
Port Everglades	North American	3 190 741	2 636 711	2 690 058	no data	3 801 464
Cozumel	North American	2 221 729	2 569 433	2 488 190	2 350 834	2 519 179
Barcelona	European	2 151 465	2 074 554	1 765 838	1 407 179	no data
St. Thomas	North American	1 936 216	1 855 465	984 644	19 484	2 008 144
Grand Cayman	North American	1 517 585	1 553 053	1 725 647	1 931 588	1 818 686
Singapore	Asian	1 138 500	920 689	943 000	856 556	623 740
San Juan	North American	1 135 983	1 392 624	no data	1 338 019	1 315 079

Source: Prepared by the author on the basis of: *Shippax Market: 10 Statistics…*, pp. 249–255; *Shippax Market: 09 Statistics…*, pp. 247–254; *Shippax Market: 08 Statistics…*, pp. 256–261; *Shippax Market: 07 Statistics. Shippax Information*, Halmstad 2007, pp. 239–246; *Shippax Market: 06 Statistics. Shippax Information*, Halmstad 2006, pp. 241–246.

The broad offer of sea voyages offered by shipowners of cruise ships in the subregion of the Bahamas includes most often shorter, 3–4 day cruises, while in the Caribbean longer, 7–11 day cruises. The base port for sea voyages organized in the area of the Bahamas is most often Port Canaveral, and during the cruise

[3] J. Miotke-Dzięgiel, *Turystyka morska*, University of Gdansk, Gdansk 2002, p. 41; *Shippax Market: 06 Statistics. Shippax Information*, Halmstad 2006, p. 47; *Shippax Market: 09 Statistics…*, p. 56; *ShipPax Market: 10 Statistics*, p. 55.

a ship calls at, among others, the ports of Nassau, Coco/Little Stirrup Cay or Castaway Cay. Cruises within the Caribbean Islands usually begin and end in the port of Miami or Port Everglades,[4] and depending on the offer, they include one of three areas, i.e.:[5]

- Western Caribbean (e.g. Jamaica, Cayman Islands, Cuba, Haiti);
- Eastern Caribbean (e.g. British and American Virgin Islands, Dominican Republic, Barbados);
- Southern Caribbean, Panama Canal (e.g. Mexico, Honduras, Nicaragua, Columbia, Venezuela, Trinidad and Tobago).

Structure of the number of passengers traveling by sea in the area of the Caribbean Sea and of the Bahamas indicates a substantial advantage of the eastern and western part of the Caribbean Islands (in 2009 42% and 35% respectively) in relation to the southern part of the water body, along with cruises through Panama Canal (in 2009 11%)[6] Region of the Bahamas in the discussed period had only 12% share in the total number of passengers traveling by sea in that area.

Notwithstanding falling trends which may be observed in recent years in the number of passengers traveling by sea in the area of the Caribbean Islands and of the Bahamas, this area has still a dominant position in serving sea tourist traffic in the world. In this context, actions undertaken by representatives of supply side – shipowners of cruise ships, are important. Majority of new, luxury equipped ships begin their cruises in the discussed area. In addition, it is a more and more common tendency to prolong the time of duration of cruises (in case of longer voyages), and to maintain simultaneously invariable level of prices. These actions, though affect limitation in the pace of fall in demand for traveling by sea, bearing in mind a constantly growing number of operators and units engaged in the area, leading to congestion in seaports of this area, will not make it possible to maintain the previous market share.

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[4] In the subject literature simultaneously two types of port names can be found, i.e. Port Everglades and Port Lauderdale.

[5] M. Butler, *Worldwide Cruise Ship Activity*, World Tourism Organization, Madrid 2003, p. 102.

[6] *Shippax Market: 09 Statistics…*

2. SUBREGION OF THE EASTERN COAST OF NORTH AMERICA

The Eastern Coast of North America, covering ports of the Eastern Coast of the USA, Bermudas and the northern part of Canada, is characterized by much smaller, as compared to the Caribbean Islands and to the Bahamas, share in number of tourists using cruises. For instance, in 1990, the whole market constituted 6% of the world cruising, in 1995 – 5%, in 2000 – approximately 3% and in 2000 – also ca. 3%.[7] The specific character of operations of the market in question results, in particular, from a short navigation season, which lasts from spring to autumn, and from the fact that within the structure of nationality of tourists using sea voyages in this area, European travelers prevail.

In spite of the fact that sea tourist carriages on the discussed market are growing, particularly in the area of Canada and New England, towards dynamics of growth lower than for world carriages, the market rank falls systematically. The most popular sea voyage destination in the subregion of the Eastern Coast of North America are undoubtedly the Bermudas. In 2009, three largest cruise ports in this region (Hamilton, St. George's, King's Wharf) served together 135 of ships calling at the port, with the total number of more than 286 000 of passengers aboard.[8] Every year, also the number of tourists traveling by sea in the area of Canada increases. In 2009, ports of Halifax, Saint John, Montreal and Quebec served total over 776 000 of passengers (growth as compared to 2008 by almost 46%) and recorded 310 ships calling at the port (Tab. 2). The third important group of travelers calling at the ports of the Eastern Coast of North America are tourists participating in transatlantic cruises.

[7] J. Miotke-Dzięgiel, *op. cit*, p. 41; *Shippax Market: 06 Statistics*, Shippax Information. Halmstad 2006, p. 47; *Shippax Market: 09 Statistics*, Shippax Information, Halmstad 2009, p. 56.

[8] www. experiencebermuda.com, 21.07.2010.

Table 2

Main cruise ports on the Eastern Coast of North America in the period 2007–2009

Port	2009		2008		2007	
	number of passengers	number of calling at the port	number of passengers	number of calling at the port	number of passengers	number of calling at the port
New York	535 000	275	524 000	264	no data	no data
Montreal	283 770	43	39 636	41	34 809	45
Boston	271 934	122	269 911	113	234 284	101
Halifax	227 797	118	228 133	125	176 742	92
Saint John	178 210	73	183 462	79	133 676	53
Philadelphia	126 611	96	114 064	87	111 828	no data
Quebec	86 714	76	82 050	84	66 152	74

Source: Prepared by the author on the basis of: *Shippax Market: 10 Statistics…*, pp. 249–255; *Shippax Market: 09 Statistics…*, pp. 247–254; *Shippax Market: 08 Statistics…*, pp. 256–261; www.philaport.com, 20.07.2010; www.massport.com, 20.07.2010.

In 2009, almost all ships serving the discussed region had their base in New York, however, it should be emphasized that this port, the greatest in the world in the period of magnificence of linear navigation, has presently no more significant prospects of development. Presently, its role is limited only to serving seasonal traffic of units departing to the Bermudas or to Canada as well as more and more often to Europe. In this context, however, attention should be paid to a dynamically growing role of Canadian ports in serving sea cruises in the region, in particular of the port of Montreal, which in 2009, as compared to 2008, recorded more than six-time increase in the number of passengers.

3. SUBREGION OF THE WESTERN COAST OF NORTH AMERICA

Market of the Western Coast of the United States includes four main areas, where cruise sailing activities are performed: coast of Alaska, USA and Canada, Mexico and Hawaii.

A considerable number of sea voyages performed in the discussed region can be attributed to areas of the coast of Mexico and Alaska. The coast of Mex-

ico, where cruise sailing activities are performed nearly all-year-round,[9] offers tourists, first of all, beautiful, sandy beaches and a chain of low-cost stores. This region is thus the primary destination of *strictly* leisure travels. Cruises to Alaska, thanks to unique natural values of this region – seaside beaches, mountain ranges, glacial lakes as well as history and culture – associated by the Americans with pioneer times and gold fever, until the end of 20th century were characterized by an annual growth in the number of travelers. Even until 1999, cruises to Alaska were 63% of all sea voyages in the region of the Western Coast of the United States (ca. 8% of the total number of passengers of cruise ships in the world).[10] Tax changes, unfavorable for shipowners of cruise ships, introduced by the American government in 2006, imposing the so-called "per capita fee" on each passenger of cruise ships calling at ports of Alaska, in the amount of 46 dollars, caused decrease in the number of travelers visiting the discussed region.[11] In addition, it should be emphasized that sector of sea voyages in the area of Alaska is characterized by a high seasonality. Cruise sailing activities are performed in that area from April to October, and beyond this period nearly all ships are directed to all year bodies of water (e.g. Caribbean Sea, Mexico, Hawaii). Presently, both mentioned regions (coasts of Mexico and Alaska) have the same share (at the level of 6%) in the total number of passengers traveling by sea in the world.[12]

[9] Analyzing statistics of the number of travelers in ports of the Mexican coast, it can be noticed that the number of ships and tourists visiting this region in summer months, from May to August, decreases considerably.

[10] "Lloyd's Cruise International" 1999, No. 9, pp. 24–27.

[11] This tax, as a result of lobbing actions of cruise ships operators, was reduced in 2010 to the amount of 34.5 dollars per passenger. For more information: www.cruisecritic.com.

[12] *Shippax Market: 10 Statistics*, Shippax Information, Halmstad 2010, p. 58.

Table 3

Main cruise ports on the Western Coast of North America in the period 2007–2009

Port	2009		2008		2007	
	number of passen-gers	number of calling at the port	number of passengers	number of calling at the port	number of passengers	number of calling at the port
Los Angeles	1270000*	301*	1 200 000	265	1 161 663	255
Vancouver	898 473	256	854 493	254	no data	no data
Seattle	875 433	218	886 039	210	787 143	190
San Diego	834 211	265	815 000	252	no data	no data
Ensenada	484 514	210	610 600	270	665 480	293
Puerto Vallarta	475 954	185	597 474	276	no data	no data
San Francisco	172 837	62	173 922	59	184 935	60
Calica	43 168	25	70 625	37	141 212	67
Cabo/San Lucas **	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data

* – Estimated data; ** – Official sources do not provide statistics concerning number of ships calling at the port and number of travelers aboard ships calling at the port of Cabo/San Lucas. However, analyzing the offer of shipowners of cruise ships, it can be presumed that this port is one of the major destinations on the Western Coast of North America.

Source: Prepared by the author on the basis of: *Shippax Market: 10 Statistics…*, pp. 249–255; *Shippax Market: 09 Statistics…*, pp. 247–254; *Shippax Market: 08 Statistics…*, pp. 256–261; www.portofsandiego.org, 20.07.2010; www.apivta.com 20.07.2010; www.portoflosangeles.org, 20.07.2010; www.sandiegometro.com, 20.07.2010.

Base ports for cruise ships sailing in the area of the coast of Mexico are the ports of Los Angeles, San Diego and San Francisco. In addition, the port of Los Angeles serves, though to a much smaller extent, cruise units departing in the direction of Hawaii. In 2009, this port received in total more than 300 of units and served over 1.2 million passengers aboard these units (Tab. 3), which makes it come in first among cruise ports of the region of the Western Coast of North America. The port of Vancouver comes in second in terms of number of served passengers in the region. It performs role of a base port for cruise ships cruising towards coasts of Alaska. In 2009, it served total nearly 900 000 passengers aboard over 250 cruise ships. Another port being a base for sea cruise

ships sailing at the coasts of Alaska is the port of Seattle, classified on the third rank among ports of the region.

Functioning and development of cruise sailing at coasts of the United States, including also at western coasts of the USA, are significantly affected by binding in this country Passenger Service Act (PSA), defined also as Passenger Vessel Services Act (PSVA).[13] This Act forbids to foreign flag ships or ships manufactured in shipyards other than American ones, or ships operated by navigating companies whose owners are not citizens of the USA, to transport passengers between ports of the United States. In this case, an exception are cruises that begin and end in an American port, and the voyage assumes at least one calling at a port in countries other than the USA. Thus, shipowners, in order to avoid high fines for non-compliance with regulations,[14] often choose the port of Vancouver as the base port, and transport passengers by air transport from the depths of the country to Seattle, and then by coaches to the place of starting voyage. A common practice among cruisers is also introduction in the cruise plan of at least one foreign port, which also makes it possible to avoid the fine provided for in PSA. Such a solution is applied, for example, during sea cruises with destination to Alaska, which begin and end in the port of Seattle, and the cruise route includes one of Canadian ports. On the other hand, application of solutions permitting avoidance of law is not possible in case of cruises organized in the area of Hawaii. For this reason, a part of shipowners, for the purpose of serving this region, has separated daughter companies, registered in the United States, which operate units manufactured in the USA and sailing under the flag of this country. However, substantial financial outlays which involve running navigation activities in the area of Hawaii, and thereby substantially higher prices of sea travels in that area, cause that its share in the world market of cruises reaches the level of only 1–2%.

[13] For more information: Maritime law exemption provides limited competitive advantage, but barriers to further entry under U.S. flag remain. Report to the Chairman, Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation US Senate, United States Accounting Office, Washington 2004.

[14] The amount of fine for the shipowner for non-compliance with PSA provisions reaches the level of 300 dollars calculated practically per any passenger.

Conclusions

The North American sea tourism market is still certainly the main area of concentration of sea tourist traffic in the world. The basis for its development is in particular the subregion of archipelago of the Caribbean and of the Bahamas that, owing to prevailing climate conditions, is most often chosen sea voyage destination among American tourists. However, it should be emphasized that constantly growing number of units operating in that area and a limited number of ports capable of receiving large cruisers has been affecting, already since the late 1990s, significant limitation in supply of sea voyages in this subregion. An important factor influencing limitation in the number of tourists using the offer of sea tourism in the subregion of the Caribbean Islands and of the Bahamas are also changes in preferences of sea voyage consumers alone. More and more often, instead of sea voyages of strictly leisure nature, they are looking for offers ensuring the possibility to visit world regions interesting in terms of history or culture.

Other analyzed subregions of the North American market are characterized by a relative stabilization or small increases in the number of travelers using the offer of sea tourism. On the other hand, it may be presumed that one of the reasons for such a state of affairs is, in this case, introduction by the American government of legal solutions unfavorable for shipowners, causing substantial difficulties in planning routes of cruises and influencing increase in costs of sea voyages.

To sum up, it can therefore be stated that within the future years the North American market will be characterized by stabilization or small decrease in share in the global volume of sea tourist traffic. This trend, as it seems, will be additionally intensified by growth of new areas of sea tourism, alternative to the described market.

TENDENCJE ROZWOJOWE PÓŁNOCNOAMERYKAŃSKIEGO RYNKU TURYSTYKI MORSKIEJ

WYBRANE ASPEKTY

Streszczenie

Turystyka morska, definiowana na potrzeby niniejszego artykułu jako podróże morskie od portu do portu odbywane na pokładach pełnomorskich statków pasażerskich (tzw. cruiserów), jest współcześnie jednym z najszybciej rozwijających się segmentów światowej turystyki. Wśród najważniejszych obszarów koncentracji morskiego ruchu turystycznego na świecie szczególną rolę odgrywa natomiast rynek północnoamerykański, którego udział w ogóle podróżnych korzystających z tej formy spędzania czasu w 2009 roku wyniósł aż 43%. Celem niniejszego artykułu jest zatem szczegółowa charakterystyka regionu północnoamerykańskiego i jego poszczególnych subregionów jako atrakcyjnego obszaru uprawiania turystyki morskiej.

GROWTH TRENDS OF THE NORTH AMERICAN SEA TOURISM MARKET

SELECTED ASPECTS

Summary

Sea tourism, defined for the purpose of this article as sea voyages from port to port aboard seagoing passenger ships (the so-called cruisers), is presently one of the most rapidly growing segments of the world tourism. Among the major areas of concentration of sea tourism in the world and the special role played by the North American market, whose share in the total passengers using this form of spending time in 2009 was as high as 43%. The aim of this article is, thus, to present a detailed characteristics of the region and its particular subregions as an attractive area of performing sea tourism activities.

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ARTS MANAGEMENT AND CHANGE IN TOURISM PRODUCTS: A SPACE FOR A NEW HOTEL OFFER?

Introduction

Changes insight of enterprises and product innovations became a crucial condition for market development in many branches of economy. Some researches suggest that unexpected events in the world have forced tourism companies to change their strategies for improving competitive power in the global market. According to Mulvaney et al. "The recent recovery in business tourism after September 11th (…) has forced hotel and other types of tourism companies to critically examine operations and performance and to reassess strategies for gaining competitive advantage in this economic sector".[1] On the other hand many positive changes in the market environments stimulate new approaches of tourism enterprises (including hotels) to product and process management. However, taking into account that "In the turbulent environment of the post-

[1] R.H. Mulvaney, J.W. O'Neil, J.N. Cleveland, A.C. Crouter, *A Model of Work-Family Dynamics of Hotel Managers*, "Annals of Tourism Research" 2007, vol. 34, No. 1, pp. 66.

Internet era, situations arise that are incomparable with those in the past"[2] tourism managers have to be pro-active to predict many future processes in the market; it requires experience development and knowledge management on one hand and understanding of internal relationships between employees and components of tourism products on the other.[3] All the dimensions of the process of tourism product management are connected with a necessary change insight of the enterprise and can lead to a product innovation; it could be a very important factor shaping e.g. hotel's supply. In a view of the findings that "From a demand perspective, the most popular tactics for reducing yearly peaks and troughs have been the organization of special events and festivals, the identification of new market segments, and promotional pricing",[4] changes in a tourism product could intensify demand for other services than overnight stay in a hotel.

Spa&Wellness services create a unique opportunity for hotel guests to improve their health and for the hotel itself – to improve its added value or income of enterprise cooperating with the hotel in the field of Spa&Wellness offer. In improving hotel products it is necessary to focus on both product and process innovation[5] because of the specific character of a hotel service: parallel production and consumption, the importance of customer service for the perceived quality of the product.

1. THE SPA&WELLNESS SECTOR IN POLAND

The Spa&Wellness sector in Poland has emerged as one of the growing leisure industries, which has developed on the basis of both hotels and specially built or adapted leisure centres. Social functions of the activity offered by the

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[2] F.J. Garrigos-Simon, D. Palacios-Marques, Y. Narangajavana, *Improving the Perceptions of Hotel Managers*, "Annals of Tourism Research", vol. 35, No. 2, pp. 374–375.

[3] B. Marciszewska, *Kreowanie wiedzy warunkiem racjonalnego wykorzystania potencjału turystycznego Pomorza*, in: *Usługi a rozwój gospodarczo-społeczny*, ed. B. Marciszewska, S. Miecznikowski, GTN-AWFiS, Gdańsk 2004, pp. 24–31; B. Marciszewska, *Współpraca sektora turystycznego i instytucji kultury a rozwój regionu*, in: *Rola turystyki w strategii i polityce rozwoju gospodarki regionalnej*, conference materials, Gdańsk 2006, WSTiH, pp. 517–522.

[4] J.C. Parrilla, A.R. Font, J.R. Nadal, *Accommodation Determinants Of Seasonal Patterns*, "Annals of Tourism Research" 2007, vol. 34, No. 2, pp. 433.

[5] B. Marciszewska, *Emotional Arts Marketing-creating tourist value*, "Tourism Review" 2005, vol. 60, No. 3, pp. 29–34.

Spa&Wellness sector are similar to those identified by A. Warning as typical for premier health clubs in the UK: "Premier health clubs expand on the common health club model of gym, aerobics studio and pool and seek to offer a better standard of facilities, a wider range of activities and extension services such a spa treatments, dry cleaning and concierge services".[6] The differentiated level of service and facilities in hotels and other leisure centres can be, therefore, defined by both the quality and range of services on one hand, and location – on the other; this leads to a potential difference between customers. In view of the fact that 'traditional' hotels are mainly situated in the business districts of Polish cities their clients can be characterized as high earning professionals participating in Spa &Wellness activities during a week or/and weekend. Similar features can be identified in relation to leisure centres which are situated in cities.

The typical SPA hotels which are mainly located outside of the cities and those leisure/health centres, which operate in very prestigious areas, became an attractive tourist destinations, particularly for one or two week rest. Taking into account that "the development of the spa market is of significance for state finance, public health, spa towns' incomes, and potential or existing patients"[7] an evolution of the Polish spa sector and its products as a factor shaping the tourism market becomes an important issue. Some researchers examined the forces that drive decisions about the locations of new hotels[8] but the Polish hotel market is not described clearly enough in this context. It can be assumed that the main factor for new locations of spa hotels is creation of new products, which could be a source of customer satisfaction and an additional income for enterprises. "In general terms, when a chain decides to open a new hotel in a specific geographic area, it aims, among other things, to increase its market share, to maintain or boost its image, or to implement a segmentation strategy".[9]

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[6] A. Warning, *Health club use and 'lifestyle': exploring the boundaries between work and leisure*, "Leisure Studies" 2008, vol. 27, No. 3, p. 295.

[7] A. Kapczyński, A.R. Szromek, *Hypotheses concerning the development of Polish spas in the years 1949–2006*, "Tourism Management" 2007, No. 29, p. 1035.

[8] A. Urtasun I. Guttierez, *Hotel location in tourism cities. Madrid 1936–1998*, "Annals of Tourism Research" 2006, vol. 33, No. 1, p. 386.

[9] J.L. Nicolau, *Assessing hotel openings through an event study*, "Tourism Management" 2002, vol. 23, No. 1, p. 48.

Does this apply to the hotel sector in Poland?

2. *MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE IN THE HOTEL SECTOR IN THE SEASONALITY CONTEXT: A SPACE FOR THE ARTS*

According to Fernandez-Morales and Mayorga-Toledano "Both the public and private sector consider seasonality as an intrinsic feature of tourism that must be tackled, in order to reduce negative impacts in the economy".[10] Hotel enterprises as main actors on the tourism market are under the influence of changes in its environments but they are able to control at least some market processes due to implementation of relevant management. Some researches stress a significant difference between meaning of management and leadership. "An important theoretical distinction is the difference between management and leadership. Management is focused primarily on maintaining patterns of successful actions (routines), while leadership is focused on developing new patterns of action".[11] This approach to management reveal the importance of new ideas and concepts in a process of recognizing, controlling and managing internal and external actions of the enterprise. Refereeing to the previous statement that managers have to be pro-active if they want to be successful, suggesting that positive results of managerial work depend mainly on leadership in thinking and concept creation leadership understood as developing new patterns of action should be seen as the next stage of management, following the creation of the new concept. Some researchers stress that literature presents some approaches according to which "…managers in the hospitality industry are influenced by a traditional concept of leadership and management (…), where the leader and manager does the thinking by structuring and controlling his or her subordinates, and the subordinates follow specific instructions and systems given by their superiors".[12] Such an understanding of leadership does not sup-

[10] A. Fernadez-Morales, M.C. Mayorga-Toledano, *Seasonal concentration of the hotel demand in Costa del Sol: A decomposition by nationalities*, "Tourism Management" 2007, No. 29, p. 941.

[11] R.A. Barker, *How can we train leaders if we do not know what leadership is?*, "Human Relations" 1997, vol. 50, No. 4, pp. 343–362.

[12] T. Ogaard, E. Marnburg, S. Larsen, *Perception of organizational structure in the hospitality industry: Consequences for commitment, job satisfaction and perceived performance*, "Tourism Management" 2008, vol. 29, No. 4, pp. 665.

port managers' behaviour as pro-active in the hotel sector and its environment. It means that creation of new products or product innovation and processes could be irrational not bringing optimum customer satisfaction. The only way to manage successfully product and process innovation in hotel enterprises is to "identify" tourist needs before other actors of the market do so and implement appropriate changes in the structure of the product and in some or all of the processes shaping an integrated hotel offer.

Considering that "OL (organizational learning) enables organizations to create new knowledge and change and upgrade policies and strategies through continuous collective learning processes"[13] an implementation of new hotel products requires changes in personnel's and managers' knowledge concerning visitors' expectations and their motivations to buy a given product. Scarcity of enterprise resources (including knowledge) requires knowledge management understood as "…the practice of capturing and developing individual and collective knowledge within an organisation for the purpose of using it to promote innovation through the transfer of knowledge and continuous learning".[14] In a wider context change and knowledge management can be perceived as a basic condition for product and process innovation. The value of these words was confirmed by A. Hjalager[15] and Ch. Cooper who stated: "The generation and use of new knowledge to feed innovation and product development is critical for the competitiveness of both tourism destinations and enterprises".[16] Hotels activities contribute to this field due to their products which make tourist destinations more attractive and tourism enterprises more open for tourists.

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[13] J.T. Yang, *Individual attitudes and organisational knowledge sharing*, "Tourism Management" 2008, vol. 29, No. 2, p. 345.

[14] I. Nonaka, H. Takeuchi, *The knowledge-creating company: How Japanese companies create the dynamics of innovation*, Oxford University Press, New York 1995; C.A. Hallin, E. Marnburg, *Knowledge management in the hospitality industry: a review of empirical research*, "Tourism Management" 2008, vol. 29, No. 2, p. 367.

[15] A. Hjalager, *Repairing innovation defectiveness in tourism*, "Tourism Management" 2002, vol. 23, No. 5, pp. 465–474.

[16] Ch. Cooper, *Knowledge Management and Tourism*, "Annals of Tourism Research" 2006, vol. 33, No. 1, p. 47.

3. *THE PURPOSE, METHODS AND RESULTS OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH*

The direct **purpose** of the research was:

1. to identify evidence of health-recreational services in chosen hotels in Pomerania Province;
2. to identify tourist motivations for stay in a given town and hotel;
3. to describe the importance of arts and cultural events as components of services offered in a hotel.

The **methods** used in the research:

- analysis of literature discussing relationships between tourism and culture
- questionnaire survey among visitors of four star hotels in Pomerania Province (2008); the questionnaire was prepared for the research project Spa&WELLNESS realized by the Association for Tourism and Leisure ATLAS. The instrument was translated into Polish and again – into English to verify its content and clear meaning of questions. Only activities undertaken by tourists during their stay in a given hotel are a subject for analysis in this article.
- Organisation of 'Mystery shopping' during many arts exhibitions and cultural events held in: *Philadelphia* – Exhibition of Drawing, PII Gallery, 2004; 15 years Anniversary of PII Gallery, International Fine Arts Exhibition, 2004; *Knokke-heist* (Belgium) – Krzysztof Marciszewski's Painting Exhibition, 2005; *Gdansk Graffest 2009*, Krzysztof Marciszewski's participation in International Street Art Group Exhibition, May, 2009; Krzysztof Marciszewski's Painting Exhibition "Galeria Punkt", July, 2009; Yoko Akiba's Painting "Galeria Sikorski", February-March 2010.

The first author of the current article was involved in the questionnaire survey in the hotels as a leader responsible for complex analysis of the findings and their interpretation according to the particular research problems. This article is based on a small part of the research data which highlight an importance of cultural components in tourism product for people visiting a given hotel mainly for Spa&Wellness services. The second author initiated and organised the above events and actively participated in all of them. Motivations of partici-

pants for visiting exhibitions or attending an event were identified using informal interviews.

The number of respondents participating in the questionnaire survey was 204; this was carried out among visitors of 4 hotels in Gdansk and Gdynia. Activities undertaken by respondents during their stay in a hotel are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1

Activities undertaken during the stay

Attractions visited/activities undertaken	Answers		Comments
	N	Percentage	
Cultural sites (museums, historical and religious buildings)	38	14.1	The second choice
Cultural events	19	7.0	
Sports and other activities	25	9.3	
Excursions outside the city	34	12.6	
Wellness	46	17.0	The first choice
Casino	2	0.7	
Sightseeing	37	13.7	
Meetings with other people	31	11.5	
Shopping	26	9.6	
Other	12	4.4	

Source: own research.

Data presented in Table 1 suggests that tourists visiting the investigated hotels do prefer activities connected with culture: more than 14% of them visited cultural sites and 7% participated in cultural events; this means that more than 21% of hotel guests could be interested in developing a hotel's cultural offer. Observation of people attending cultural events in the City of Gdansk and interviews with them left a very similar impression: respondents expect to experience something new – this seems to be realistic when participating in culture. This was especially pointed out by visitors commenting the exhibition of Japanese paintings; people involved professionally in fine arts stressed that not only paintings themselves create completely new experiences but also traditional Japanese techniques described by the artist. Visitors of Krzysztof Marciszewski's exhibition of painting and sculpture in Knokke-Heist (Belgium)

stressed the importance for both the interesting techniques of painting, interesting composition and combination of hard material in sculpture with dynamic design. Most of visitors in PII Gallery in Philadelphia indicated the place of origin (Europe) and good "touch" as the main factor influencing their interest in drawings exhibited. Taking into account statements of both visitors in hotels and participants of cultural events it is possible to suggest a need for innovation of hotel services using arts and cultural events.

Conclusions

As one of the research tasks of the article was to examine motivations of visitors for choosing a certain hotel, it is useful to explain the reasons for participation in a given activity.

Table 1 indicates that respondents like culture related activities. These data confirm the findings of earlier studies that participation in cultural activities is often connected with the aspiration of consumers to experience new things.

In view of the fact that 21% of respondents participated in such activities it is possible to conclude that cultural dimension of an offer (hotel services) is expected by hotel visitors. In this context it could be stated that **modification of a tourist product** becomes an important factor strengthening an image of tourist destination in both at present and in a future. A complex assessment of the product itself starts parallely with consumption and it is finished some time after this process; tourism destination changes often its image thanks to modification of the tourist product and a new customer service. This suggests that an image of tourist destination is shaped not only by tourist services but also by man: personnel of the service provider and the tourist himself.

Creating a complex understanding of a tourist product offered by hotels and their image requires pointing out the following its components:

- tourist attractions, including such activities as visiting arts exhibitions, museums, festivals and participating in other cultural activities,
- methods of management,
- creative approach to tourist products leading to their modification or/and change,
- organisational culture,
- relationship with tourists,
- flexibility of relationships with all the actors on the market,

– quality management.

The above point of view suggests the existence of a very special relation between tourist product and the image of a tourist destination. Taking into account a growing interest of tourists in fine arts and other cultural components of tourist product[17] it can be stated that these components should be seen as an important dimension of tourist product innovation which in services is strongly connected with process innovation.[18] On the other hand it has to be pointed out that management of fine arts and cultural events, even if different from that in the tourism sector, could lead to development of tourism products because of the following reasons:

– fine arts events and cultural events are addressed to a specific target group: educated people usually professionally connected with culture,
– young people accept different forms of street arts and popular arts events what should be taken into account in both culture and tourism management,[19]
– high culture is not accessible for some social groups in Poland; it could be a subject for discussion about cooperation and partnership between the cultural sector and tourism how to make high culture more accessible for average citizen of Poland,
– preparation of fine arts events requires more than managerial knowledge and skills: it should be based on deep understanding of the nature of different disciplines and historical perspective of the arts. Involvement of people professionally connected with arts is a crucial condition for higher satisfaction of visitors/tourists,
– the customer benefits created due to participating in fine arts and cultural events strongly depend on emotional aspect of visitors and their evaluation requires special tools[20],

[17] *Cultural Attractions and European Tourism*, ed. G. Richards, CABI, New York 2001.

[18] B. Marciszewska, *Emotional Arts Marketing-creating tourist value*, "Tourism Review" 2005, vol. 60, No. 3, pp. 29–34.

[19] K. Marciszewski, *Graffiti jako zjawisko społeczne i kulturowe*, Akademia Sztuk Pięknych w Gdańsku, 2003, p. 44; M. Pawlik, *Street art jako czynnik aktywizacji turystycznej miast*, AWFiS, Gdańsk 2008.

[20] R.J. Best, *Market-based Management. Strategies for Growing Customer Value and Profitability*, Pearson, Prentice Hall, New Jersey 2004; B. Marciszewska, *Emotional Arts Marketing-creating Tourist Value*, "Tourism Review" 2005, vol. 60, No. 3, pp. 29–34.

- brand equity of arts and cultural events become an important factor of arts product development;[21] a brand of arts exhibition or other cultural event could be based on the brand of old, stylish architecture, e.g. on the Malbork castle image. Taking this into account it is necessary to agree with some writers that "…museums and exhibitions have became drivers in the development of tourism…"[22],
- visitor attractions play a crucial role in the success of tourism destinations, when they act as key motivators for visits and as resources for local communities.[23] It is the reason why arts and cultural attractions should be combined with pure tourism products.

ZARZĄDZANIE W SZTUCE A MODYFIKACJA PRODUKTU TURYSTYCZNEGO: SZANSE DLA ROZWOJU OFERTY HOTELI

Streszczenie

W artykule podjęto problem zarządzania w sztukach pięknych w kontekście włączenia ich do produktu turystycznego. W oparciu o preferencje i oczekiwania gości hotelowych ukierunkowanych na ofertę Spa&Wellness określono potrzebę wzbogacenia usług hotelarskich o produkty turystyczne z komponentami sztuki i imprez kulturalnych. Obserwacja Autorów prowadzona podczas licznych wystaw i innych imprez artystycznych oraz opinie ich uczestników pozwoliły na stwierdzenie, że zarówno polskie jak i zagraniczne imprezy z zakresu sztuk pięknych są źródłem nowych doznań; te wnioski są zbieżne z wynikami badań, które wskazują na podobne oczekiwania wśród turystów. Rozważania powyższe stanowią przesłankę do stwierdzenia, iż istnieje potrzeba kreowania nowej oferty hoteli zawierającej propozycje uczestnictwa w imprezach kulturalnych, co wymaga zmiany w ich podejściu zarządczym.

[21] C. Camerero, M.J. Garrido, E. Vicente, *Components of Art Exhibition Brand Equity for Internal and External Visitors*, "Tourism Management" 2010, No. 31, pp. 495–504.

[22] *Ibidem*, p. 502.

[23] A. Leask, *Progress in Visitor Attraction Research: Towards More Effective Management*, "Tourism Management" 2010, No. 31, pp. 155–166.

ARTS MANAGEMENT AND CHANGE IN TOURISM PRODUCTS: A SPACE FOR A NEW HOTEL OFFER?

Summary

The article is an attempt to solve a managerial problem: how arts could be included in a tourism product. Taking into account customer preferences and expectations of hotel guests regarding Spa&Wellness a need for tourism product improvement has been shown; art and cultural events are analysed as components of tourism products. Authors' observation of cultural events and opinions of their participants suggest that both national and international arts events become a source of new specific experiences. Such a relationship was also noticed in previous studies. This could be a background for statement that there is a need for building a new hotel offer which could include particular forms of art; it requires changes in managerial approach.

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ONLINE TRAVEL AGENCIES VERSUS TRAVEL METASEARCH ENGINES

Introduction

Distribution of travel agencies offers differs significantly from distribution system of material goods, although its fundamental function in both cases is making it convenient for the customers to purchase products. Distribution of tourist services is a process of creating a convenient access of offers in a specified destination or destinations by potential customers, which enables receiving specific information about the product and its purchase.[1] Shaping distribution system by a travel agency then, aims mainly at making it possible for a customer to receive information about a product and a time and place of selling it.

The objective of the hereby article is to present changes and effects brought about by ICT development in distribution activities of a travel agency. The article will characterize the so-called modern – using telephone, television – systems of sale and bookings or internet – distribution channels of travel agencies. Two categories will be of particular interest, the most popular and at

[1] J. Kaczmarek, A. Stasiak, B. Włodarczyk, *Produkt turystyczny. Pomysł. Organizacja. Zarządzanie*, PWE, Warszawa 2005, p. 271.

the same time most promising units in distribution channels, these are online travel agencies and travel metasearch engines. The article tries to compare them, indicating main differences in their functioning, showing also possible directions in their development. The considerations are enriched with selected examples taken from business practice of travel agencies.

1. *THE ESSENCE, TASKS AND TYPES OF TRAVEL AGENCIES DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS*

The links in the system of distributing tourist services, are all the companies involved in distributing tourist product to final customers on the market. Among them we can distinguish tour operators, agents and other entities (professional organizations, local accommodation offices, tourist fairs, hypermarkets).[2]

Touroperator is a producer of service package, who combines tourist product elements (derived from suppliers of sub-services e.g. accommodation, catering, transportation, insurance, tour guiding etc.) into a coherent whole. A touroperator also sells its services directly to tourists or through the subsequent links in distribution system. Most often you can distinguish generic tour operators who have in their portfolios various events, targeted to chosen market segments and specialty tour operators organizing events for specific often niche market segments.

Tourist agent (distributor, retailer), on the other hand, is a travel agency, providing its customers with services in the areas of i.e. sale of tourist events, travel documents and tickets, providing an information on tourism products, advice and help when purchasing tourism offers, settling customers complains.[3]

From distribution point of view travel agents can be divided into:[4]

– universal agencies (offering all kinds of packages, full range of accommodation, transport services, and additional services taking into consideration whole scale of customers financial abilities),

[2] I. Michalska-Dudek, R. Przeorek-Smyka, *Marketing biur podróży*, C.H. Beck, Warszawa 2010, p. 161.

[3] A. Oleksiuk, *Marketing usług turystycznych*, Difin, Warszawa 2007, p. 220.

[4] I. Michalska-Dudek, R. Przeorek-Smyka, *Marketing…*, p. 161.

- special agencies (differentiated on the basis of the type of tourism and space, specializing in leisure, recreation, business travels, cruises and others divided into domestic and foreign tourism),
- retail chains (companies with regional, national or global range having integrated computer networks which carry wholesale transactions, with strong position on the market, i.e. multiagencies having many branches and many small agencies organized in consortia or franchised),
- online travel agencies[5] (tourist agencies based on modern technology running a distributing business via the internet).

2. *TRADITIONAL AND MODERN DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS ON TRAVEL AGENCIES MARKET*

In practice, travel agencies usually use both indirect and direct form of sale, using direct (their own network of showrooms, booking and online sale system, info line or Call/Contact Centre) and indirect distribution channels (brokers and tourist agents GDS systems).[6] Therefore from the point of view of modern tourist organizations functioning and intermediary market the most vital seems to be the division of distribution channels due to criteria according to which you can extract:[7]

- traditional direct channels, and thus the sale of offers through traditional sale points and direct contact between customer and travel agency staff,
- modern distribution channels.

Among modern distribution channels one should point out:

- distribution channels with the use of TV – a TV channel prepared for the sale of tourist offers, through information programs – documentaries about destinations and specific objects and detailed presentation of of-

[5] It is important to notice, that in practice often exists tourist agent in a mixed type forms, i.e. travel agency having a traditional retailing point and at the same time selling its services through the Internet.

[6] In the 1960s of the 20s century the first electronic distribution systems were created. In the 1970s Computer Reservation System (CRS) was introduced, based on which Global Distribution System (GDS) was applied in the 1980s; Comp. G. Syratt, J. Archer, *Manual of Travel Agency Practice*, Third edition, Butterworth Heinemann, London 2003, pp. 142–143.

[7] Comp. I. Michalska-Dudek, R. Przeorek-Smyka, *Marketing…*, p. 167 and further.

fers including prices. The programs in such stations consist mainly of filmed trips, reports from staying in particular tourist objects, interviews with personnel servicing tourists. Broadcasting time is accomplished by e.g. geographic, travel programs and quizzes, and also extensive advertising blocks. The presented through this channel offers can be purchased through Call Centre or Internet.

- distribution channels with the use of telephone (info-line, call centre, contact centre) – the sale is done by consultants operating calls coming through travel agency telephone exchange. Customers after reading an offer on a website or in a catalogue call to place an order. Call/contact centre may also advise customers and direct offers to old and potential clients,
- distribution channels with the use of booking systems and sale – according to the type of units involved in distribution, systems are designed to carry out transactions between tour operators and agents or between travel agencies and their customers. Due to the range of the systems one can point out: computer systems for management and booking particular tourist products i.e. CRS or global distribution systems – GDS, which enable booking flight tickets, accommodation and car hire, and also internal systems of tour operators (e.g. Sykon, Blue Vendo, Sercu, Centauri, Sift, Iris, Genius).[8]
- distribution channels with usage of the Internet – tools of internet distribution are website, newsletter, direct e-mail, online booking system from the level of website integrated with internal travel agency sale system. Most tour operators treat the increase role of internet distribution as a strategic point for the development, creating significant opportunities to improve profitability and strengthening their position on the market. Of course, the importance of direct online distribution channels depends on the operating scale of an individual entity. For large and medium-sized universal tour operators they represent a complementary, though important, next to the tourist agency distribution channel. However, for small and medium-sized organizations, operating primarily in

[8] F. Furman, *Alternatywa dla systemów globalnych*, "Wiadomości Turystyczne" 2007, vol. 136, No. 10, p. 15.

the area of specialized tourism, they are one of the main channels, because they enable them to reach specific segments or market niches excluding tourist agencies. The percentage of online offers sales done by large tour operators is constantly increasing, and the leading European tour operators perform this way 20–30% of the reservations.[9]

The growing importance of distribution is a result of: the need to gain competitive advantage, the growing power of intermediaries in the channel, the need for suppliers and operators to reduce the costs of distribution and the role of Internet and technology.[10]

3. ONLINE TRAVEL AGENCIES AND TRAVEL METASEARCH ENGINES

Observation of the travel agency marketplace confirms the rapid growth of **travel portals** (Online Travel Agents), selling products only through a virtual distribution channel, or both online and by phone through Call/Contact Centre. Examples of these are travel agencies such as Expedia Inc., Orbitz/Travelport, Travelocity, Priceline.com, Lastminute.com, Opodo, ebookers, and on the Polish market: www.blizejslonca.pl, www.travelplanet.pl, www.traveligo. com, www.odpoczne.pl, www.easygo.pl, www.wakacje.pl, www.AlleWakacje.pl, www.Rezerwacje.pl or www.Traveliada.pl.

Online travel agencies are not consistent category and include companies operating under different business models. Amongst them we can distinguish:[11]

- online retail travel agencies, for whom the main source of income are fees received from tourist service providers. It is a system similar to the one functioning between suppliers and traditional travel agencies, the level of commission here is approximately 10%,
- online travel agencies *merchant* type – they are the entities cooperating with producers of sub-services, especially hotels, on the basis of contracts where the payments for services are established according to net

[9] J. Nalazek, *Internetowe kanały dystrybucji na rynku turystycznym*, Difin, Warszawa 2010, p. 106.

[10] D. Buhalis, E. Laws, *Tourism Distribution Channels. Practices, Issues and Transformations*, Thomson, London 2004, p. 316.

[11] J. Nalazek, *Internetowe…*, p. 115.

value, whereas online travel agency sets its own retail prices often reaching overhead of 25–30% from net price.

– online travel agencies *opaque* type – they operate on the basis of contracts with services suppliers, which allow even greater discount than in merchant type agencies. However services are sold in this system only in the chosen periods (when suppliers have a surplus of supply over demand) without the possibility of giving a name of a supplier. Consumer learns about the "supplier" only after making a payment. For suppliers such contracts are beneficial because they reduce the losses in the period of lower demand for their services, they also allow a freedom in shaping the prices of products sold through other distribution channels.

The results of survey done by Google Polska for tourists using internet "Tourist products and services in the Internet" show, that in the last years there has been a dramatic growth in the significance of using search engines in the process of purchasing tourist products and services (92% of internet users have used search engines for finding tourist products) – and the internet browsers are not only the source of information, but more often an essential part in making purchasing decisions.

The huge success of the Internet has also produced new and up-to-now non-existent forms of intermediaries. "Metamediaries" like travel meta-search engines and "infomediaries" appear between suppliers and customers to aggregate and filter out relevant and pertinent information from the wealth of material.[12]

Therefor in this place it is worth to point out a next category of entities supporting consumer in purchasing decisions on tourism market – **travel meta-search engines** (Fig. 1).

[12] D. Buhalis, R. Egger, *eTourism case studies: management and marketing issues in eTourism*, Elsevier, 2008, p. 85.

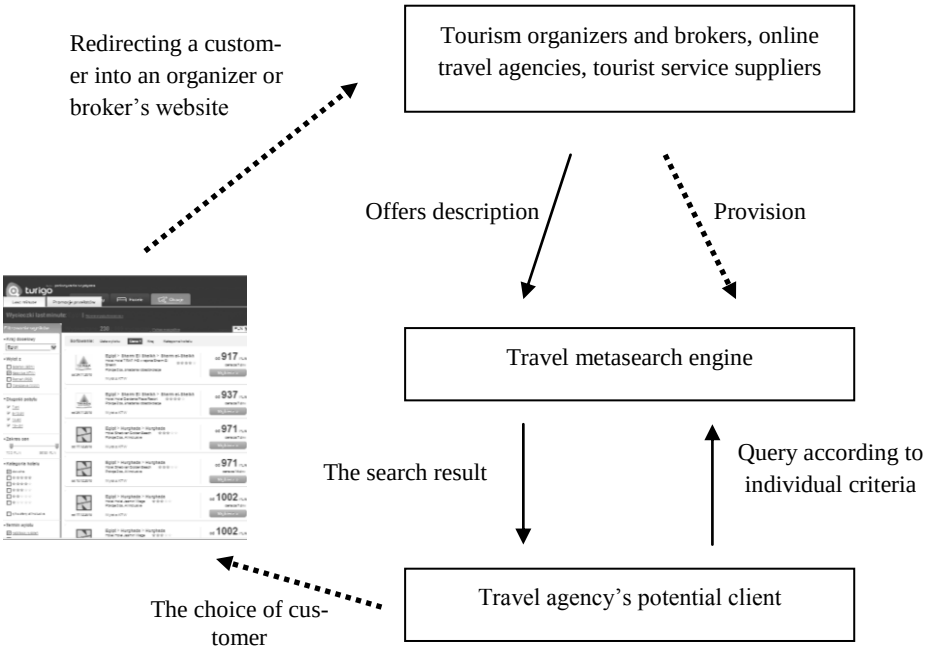

Fig. 1. The essence of functioning of the travel metasearch engine
Source: own elaboration.

They are still not well known internet services, whose main advantage is shortening the time the customer needs to find optimal, according to his point of view offers.[13] Travel metasearch engines do not directly serve client, and the main task they set to themselves is directing the client into the website of offer producer (seller). The main source of their revenue are the fees paid by service providers (not per transaction, but in return for directing potential client onto providers website regardless of whether the transaction would be finalized) and/or advertising revenue.

From the technical point of view travel metasearch engine is a specialized "search engine", which sends the user's searching tips to many data basis, then aggregating the results into one list, which may be freely filtered by the user

[13] I. Michalska-Dudek, R. Przeorek-Smyka, *Marketing…*, p. 173.

according to offers' different virtues, but most of all according to their prices. In order to make the booking or purchasing the chosen offer, users are switched directly to websites of organizers, tourist agents, airlines and other tourist service suppliers, so they can benefit from currently offered promotions and loyalty programs.

The main advantage of travel metasearch engines is the fact that the results of search are directly compared with each other, and the user does not need to visit many websites. This distinguishes them from services of internet intermediaries, which did not really change, since they have appeared in late 90's of the twentieth century and are designed to sell offers of virtual agents, not to help the user to choose the best offer.

First metasearch engines (Farechase and Sidestep) have started operating as soon as a year 2000, but their beginnings were difficult and lost the first encounter with internet intermediaries. Their another, and as it turned out later, effective expansion started in 2004, when ex-workers of Orbitz started new search engine Kayak. Presently it is the biggest metasearch engine in the world for tourists, showing results of 404 tourism websites, presenting prices and routs of hundreds of airlines, over 155 000 of hotels, all major car hire businesses and 17 lines offering sea cruises. The appearance of price comparison services for tourism organisers, agents and tourist services suppliers (i.e. airlines, hotels, etc.) became another possibility of direct contact with potencial customers, bypassing virtual intermediaries and their commissions. And online travel agencies themselves, seeing the clients' interest in metasearch engines, quickly started putting their promotional adds and now, next to tour operators, they are significant beneficiary of these systems.

In the United States travel metasearch engines as Kayak, Sidestep, Mobissimo, Farechase or Farecast get over 10 million of users monthly. Such an example on the Polish tourism market, where metasearch engines are still a marginal phenomenon, may be travel metasearch engine Turigo.pl. It is an internet service allowing simultaneous browsing of many websites, comparing prices of found offers and redirecting the user into supplier's webpage to book an offer. The use of modern technology makes it possible for Turigo to present, in a time normally consumed for single search, a clear list of results derived from many websites and a client may quickly find the cheapest offer of interest. Turigo is not an online travel agency or tourist agent and it does not sell tourist offers, thus searching for offers here is free, and the booking and sale is done

directly on, chosen by clients, browsed websites of offer suppliers. Turigo's objective is making it easier to find and make a booking of air tickets, accommodation and excursions.

There are many similarities between travel metasearch engines and online travel agencies or tourism websites – they look alike, information is presented in a similar way. Similarities appear because both services should satisfy the identical client's need – finding best offer. Despite these similarities, there are several key differences that define the functioning of these entities:[14]

- **different type of business** – online travel agencies are retailers, whilst travel metasearch engines are the companies, which do not directly sell tourist offers, but make profit mainly from commercials and redirecting clients on websites of tourist service suppliers.[15]
- **number of offers** – the primary aim of travel metasearch engines is integrating offers from the biggest possible number of online services, including tourist services which had been integrated before by consolidators or online travel agencies. Thanks to that a user has an access to a much bigger number of offers and may e.g. find a flight or hotel that he could not find on a website of particular agent or tourism portal. Travel metasearch engines with every offer present also prices coming from different suppliers, and a user may choose an offer himself, having in mind the price as well as the brand of supplier or attachment to a favorite or proven before travel agency. Hence the fact, that for travel agencies travel metasearch engines are advertising publishers, directing qualified traffic to their websites.
- **user activity** – despite that both online travel agencies and travel metasearch engines, give the possibility find offers, a client has a different approach to these services. People using tourism websites are set for "bargain hunting" and at the same time they look for support, contact with a consultant, which is what a customer needs from a retailer. The users of travel metasearch engines while making a decision do not feel

[14] Comp. E. Orlewska, *Porównywarki turystyczne a internetowe biura podróży – główne różnice*, "Travel Marketing" 2009, No. 10, pp. 1–3.

[15] The fee – which metasearch engine receives, depends on what a user would do on supplier website: would he learn abort the offer and buy it the next time he visits the website, or would he immediately order it online.

the need of contact with a counselor, and their goal is much more fully defined – they want to find and book the actual offer in the best price. Therefore, online travel agencies try, first of all, build a confidence to its brand and invest in looking after a client. Travel metasearch engines care mostly for getting good quality traffic and commercially directing it to partners and advertisers websites.

- **approach to marketing** – travel metasearch engines in comparison to online agencies require different approach to marketing, retention of a customer and business development. Online travel agencies build loyalty through bargain exposing, sale, managing client's relations and creating the unique product, which is everything that is connected with client's experience while booking his trip and building a client's confidence to qualified consultant. Travel metasearch engine is a kind of "intermediate stage" on a way to finding an offer to buy. Therefore to draw and keep its clients it has to confirm them that this is the best and the fastest way of finding flights, hotels or cruises in the best price.
- **the target market –** the main business objective of travel metasearch engines is tourist branch, and in particular travel agencies, tour operators, tourism websites or tourist agents in the field of online advertising and getting traffic on company's websites, as opposed to online travel agencies, where only minor part of income is generated from placing commercials of outside advertisers.

The survey results presented by metasearch engine Kayak.com show, that one in five users does not finally chose the cheapest search result, but a more expensive one, guided by loyalty to particular brand or its perceived value. These 20% of users require constant improvements in making it possible to compare other then price attributes of services such as e.g. duration of flight or the number of hotel stars in chosen destination.

Let's assume that potential client from Wroclaw wants to go to New York and spend a week in a three star hotel not to far from Empire State Building. A search engine of the future will not only understand the query, but also appropriately analyze all the data, choosing only these options, which are available in indicated periods and according to specified requirements. And in response to query put by the buyer he will get a specific answer, instead of a list of dozens of search results.

This still futuristic vision is based on assumptions of so called semantic web,[16] which is under development since the late 90' of the XX century. The difference between the currently used data transmission is that, data transmitted in semantic web will be "understood" by computers, which will be able to combine them with each other and in appropriate context (e.g. recognize that the given sequence of numbers is a postcode of a hotel and not its phone number). The transmition of information, will require, not data themselves but information about these data (so-called metadata), which would describe relations between them and the law of logic that can be applied to them. This way of processing information will enable linking the meanings, and not, as so far, key words. Therefore recognizing the meanings of queries sent by tourist services buyers should be recognized as the major challenge for using informational technology in tourism.

Conclusions

Without a doubt, the main assumptions of building and functioning of travel metasearch engines perfectly fit into guidelines of modern distribution channels of tourist offers – namely building the most convenient and comfortable access to information by potential tourist about an offer, allowing getting its specific description and purchasing it. For travel agencies metasearch engines will become in future an important distribution channel performing, at the same time, promotional functions and directing the qualified traffic into their websites.

As for the customer, in a process of choosing an organizer of his holidays, during constructing the so-called acceptable set and making the right choice, it is hard to find a more convenient tool for minimizing time, mental commitment and effort, while maintaining a full spectrum of analyzed possibilities.

[16] Semantics is a scientific discipline that deals with words meaning, i.e. interpretation of signs sentences and phrases. The creator of Semantic Web is regarded as a creator of WWW and the first Internet search engine Timothy Berners-Lee.

INTERNETOWE BIURA PODRÓŻY A PORÓWNYWARKI TURYSTYCZNE

Streszczenie

W niniejszym artykule scharakteryzowane zostały tzw. nowoczesne – wykorzystujące telewizję, telefon, systemy rezerwacji i sprzedaży czy Internet – kanały dystrybucji biur podróży. Przedmiotem szczególnego zainteresowania są dwie kategorie, najbardziej popularnych i przyszłościowych zarazem, ogniw w kanałach dystrybucji, a mianowicie: internetowe biura podróży oraz porównywarki turystyczne. W artykule podjęto próbę ich porównania, w tym wskazania głównych podobieństw oraz różnic w ich funkcjonowaniu, a także przedstawienia możliwych kierunków ich ewolucji. Rozważania wzbogacono wybranymi przykładami z praktyki gospodarczej biur podróży.

ONLINE TRAVEL AGENCIES VERSUS TRAVEL METASEARCH ENGINES

Summary

The article will characterize the so-called modern – using telephone, television, systems of sale and bookings or internet – distribution channels of travel agencies. Two categories will be of particular interest, the most popular and at the same time most promising cells in distribution channels, these are online travel agencies and travel metasearch engines. The article tries to compare them, indicating main differences in their functioning, showing also possible directions in their development. The considerations are enriched with selected examples taken from business practice of travel agencies.

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CURRENT CONDITIONS OF TOURISM POLICY IN POLAND

Introduction

Tourism is a significant area of interest of the state and its institutions. Starting point for discussion of tourism economy issues and their influence on creation of tourism development strategy is a general introduction to the socio-economic policy.

The concept of policy should be understood as an activity of the government in creation of internal relations in the country as well as relations with the foreign countries. This term is often given a wider meaning comprising all kinds of activities that influence public affairs.[1]

Tourism sector is placed in the area of the government's activities with the following character:

a) economic – related to the operation of tourism market, especially to the economic entities that provide services for consumers (tourists),
b) social – related to influencing social needs in the field of tourism making, connected with the availability of tourist services in the conditions of civilizational development.

[1] *Polityka gospodarcza*, ed. B. Winiarski, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2006, p. 17.

Position of the state on the tourism market is determined by many factors. The aim of this article is presentation of basics of tourism policy, then indication of its determiners and references to the current issues of the state's policy like globalization, economic crisis and a Polish presidency of the European Union. Those are factors that should be considered as crucial in the current government assignments. Tourism policy led by the government is a result of administrative and legal regulations influencing tourism sector in the period of their validity. It also have a long-term character and create bases for a development. Consideration of globalization and economic crisis in the tourism policy allows influencing tourism economy in a long-term period. Polish presidency of the European Union in the second half of the year 2011, despite precisely described time frames, should enable realization of not only current issues, but also long-term goals like e.g. strengthening Poland on the European market as a tourist destination, influence on the EU's regulations in the field of tourism, etc.

1. TOURISM AS AN AREA OF THE STATE'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC POLICY

Considering mentioned problems one should refer to the terms economic policy and social policy.

Economic policy is a conscious influence of the government, institutions and international organizations on the economy, its dynamics, structure, operation and economic relations,[2] by means of particular tools that describe assumed goals.[3]

Social policy is not univocally defined. There are two interpretations enumeratively referring to the range of the state's operation. Social policy in the wide meaning comprises issues of social security and labor, health, education and upbringing, housing and culture. The narrow meaning refers only to the financial prestations (pensions, annuities, benefits).[4]

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[2] *Ibidem*, p. 18.

[3] A. Horodecka, *Ewolucja celów polityki gospodarczej. Rola zmian otoczenia*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2008.

[4] G. Firlit-Fesnak, M. Szylko-Skoczny, *Polityka społeczna*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2007, p. 18.

Socio-economic policy is a term implemented in order to underline the necessity of combining aims and premises of the state's intervention in the socio-economic affairs.[5] Considering that modern government policy should realize the idea of responsibility for the citizens' prosperity, social and economic policy approach to each other.[6]

The government's activities refer many areas and social aspects of economic process what results in a necessity of precise identification of problems occurring in the mentioned areas and therefore creation of suitable ways and means of intervention. As a consequence, within the whole socio-economic policy there are differed various areas and subsystems like e.g. macro and micro policy, international and regional policy, policy in the particular economic sectors.[7]

One of the examples of sectoral policy is tourism policy, which enables a direct influence of the state on the tourism economy and which also occurs in the other sectoral policies. Tourism policy (as a sectoral policy) is described in the economic literature by means of many definitions. According to the one of them the main task of tourism policy is creation of optimal size and structure of tourist movement by means of application of economic rules in the field of tourism economy, coordination of tourism development (considering tourism functions and variety of its relations) with other fields of the country operation.[8]

Tourism policy is also an activity that consists in describing economic, political, social and cultural aims related to the tourism development. It also consists in gaining positive effects resulting from the existence of demand and supply, in striving to satisfy social needs in the field of tourism making and in specifying means that are necessary for it.[9]

The whole of government's operations in the tourism economy describes its basic aims as follows:

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[5] *Polityka gospodarcza…*, p. 18.

[6] G. Firlit-Fesnak, M. Szylko-Skoczny, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

[7] *Polityka gospodarcza…*, *op. cit.*, pp. 60–64.

[8] *Ekonomika turystyki*, ed. A. Panasiuk, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2007, p. 159.

[9] S. Wodejko, *Ekonomiczne zagadnienia turystyki*, Wyższa Szkoła Handlu i Prawa, Warszawa 1998, p. 169.

- fulfilling society's needs in the field of tourism,
- rational utilization of tourist virtues, resources of labor and capital in the field of tourism economy,
- creation of optimal size and structure of tourist movement,
- coordination of tourism development considering its various functions and relations with other areas of economic life.[10]

Basic elements of a conscious tourism policy are activities in the field of creation of economic and non-economic aims and selection of means (instruments) for their realization. Tourism policy occurs when government presents a positive attitude toward tourism what consists in, inter alia, current control of tourism policy influence on the socio-economic life of the country.[11] Tourism policy should lead to a rational utilization of natural tourist resources of a particular area and to creation of plans of tourism infrastructure in economic regions.

The structure of the tourism policy comprises:

a) policy's subjects,
b) policy's addressees,
c) policy's models (methods),
d) policy's instruments.

The basis of the structure of socio-economic policy, also tourism policy, is a model (method) of policy implemented in the economy. Policy is executed by means of proper instruments (adequate to the implemented model of the policy) which are means of realization of aims and tasks.

Two basic methods of socio-economic policy are liberalism (no intervention of the state in the economic relations or significantly limited) and interventionism (state intervention in the development and operation of the national economy). Liberalism and interventionism in its pure form do not occur in the economy. Influence of the government on the economy occurs therefore as a mixed model. It is believed in the market economies that the state influence should be limited, moving from advanced interventionism toward liberalism. That kind of model is called deregulation or in the other words limiting state's function in the economy. Practical actions of the countries with the market

[10] *Turystyka*, ed. W. Kurek, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2007, p. 259.

[11] S. Wodejko, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

economy strengthen position of the state on the market in order to protect their economies, companies and the society. The European Union declaratively uses deregulation in the majority of economic sectors, also in tourism.

Before the classification of tourism policy's instruments (which indicates policy implemented by the government), there should be made a classification of tourism policy's entities. Activities in the field of tourism policy are realized by:

1. International entities (e.g. World Trade Organization – UN WTO, European Union's Committee for Tourism, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development – OECD),
2. National central institutions:
   a) legislative,
   b) executive: government, national tourism administration (NTA), other governmental agencies,
   c) specialized: national tourist organization (NTO),
3. Territorial self-governments of all levels,
4. Organizations and sectoral associations in tourism; especially self-government and tourist organizations, institutions and other entities supporting tourism development; local and regional entities of tourism policy, economic self-government of tourism.

Main addressees of tourism policy are entities of so called direct tourism economy. It comprises operation of only those entities which functioning is determined by tourists demand. Basic element of tourism economy structure is a tourist company. Tourist company is an addressee of the state's and its institutions' activities in the field of gaining tourism policy's goals on the local, regional, domestic level and on the level of international organizations.[12] Companies that operate in the field of tourism policy are: hotels, tour operators, entities that enable access to the natural virtues, travel guides.[13]

Another group of tourism policy's addressees are consumers of tourist services understood as clients of tourist companies. Implementation of legal regulations referring to the provision of tourist services results mainly from the ne-

[12] *Przedsiębiorstwo turystyczne. Ujęcie statyczne i dynamiczne*, ed. G. Gołembski, PWE, Warszawa 2007, p. 22.

[13] *Gospodarka turystyczna*, ed. A. Panasiuk, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2008, p. 30.

cessity of consumers' interests protection. The government should also create conditions for a common tourism making within implemented tourism policy. The government should therefore facilitate an access to utilization of some offers on the tourism market, e.g. within social tourism, health tourism (including health resort tourism), tourism for children and teenagers, tourism for disabled people.

Knowing model structure of tourism policy and its participants (entities and addressees) the range of policy's instruments should be indicated. As it was mentioned before, the range of the policy's instruments depends on the implemented methods which can be closer to the liberalism or complete interventionism. The main groups of tourism policy's instruments are listed below:

1. legal – general legal system in the country, tourism legislation,
2. economic – fiscal and financial,
3. administrative,
4. organizational,
5. informational.

Application of particular instruments of tourism policy gives a basis for ensuring accordance of standards of offered services with the standard on the global tourism market. Institutional and legal surroundings, which are very important for all companies from the tourism sector, are created under the influence of the tourism policy of the government and international organizations. The surroundings comprise, inter alia, legal system, governmental institutions and non-government institutions and all others groups of pressure.

2. CONDITIONS OF TOURISM POLICY CREATION

Tourism policy is determined by many factors, which can be classified in the following groups:

1. General factors:

a) social and economic system in the country,
b) political situation,
c) safety level,
d) methods and instruments of implemented policy,
e) policy's aims and tasks,
f) system of legal, organizational and economic connections in the country and abroad,

g) the range of general socio-economic policies led in foreign counties,
h) globalization,
2. Social factors:
a) level of social development,
b) tourist consciousness of the government and local governments,
c) consciousness of local societies,
d) tourist mobility of the society,
e) motives of tourists' outgoings,
3. Economic factors:
a) level of economy development,
b) economic situation,
c) level of society's wealth,
d) position of tourism the economy,
e) structure of tourist supply,
4. Other factors related to the development of tourism economy:
a) level of tourism development,
b) possessed tourist virtues,
c) level of tourism infrastructure development,
d) tourism policy of the EU,
e) tourism policy in another countries.

Presented list of factors should be treated as ideological. Discussion of meaning and strength of impact of particular factors would be too extensive for this paper. It should be stated that in the list of the factors occur issues directly related to the topic and they determine activities taken up by the tourism policy's entities that operate on different levels.

3. GLOBALIZATION AND TOURISM POLICY

Globalization is a process of economy internationalization, especially international trade, leading to a greater mutual dependence between entities participating in the trade. This is a phenomena of large and increasing flows of products, services and capital, what in consequence cause an increase in movement of people, information and ideas between the countries. In another approach globalization is related to liberalism, universalism, modernization and westernization and also to breakdown of the concept of territory as a cohesive area belonging to a particular country and to the creation of one global area.

Globalization processes therefore are particularly visible in the economic and spatial fields.[14] Globalization undoubtedly occurs in economic and social spheres. It should be stated that issues of globalization are significantly related to the tourism and determine tourism policy.

Implementation of globalization issues in the structure of the government's activities aimed at tourism economy is not easy. However the governmental institutions are aware of the influence of globalization on the tourism economy but they do not present special decisions showing consideration of the process. From the point of view of the number of incoming tourists, Poland's position as a tourist destination have downgraded on the international tourism market. It can be stated that Poland is rather visible destination in Europe but with a small influence on another continents. Length of the stay, motives of the stay and foreign tourists' expenditures don't allow for building Poland's global position on the international market. On the other hand, considering criteria of Polish tourists leaving abroad, it can be stated that there is observed an increase in the number of tourists leaving to the tourist regions with confirmed global position. However observed processes can be hardly taken into consideration in the activities of tourism policy's institutions.

Treating globalization in a strictly economic aspect, it should be pointed out that there is no significant income of foreign capital to the tourism economy. Market of net hotels and tour operators is strongly dependant on the foreign capital but mainly European. Stating that tourism infrastructure (especially accommodations) in Poland is not enough developed there are any spectacular foreign investments, what could be expected in the period before organization of UEFA European Football Championship EURO 2012 by Poland.

Documents adopted by the government – *Directions of the tourism development to the year 2015* and *Marketing strategy in tourism sector for the years 2008–2015* created by Polish Tourist Organization do not expose issues of globalization and its influence on the Polish tourism economy.

[14] M. Czerny, *Globalizacja a rozwój*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2005, p. 74.

4. ECONOMIC CRISIS AND TOURISM POLICY

Economic situation is a main factor deciding on the size of tourist demand. Tourism is a high-order good so the demand for tourism is limited when there appear the risk of income decrease in households (leisure tourism) as well as in companies (business tourism).

UN WTO and Tourism Institute research shows that unfavorable phenomena in tourism economy (global as well domestic) caused by the crisis in 2010 have been stopped. Presented prognosis related to the tourists' journeys indicates continuation of previous favorable situation on the world tourism market for the second decade of XXI century.[15]

It should be underlined that in the years 2008–2009 there was observed a decrease in the world's tourist movement, incomes of hotels, tour operators and airlines. Situation in the domestic tourism market got worse and one of the reasons was unstable exchange rate of zloty. Therefore higher percentage of Poles travel within Poland.

Business tourism was more influenced by the crisis than leisure tourism. There were no significant changes in the domestic tourism and in the journeys to nearby countries. The length of the stay was shorten and therefore tourist expenditures were limited. Holiday travels became priority – next ones were limited. Situation on the tourism market also depends on the other factors like disasters in the main world tourist regions, threat of global epidemics, world terrorism or air transport problems connected with the volcanic dust from Iceland.

Issues of economic crisis, similarly like issues of globalization, are hardly considered in the activities in the field of tourism policy. One should mind a complexity of the situation and influence of many other factors (like mentioned instability of the exchange rate). Strategic documents do not consider problems of world crisis and its influence on the tourism economy. The documents were created before the crisis and implemented at the beginning of the crisis when those phenomena referred to Poland in a very small degree. Positive growth of GDP and relatively satisfying other economic results give basis for the statement that the tourism economy development won't be stopped.

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[15] www.intur.com.pl, 15.12.2010.

The problem of economic crisis is not noticed in Polish tourism policy. The government doesn't take up activities aiming at influence either on the supply (tourist companies, which manage with the market situation and haven't declared bankruptcy due to the too law demand) or demand (especially to create its intensity). It should be assumed that Polish market should manage with self-regulation in this field and visible positive phenomena in Polish economy give basis for the market duration and development.

5. *POLISH PRESIDENCY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND TOURISM POLICY*

On the 1 of July 2011 Poland will take over a presidency of the European Union Council. Council of Ministers implemented an ordinance on appointment as the Government Plenipotentiary for the Preparation of the Government Administration Bodies and Performing by Poland the Presidency of the EU Council. As the result of the work of the government plenipotentiary and the team, with involvement of the ministries and offices, there was implemented a program of Poland's preparation for taking over and performing a presidency of the EU Council.[16]

It is estimated that in the period of presidency there will be organized approximately 2000 political and economic meetings in Poland. Tourism sector should be therefore involved and the image of Poland should be created in Europe. There is expected a significant growth of the congress, business and cultural tourism in the second half of the 2011.

One can not notice tourism issues in the preparation program. It can be noticed only indirectly that cultural undertakings related to the presidency could create European tourists' interest in Poland. It should be assumed that promotion of our country should influence the amount of incoming tourists.

The main goal of the tourism policy should be utilization of Polish presidency for creation of future effects in tourism economy. That should be achieved by tourism promotion, especially by activities led by the Polish Tourist Organization in order to prepare for the other undertakings, especially for EURO 2012 what is written in PTO's *Marketing strategy*.

[16] www.prezydencjaue.gov.pl, 15.12.2010.

Conclusions

For the needs of this paper there were chosen three issues that create tourism policy and influence the level of Polish tourism economy development: globalization, economic crisis, Polish presidency of the EU.

The results of observations are:

1. Globalization processes – with a long term influence on the tourism economy are not included in the tourism policy. It can be assumed that Poland doesn't tend to be a global tourist destination.
2. Economic crisis – currently influencing tourism economy but which influence can bring long-term effects. It is treated as a phenomenon that doesn't threaten Polish tourism economy, what is confirmed by the tourism market indicators. It isn't a significant part of tourism policy as well. Moreover it should be underlined that strategic documents referring to tourism and implemented by the institutions of tourism policy in 2008 were created at the beginning of the crisis when it didn't refer to the Polish economy that much. Despite cooling off period in tourism economy in 2009, there were signals of increases at the beginning of the 2010 so the government's intervention in this field was not necessary.
3. Polish presidency of the UE – haven't been perceived as a goal of tourism policy and real possibility for strengthening Polish tourism market so far. It can be assumed, like in cases of the factors mentioned above, that the effect for tourism economy will have a short-term character and will refer only to the chosen forms and kinds of tourism destined for tightly profiled and demanding tourist.

In an attempt of general estimation it can be stated that noticing current and log term problems in the tourism policy is, inter alia, a result of improper assigning tourism in the administrative structure. Ministry of Sport and Tourism concentrate its activities mainly in the field of tourism. Tourism separated from the ministry of economy is not treated equally with other economic sectors and therefore some of the tourism's problems are not properly analyzed and considered by the socio-economic policy. Additionally, significant number of tourism policy's entities on different levels and disorder in competences make that some of the activities are not efficient and task of tourism policy's entities are competitive on regional and local level.

It should be expected that the period of Polish presidency of the EU will be currently utilized for the development of the tourism economy. Although it seems that the long-term goals of tourism policy will not be significant and sustainable for tourism economy.

AKTUALNE UWARUNKOWANIA POLITYKI TURYSTYCZNEJ W POLSCE

Streszczenie

Miejsce państwa na rynku turystycznym warunkowane jest szeregiem czynników. Celem niniejszego opracowania jest przedstawienie podstaw polityki turystycznej, następnie wskazanie na zakres czynników ją determinujących oraz odniesienie się do bieżących zagadnień prowadzenia polityki przez państwo, takich jak: globalizacja, kryzys ekonomiczny oraz prezydencja Polski w Unii Europejskiej. Są to czynniki, które powinny być uwzględniane pierwszoplanowo w bieżących zadaniach państwa. Należy uznać, że uwzględnienie w polityce turystycznej kwestii globalizacji i kryzysu ekonomicznego wyznacza możliwości wpływu na gospodarkę turystyczną w długim horyzoncie czasu. Prezydencja Polski w Unii Europejskiej w drugiej połowie 2011 roku, mimo ściśle określonych ram czasowych, powinna umożliwiać nie tylko realizację celów bieżących, ale także długofalowych, jak np. umocnienie Polski na europejskim rynku turystycznym jako destynacji, wpływ na regulacje unijne w zakresie turystyki itp.

CURRENT CONDITIONS OF TOURISM POLICY IN POLAND

Summary

The government's role on the tourism market is conditioned by numerous factors. Main aims of this paper can be summarized as follows: describing the fundamentals of tourism policy, indicating the factors that determine its character and discussing relationships between tourism policy and globalization, economic crisis and Polish presidency in the European Union. It is to underline that tourism policy should be incorporated in the public economic policy in the context of globalization, especially in the long-term view. Polish presidency in the European Union in the second part of the year 2011, despite fixed time frames, should facilitate not only an achievement operational goals but also contribute to long-term objectives such as: strengthening of Poland as a destination on the European tourism market, EU regulations in the tourism market etc.

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THE CITY MUSEUMS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CULTURAL TOURISM IN BULGARIA

Introduction

A series of principles, giving the main directions for development of the museums as tourist resources are treated. An attempt is made at applying them to Bulgarian conditions, showing the possibilities for development of the museums in a national and regional aspect. The basic trends in the development of the cultural tourism in Bulgaria are drawn and the place of the museums in it is sought.

Museum development in this context is on the basis of the different motivation of the different groups of tourists. Attracting these two largest groups – **accidental and non-motivated tourists** must be a lucid objective for each museum and each professional in the field of cultural tourism.

It is evident that the main tourist potential (40%) is of non-motivated or accidental tourists involved in cultural tourism, including those visiting museums as resources of this type of tourism. It is known that those 15% that are highly motivated travel purposefully to a specific cultural site. As a whole this is the group with highest social status, with highest demands for tourist infrastructure, for cultural tourism sites and the service there, for accommodation facilities, etc. In France for example there are such tours for that tourist profile, visiting museums all over Europe in the course of 4–5 weekends. In our case such a group of highly motivated tourists are considered only the school groups

visiting museums. Exceptions are those who prefer archaeological discoveries in the open and combine watching them with going to the museums in Veliki Preslav, Madara and Pliska for instance. Nevertheless these school groups are frequent customers of the museums, but are not differentiated when the tourist flow is registered. This could be done through accounting for the tickets sold at reduced prices. However, there is no such data. From another point of view the tourist industry does not register these groups as tourist ones by many reasons, one of which being the absence of a realized overnight accommodation. As for the foreign visitors, they can be related to the last two groups – of the accidental and non-motivated. That is because they come in the summer, mainly from the Black Sea coast and register in situ in the marine hotels. I.e. they are typical summer tourists, looking for diversification of their beach program with visiting cultural sites.

1. ANALISIS

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one of which being the absence of a realized overnight accommodation. As for the foreign visitors, they can be related to the last two groups – of the accidental and non-motivated. That is because they come in the summer, mainly from the Black Sea coast and register in situ in the marine hotels. I.e. they are typical summer tourists, looking for diversification of their beach program with visiting cultural sites.

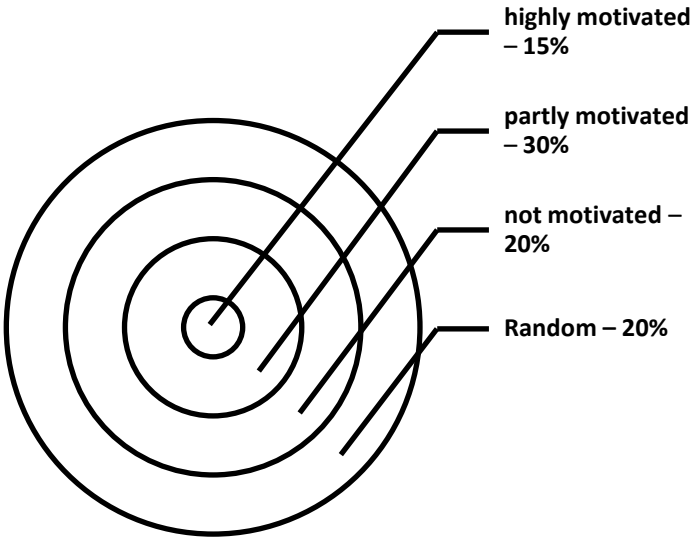

Fig. 1. Motivation of the tourists involved in cultural tourism in the world
Source: T. Trujillo, *Proposal for a chapter of principles for museums and cultural tourism*, Lima 2000.

T. Trujillo[1] gives 5 principles of development of museums. In the middle of Bulgarian museums seem so:

2. PRINCIPLE NO. 1

Museums constitute an important resource for Cultural Tourism for several reasons: their status as cultural mediators and the diversity of their collections, their category (whether public or private and national, regional or local), and

[1] T. Truijllo, *Proposal for Charter for museum and Cultural tourism*, Lima 2000.

their conditions of multiplicity, uniqueness, freedom, flexibility and creative potentiality.

- legislation for the promotion of a tourism which includes investments and interventions in areas of heritage value, should ensure that preservation of cultural and natural heritage shall take precedence over economic interests, where there is a risk of irreversible damage,
- co-operation between museological institutions, tourism sector institutions and the communities should be encouraged and arranged,
- legislative consistency necessary for defending heritage and tourist development should be addressed, taking into consideration the coexistence of the different levels of governmental authority as well as the various social sectors concerned. The participation of representatives from the local communities should be especially encouraged,
- museums shall favour self-management as a way to redistribute socio-economic benefits of cultural tourism to the community, since tourism development represents a proven option for generating resources. If they are properly administrated, these resources can directly benefit heritage institutions, especially museums and the communities where they are located.

3. THE BULGARIAN EXPERIENCE AND THE MUSEUMS IN SHUMEN REGION

Museums should be inclined to allocate the incomes of the cultural tourism.[2] The principle referred to indicates that a museum should not be content with its own specimens and exhibits only. It is always better if it acts as a mediator between the visitors – those involved in cultural tourism and the owners of different valuable collections. This would make the museum more attractive and would increase the number of visitors. The successful guest-exhibition of wax figures in the Regional Museum of History – Shumen in 2007 could serve as an example. More than 4000 have visited it for about two weeks – a flow that

[2] Р. Ганчев, *Състояние, проблеми и перспективи пред българските музеи и галерии*, Papers for Workshop in Sofia, Sofia 2006.

is equal to the number of visitors for a couple of months with the usual working hours and the permanent exhibitions. Of course the state should allow establishment of private museums or at least to register the Maecenas' collections which could be easily exhibited in the halls of the museums. The revenues from the tourists should be utilized by the museums, so that they could finance their researches and enlarge their collections. This would be partially enacted through implementation of devolved budgets. The co-operation between museums and the private sector should be on equal terms and the tour operators should have their own requirements on the kinds of collections in accordance with the profile of the tourists they provide. As a whole a museum should not rely on its own specimens only, but should be in search of guest-exhibits. The home exhibitions in the halls of the Regional Museum of History – Shumen were set on display decades ago. The preservation of the artifacts for the generations to come will provide the so called sustainable development of the cultural tourism. Still, this could be achieved with the partnership of the local authorities and the tour operators and agencies concerned.

4. PRINCIPLE NO. 2

The interaction between tourism and museums is a relationship that can affect the preservation of natural and cultural heritage including that of the collections and the values they transmit. Such a relationship should maintain an ethics of preservation in order to ensure the permanence of the objects.

1. Cultural heritage property is unique and irreplaceable. Its authenticity has an appraised value and its loss or deterioration represents a loss for universal culture. Responsible and sustainable tourism reduces the impact and the deterioration of cultural property to a minimum.
2. The characteristics of cultural heritage requires museum professionals, tour operators and visitors to be a morally and ethically responsible. For this reason programmes targeting preventive preservation should take priority.
3. Evaluating the impact of visitors and regulating tourism use of the museum should take priority when planning for heritage tourism. Such studies should take into account the/an appropriate conceptual and programmatic foundation agreed upon by the sectors involved. With such a foundation, the challenge of using a heritage resource for tourism purposes could be met.

5. *THE BULGARIAN EXPERIENCE AND THE MUSEUMS IN SHUMEN REGION*

As a whole museums are not overloaded with tourists and do not require special protection. However part of the artifacts are exhibited in the open and this necessitates particular conduct. In this aspect tour operators are expected to preliminarily instruct the tourists about the itinerary of approaching a given site. The admittance in some of the places with air-conditioning (e.g. ancient tombs) is restricted and allows a definite flow per hour. Part of the difficulties that our museums meet are the absence of reliable security system and special stands for the artifacts of high value. These are heavy and armored glass cases. The Regional Museum of History – Varna has at its disposal such glass cases and the exhibition of the Bulgarian gold had a great success there last summer. Hiring such facilities is too expensive for the Regional Museum of History – Shumen. That is why for the artifacts of great significance this kind of exhibit furniture is to be provided. The preservation of the museum-houses should also be a priority which could not be gained with the resources of the museum and the municipality only.[3] These are cultural monuments and their restoration should be a national priority. Furthermore, these are buildings, which characterize not only with historical, but with architectural value too. The latter is not put in use during the tourists' visits.

6. *PRINCIPLE NO. 3*

In regards to cultural tourism, museums should encourage the active participation of the local communities in the planning of both heritage management and the operations of tourist venues.

1. The links between heritage property and the communities where they originated and where they acquired a historic meaning cannot be broken. Museums are called on to promote the identification, appreciation and preservation of such objects, as well as the environment in which they belong. The participation of members of the communities and social

[3] Д. Руменов, *Село Коньовец като притегателен център за културен туризъм*, conference materials "Културният туризъм", РИМ, Стара Загора 2007.

sectors involved in these areas is fundamental in this endeavour, and in so doing they exercise and defend both their individual and collective rights.

2. The community should take part in the design, planning, execution and monitoring phases of activities likely to use cultural heritage for tourism purposes. In order to accomplish this, both cultural identification and improvement in the quality of life of social groups involved in the cultural event are necessary.
3. The socio-cultural symbiosis between tourism activity and heritage resources, with the free and democratic participation of many sectors, should ensure the quality of the tourism services, the authenticity of the products offered to the visitor as well as the foundations for the cultural event.
4. Museums should encourage the communities to manage their cultural heritage, for which they should encourage suitable training.

7. THE BULGARIAN EXPERIENCE AND THE MUSEUMS IN SHUMEN REGION

Of all the principles for museums development mentioned above this is probably the weakest one. The link between the museums in the region and the local authorities is manifested solely by accounting the museum's resources to the local budget. Scientific conferences are partially sponsored with resources from the municipality's budget. The joint training and elaboration of green field projects is necessary since there is no direct connection between museums and the tourist center at the municipality except for the mere informing activity. Some of the financial resources from the EU funds cannot be profited without the partnership of the municipality as a beneficiary. Cultural tourism needs these resources for the research work of the museums, the improvement of the social infrastructure, etc. The Shumen Plateau Natural Park could serve as an example – it gains projects, including such for improvement of the road infrastructure leading to the plateau. The skills of the museum professionals and those of the corresponding municipality departments in creating such projects are to be questioned. Together with the tour operators the museums and the municipalities should elaborate an integral strategy for cultural tourism development in the given administrative unit.

8. PRINCIPLE NO. 4

A harmonious relationship between museums and cultural tourism should address all constituent aspects of the museum such as the infrastructure, quality of the collection, information and communication systems, educational and exhibition activities, the staff and the relationship with its surroundings.

1. Museums should be designed for everyone and not exclusively for tourists, although this sector represents an important part of its public. In their social function, museums should create enjoyable experiences emphasising education and communication. To this end the information presented should be easily understood, with language barriers reduced to a minimum, facilitating communication and with professional staff for trained both museological duties and visitor assistance. Additionally, museums should provide a collection that is appropriately selected and preserved, using the latest technology available.
2. Tourism should be a creative use of free time, providing experiences in a time and space away from daily routines. Museums shall create the necessary conditions for their visitors to circulate at their own pace and enjoy their stay. It is important to plan tours using temporary programmes which are restricted to a schedule that satisfies both the leisure periods of the local inhabitants and alternatives for foreign tourists.
3. Museums and cultural tourism should encourage the interaction between visitors and the host community in a framework of respect towards the values and the hospitality that are offered.

9. THE BULGARIAN EXPERIENCE AND THE MUSEUMS IN SHUMEN REGION

As for the language skills of the guides in the Shumen museums – they are not so problematic. The informational technologies as a mean of presenting exhibits and cultural and historical valuables are a great problem since the shortage of financial resources does not allow presentations, attractive lighting and electronic system for ticket-selling as is the practice of the main world museums. As regards the attractiveness of the exhibit presentation – the problem here is connected mainly with the static character and the long term of displaying. The collections should be replaced regularly in relation to certain dates,

celebrations or by the decision of the tour operators. Therefore meetings should be held between them and the boards of the museums for determining their successful marketing strategy.

10. PRINCIPLE NO. 5

From an economic point of view, commercialisation of cultural tourism based on heritage resources should include profitability in its economic, social and environmental dimensions.

1. Planning of cultural projects, from the perspective of the museum and cultural tourism, should reflect marketing strategies consistent with the characteristics of the cultural resources and the host communities.
2. The preservation of the legacy deposited in museums is a responsibility that transcends all administrative authorities to become a responsibility of the country. This does not exempt museums from developing their own mechanisms to seek alternate sponsors and financing; neither does it preclude them from attempting to become profitable institutions capable of generating resources without making concessions, offering a genuine product whose essential strength lies in being exceptional and a repository of identity.
3. Participation of museums in guided tours entails designing and complementing the cultural offering, in addition to being integral elements of the network of tourist attractions at each location. Museums can also be meeting points and points of departure for other itineraries and services, such as places of interest to tourists, restaurants, transportation, handicrafts, etc.

11. THE BULGARIAN EXPERIENCE AND THE MUSEUMS IN SHUMEN REGION

This is the weakest spot of the museums not only in Bulgaria. Developing a unified advertising strategy for an integral tourist product is a very difficult task and the municipalities do not have at disposal trained specialists to manage

with it.[4] The advertising leaflets of the museums are offered only there and are being purchased not until the tourist has arrived – i.e. when the tourist had already decided to practice cultural tourism. Those that still have not taken this decision (the 40% from fig. 1) are left out. Elaborating a universal advertising aspect of the tourism in a given municipality or district is a priority of the local authorities. Namely they have to initiate and assign it. Museums can only be subagents. However, the Shumen district, as a cultural center of Bulgaria, has to make the best of its cultural and historical heritage through the museums and the other cultural institutions. This way even the Regional Museum of History could be the initiator of a meeting with tour operators or the organizer of a tourist fair on the grounds of concurrent financing with municipal resources, local revenues (if devolved budgets are implemented), tour operators and agencies' sponsorship, which will be thus advertised and the owners of hotels and restaurants in the district.

An interesting fact related to this principle is the impact of the museums on the local communities and economics. The successful strategy for developing a museum exhibit to change the appearance of a given town could follow the example of Bilbao. The Guggenheim Museum was opened there in 1997, which is an architectural phenomenon not only for the town but for Spain too.

1. Its specific shape appears everywhere – from the motor advertisements to the videos of the rappers on MTV. The question "Have you ever been in Bilbao?" made the visits to that town obligatory for certain art and architecture social circles.
2. "No one had heard of Bilbao, no one knew where it was. No one knew even how to write it". These are the words of Terence Riley – director of Miami Art Museum and former chief curator of architecture and design at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Riley pointed out that he had added the word "Bilbao" to his Microsoft Word dictionary. Guggenheim became so popular that tourists began to visit the town on a mass scale. "I have been there four times. This is probably even more than expected".

[4] П. Дончев, М. Пенерлиев, *Алтернативен туризъм*, ВТУ "Св. Кирил и Методий" 2005, Велико Търново.

Conclusions

As a whole, the five principles for development of the museums in the context of the cultural tourism proposed by Trujillo and Lord[5] are not new. To a great extent their formulations are adopted and realized in the Bulgarian tourism industry and the museum institutions in particular. However, there is no unified marketing strategy on a regional and national scale – the most important component part of the successful high-quality tourist product. This could be achieved with the implementation of scientific methods and good economical context and assessment. It is far beyond the scope of the untrained municipal employees and museum professionals in the district. With that purpose, trained art-managers and economists in the field of assessment and development of tourist products should be attracted. Also financial resources from the European funds should be sought and the staff should be trained in developing corresponding projects.

MUZEA MIEJSKIE W KONTEKŚCIE TURYSTYKI KULTUROWEJ

Streszczenie

W artykule przedstawiono możliwości rozwoju muzeów w Bułgarii w aspekcie regionalnym i krajowym. Z badań wynika, że około 40% turystów należy do grupy turystów przypadkowych, którzy nie wiedzieli wcześniej o istnieniu danej atrakcji. Analizę funkcjonowania muzeów przeprowadzono w oparciu o metodologię pięciu zasad rozwoju muzeów T. Trujillo.

[5] W. Lord, *Cultural Tourism and Museums*, Seoul 2002.

THE CITY MUSEUMS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CULTURAL TOURISM

Summary

The article attempts to address urban museums in the town of Shumen in view of some common principles. Analyze the possibility of their application in the middle of the Bulgarian city museums. Reported are the weaknesses in their management. Here are directions for a successful future. Summarized are major findings.

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SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT – CURRENT SITUATION AND PERSPECTIVES

THE CASE OF ALBANIA

Introduction

Sustainable tourism is a broader term. "Sustainable tourism is all forms of tourist development, management and activity, which enable a long life for the cultural activity of tourism, involving a sequence of economic tourism products, compatible with keeping in perpetuity the protected heritage resource, be it natural, cultural, or built, which gives rise to tourism". Sustainable tourism is an area where the list of existing analyses is long and impressive. But sustainable tourism development also involves making hard political choices based on complex social, economic and environment trade-offs.[1]

Development of tourist industry on global level encouraged many European countries to address this industry. Recent directions towards development are in very close relation with the need of its sustainability.

Albania as part of it, compiled the tourism strategy which ranks some of its priorities like: promotion of the importance of natural and cultural inheritance

[1] W. Armstrong, B. Weiler, *Ecotourism and its role in sustainable develpment*, 2002, pp. 3–22.

and the eco-tourism as a basis for new development opportunities; provision of a possible supporting management for tourism effects on countries with natural and cultural heritage. The strategy emphasizes the natural and cultural tourism which are considered as a profitable means to the rural communities.

If we consider the last years, there is an increasing tendency to improve the tourist facilities and to attract the tourist market which is interested for activities in open nature and relax in fresh and pure air. These demands could be met very well in Korca destination which is characterized from suitable climatic conditions and tourist facilities.

Based on theory arguments of tourism scholars and the characteristics of the area intended for study, we proposed some hypotheses and questionnaires, which are tested by the SPSS 16 software.

The main purpose of this paper is to present the current situation in our country from the point of sustainability and the need for the development of tourism sustainable.

1. METHDOLOGY OF RESEARCH

In realizing this study, a methodology combining primary and secondary data was used. A series of secondary sources, such reports from international organizations and other publications were provided through using electronic libraries of American, European universities and other sources like Internet and reports of important national and international organizations.

The methodological achievement of this study is based on a number of indicators which could be used in tourism planning process and provides necessary information to tourism managers and public administration.[2]

As far as tourist sample is concerned, there was created one made of 70 persons, selected by chance in the tourist destination or the accommodating units of the rural area considered in study.

The questionnaire asked to tourists is made up of two parts: the first part aims to provide general information on tourist market profile, considering the object of visiting the destination, the information source used, the expenses; the

[2] W. Armstrong, B. Weiler, *The evolving concept of ecotourism and its potential impacts*, 2002, pp. 43–68.

second part aims to give information about the way how tourists perceive the holidays evaluating importance – performance analysis (IPA) for the tourist demand indicators. Such information helps in determining new tourist developments in the destination which relies on nature activities aiming to preserve the tendency of tourist visits.

Statistical analysis – The data collected from three questionnaires are recorded on SPSS 16 software, in order to be used for statistical processing. To record data and an accurate processing of the questionnaires, their encoding was used.

2. THE CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY AS A PART OF THE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGION

The concept of cultural sustainability must necessarily embrace a degree of change if future generations are to have a better life, which is a fundamental objective of sustainable development. It is necessary to analyze the value of cultural heritage in Korca city and the need for strategic planning and development if the integrity of cultural attractions must to be sustained. The potential of heritage resources to recognize as cultural tourism attractions; through their development diversification can occur easily from traditional forms of tourism to modern tourism products, without considerable investments. Albania is known to be the last undiscovered destination in Europe in which precious and rare secrets of nature and cultural heritage can still be discovered. Korca is mentioned as a castle in 1280 and in 1431, as an inhabited castle. Neolithic remains indicate the successive occupation of the city area for the last 6000 years.

Essentially, cultural tourism attractions have need to operate within the natural capacity of the destination, i.e. to adopt the principles of sustainable development. Countries and regions that have witnessed decline in their traditional markets have sought to promote other forms of tourism, thus the attention being paid to the development of cultural tourism.[3]

[3] D. Weaver, *A broad context model of destination development scenarios*, 2000, pp. 17–24.

3. *CULTURAL POTENTIALS OF KORCA'S REGION TOWARDS THE SUSTAINABILITY*

The city of Korca is situated in southeastern part of Albania. The area occupied by the city today is a former Illyrian settlement. The potential for tourism development in Korca and the surrounding area is high thanks to its historical, cultural and natural wealth. Korca is mentioned as a castle in 1280 and in 1431, as an inhabited castle. After 1484, the city started to expand and development gaining the feature of an urban and regional centre. The city has participated historically in intensive exchange of culture and trade with Byzantium and Greece. Korca's region illustrates and encompassed three of these areas: historical tourism; archeological tourism, religious tourism. *Historical tourism* encompasses the design, planning and application of historic elements used by tourism as a source of cultural attraction, such as monuments, tangible and intangible recourses and architecture. *Archaeological tourism* is very important for many tourists. So, Korca region is well-known for the artifacts housed in the Archaeology museum, some of which date back to the early Iron Age, with others from the Hellenic, Roman and Byzantine periods. This year has inaugurated "Tumb of Kamenica"'s museum, which gives information and scientific data about rites, way and lifestyle, culture until to professions, social position etc. This museum is a object which will visited by the domestic and foreign tourists. Religious tourism may be considered as the oldest manifestation of tourism. Korca's region is well-known for old churches and monasteries, such as Orthodox Cathedral, which is the biggest in the Albania. The most important monuments of the villages are the churches, such as in Vithkuq, the first church was built on 1162 (Saint Atanas). Important as an historical and religious monument is the church of Saint Peter, built on 18-th century, around 1764–1773, that has magnificent frescos with about 2000 paintings. It is important to be mentioned that here had been a famous library with books that were printed on the printing shop in Voskopoja. The village of Mborja (3 km from Korca) has one of the oldest churches in the country, dating to 1390, but built on the ruins of an even older church dating back to the IVth century. In Liqenas, there are lots of old churches, dating from the 13 or 14-th century. There are also churches and sacred places on the rocky shore of the lake. The Saint Mary Church of the 14th century(on the Maligrad island, within a cave, part of the said area) is well-known for its murals of high artistic value.

But, if we will make a analyze of this cultural potential, we will think that there are many possibilities for the development of this tourism's type in according to increase of the demand and the development of community in general. The survey of the cultural visitors in Korca region found that cultural tourists are less likely to visit for the culture alone and more likely to visit for the multiplicities of both natural and cultural attractions. They want to include aspects of culture in their holidays and stay for short periods, in generally. Many cultural tourists are first time visitors, but they have need for more information, services, and road signage to find the village and attractions.

4. GENERAL OVERVIEW ON EXISTING AND POTENTIAL MARKETS THAT VISIT THE AREA

There are no many studies which have accurately recorded the number of visitors visiting Korca region and most specifically the number of tourists in rural areas, but it is evident that there is a growing interest for holidays in tourist villages, mainly in rural houses.

1. Domestic market (including the Albanian communities that live in Kosovo, Macedonia and Albanians who live in Greece).

This market takes the greatest part in the market structure. Here are included the Albanians mainly Tirana, Durrës and Elbasan and Albanian communities that live in Macedonia, Greece. This is a considerable market in numbers which make use of fresh air, wonderful climate and gets to know the area's traditions.

According the existing data, because of events and celebrations in the region, only during the last year, flows from domestic market had a considerable increase. Thus, the investments made from the Municipality for 2010 compared with 2009 for organizing celebrations in Korca increased with 9.9% (Carnivals, Beer Fest). There are several sub-segments within the domestic market; families that chose to spend some time in a specific place, young people, tourists and groups, people who visit their relatives and friends and local tourists that make use of weekends and daily excursions. We can mention here the Albanian people who live in Greece and are actually working there, but many of them have houses here also.

2. Foreign market.

This market is important because it visits the Korca Region for the first time as well as repeatedly. For the area of study we can say that there is a small number of them who visited Dardha. This is related to the fact that this village is well-known and could be much better used as place for excursions.

Although the number of foreign tourists organized in tourist trips is relatively small; there are very good opportunities for further grow.

3. Tourist market across boundaries.

This market has opportunities for further development. It enables foreign tourist flows and its promotion is made through the word of mouth said by them. They may stay in the tourist villages of Drenova commune for some hours, in Boboshtica or spend one or two nights in Dardha. The development of this market will go higher when tour operators across boundaries include Korca region in their own tourist guides providing thus a wide range of destinations and activities. These trips could be made possible by bus and will help the improvement of the quality of tourist services. The basic thing for this market to develop is to raise the cooperation and intensify relations between tour operators in three countries.

4. Market of independent tourists.

This market is made up of tourists who look for a high quality accommodation and tourists who look for accommodation in hosting houses in the area. Independent tourists enjoy several characteristic regional products as result of having enough time to spend, discover the values and visiting tourist places within the destination. It is necessary for this market to provide information like guides, maps, Internet info and description of provided services. Thus, tourism development in villages will aim a further improvement of the infrastructure which will serve mainly to inhabitants as well as tourists for exploring these communities. Village tourist products need to be continuously improved in order to meet the needs and expectations of market. Most importantly, they should be very high-leveled promoted.

5. America and Canada Albanians.

This market is defined as *potential* to the Korca region especially to mountainous areas of Korca. From the interviews done to the inhabitants of Dardha, Voskopoja villages, we realized that this market has many possibilities to turn into a market involving a large number of people. This is a wide market and according to some data collected we could agree that it is attainable through: specialized tour operators, associations and organizations (Civic Albanian-

American Association, National Albanian – American Council, etc.) which could be found on the web: www. naac.org/partner.php – international media in the Albanian language.

5. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT TOURISTS

General information as demographic characteristics and other information to visitors are important for understanding the psychological, educational and other needs of visitors. The respondents were studied concerning the following:

"How many times have you visited this destination?" The responses were: 43% – 1–2 times; 24% – visited it for the first time; 33% – more than twice.

Taking chance of the results, we are able to notice that there is a continuous interest to visit these areas, enjoy the fresh air and the landscape, and also traditional cuisine that is often the main reason of visiting these rural areas.

Tourists that visit the destination, as far as the nationality of tourists is concerned, it results that most of them are native: 45% of them are Albanians from Albania; 19% Albanians from Greece; 10% are Albanians from Macedonia and 26% are foreign tourists, mainly Greeks about 10% followed from Macedonians, French, Germans, English and Asian people; about 1% are American people.

These data show that the interest of native tourists is still continuous and according the information gathered from the hotels of the area, there is a tendency of tourists to come during winter time to enjoy the snow and be able to skiing. It is exactly the suitable climate during winter and summer seasons and infrastructural improvements that make the owners of accommodating units feel optimistic about these rural areas.[4]

The question "What was your accommodation during your stay in these areas?" they responded: 57% in hotels; 27% in village houses; 15% did not stay; 1% hosted by friends and relatives.

The needs and preferences of visitors are directly related to the characteristics and specifics of an ecotourism destination with activities oriented toward natural and cultural heritage.

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[4] C.A. Gunn, *Tourism planning – Fourth edition*, 2002, pp. 53–75.

An important question to understand the tourists' profile is: "What is the goal of visiting this destination?"

The surveyed tourists responded to the above question: 33% of them come to enjoy the wonderful nature; 23% come to know about the culture of these areas; 21% are fond of hiking and 15% are fond of sports.

These data show that the tendency of being attracted by nature still persists. It is present in these rural areas during all the year, but there is a need to look for a more vivid environment and adding services in the destination; attraction by culture inherited from generation to generation shows that these areas are attractive in this aspect, which makes tourists go and visit these areas even though most of them are accommodated in town. They spend an overnight or half a day with outdoor activities or enjoy the traditional cooking. Thus, the special thing about these areas is that there is a mingling of nature with culture, as the reason for sustainable tourist continuity.

Sport activities let us know about their early tradition, but those tourists who spend more time in destination should have the opportunity for organized activities such as riding horses as well as ski and mountain-climbing during winter time, going on thus with the sports tradition of these areas. To understand better tourists' preferences, they were asked as following: "What was the reason you chose this place?" defining the most attractive characteristics.

From the data it resulted that they preferred the destination because they: come usually here; are interested in natural and cultural heritage; there are suitable places for accommodation and food and need to stay away from noises.

The question "Where do you provided information?" the tourists responded: 54% of them were informed from their previous visits; 42% of them were informed from accommodation brochures; 58% of them do not get information from travel agents and 68% were informed from their friends.

The results showed that the information still was provided much more from friends or previous visits' impressions and few from promoting materials or travel agents.

This shows that the way of being informed was not effective and non-professional in many cases. Being informed from friends is a characteristic of rural areas and such limited information limits also the tourist market remaining thus a casual market.

Information shows that main expenses go to accommodation and food and little for other activities.

Korça as town should not be considered as separated from tourist villages as the demands of tourists who come to town visit also the tourist villages, participating in their activities or enjoying the accommodation and traditional food. Groups of tourists look for excursions in Dardha, Voskopoja, although they accommodate mostly in town. Municipal programs to make Korca "The Town of Celebrations" not only help the vitality of the community life, but make it popular in Albania and neighbor countries as well. So, the activities serve to increase the number of foreign and native tourists in rural areas mainly during summer time because of the favorable climate and fresh air. Thus, we say that a combination of development of town tourism and tourist villages will help the sustainability of the development of Korca as tourist destination in general.

Conclusions

Position of the destination is primary, so we have to stress one more the fact about the way how visitors perceive the destination and not what is it from the community's point of view. In this definition we should be leaded by the fact that destination "is not what you say it is, but what all the others say".

As far as tourists' characteristics are concerned, records about new tourists coming to accommodations need to be kept. Meanwhile, indicators of tourists' needs and preferences will be in the center of a continuous monitoring, regardless the visitors are new or repeated in destination.

The greatest market visiting the area was the domestic market; therefore the development policies will focus on it, aiming to expand the market of foreign tourists. Tourists who visited repeatedly the destination were considerable in number, which shows that the environmental and cultural sustainability were the main source of this flow. Thus, its retention would require high service quality to tourists.

As tourists frequented the area because of its natural features, the community would be encouraged not only to preserve the natural landscape, but look for opportunities of developing such activities as: riding, mountain climbing, etc., required from tourists as the area possesses such environmental features.

Important economic effects are the incomes of the inhabitants who are directly linked to tourism. Doubtlessly, this is linked also with tourists' expenses in destination. They are concentrated in medium level expenses and high level too. The collected information shows that main expenses go more for accom-

modation and food and less for other activities. From the importance-performance analysis done for the elements of tourists supply attracting also the tourists' opinions about them, it resulted that these elements had differences about what tourists found in destination and what were they looking for. There were exactly these differences which were meant to be the improvement steps.

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Streszczenie

Koncepcja zrównoważonego rozwoju jest bardzo popularną koncepcją zarządzania ruchem turystycznym. W artykule przedstawiono próbę oceny stanu rozwoju turystyki w Korca w Albanii z punktu widzenia teorii zrównoważonego rozwoju. Metodologia badań zakładała przeprowadzenie studiów literaturowych oraz badań ankietowych na grupie 70 losowo wybranych turystów. Badania wykazały, że większość turystów przebywających w Korca pochodziło z Albanii, ich poziom wydatków był wyższy niż średnia głównym motywem przyjazdu były atrakcje naturalne.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT – CURRENT SITUATION AND PERSPECTIVES

Summary

Development of tourist industry on global level encouraged many European countries to address this industry. Recent directions towards development are in very close relation with the need of its sustainability.

Albania as part of it, compiled the tourism strategy which ranks some of its priorities like: promotion of the importance of natural and cultural inheritance and the ecotourism as a basis for new development opportunities; provision of a possible supporting management for tourism effects on countries with natural and cultural heritage.

In realizing this study, a methodology combining primary and secondary data was used.

The questionnaire asked to tourists is made up of two parts: the first part aims to provide general information on tourist market profile, considering the object of visiting

the destination, the information source used, the expenses; the second part aims to give information about the way how tourists perceive the holidays evaluating importance – performance analysis (IPA) for the tourist demand indicators.

Such information helps in determining new tourist developments in the destination which relies on nature activities aiming to preserve the tendency of tourist visits. The methodological achievement of this study is based on a number of indicators which could be used in tourism planning process and provides necessary information to tourism managers and public administration

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AGRITOURIST PRODUCT AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS

Introduction

The basis for any production activity and services is a product which is aimed at satisfying consumer needs. Agritourist product is a set of material and spiritual values created by the owners of agritourist farms and administrators of rural areas, offered to tourists.

This paper presents some aspects of agritourist products. Apart from the definitions of agritourist product, its structure, life cycle and quality were also discussed. A special feature of agritourist product is its duality. On the one hand, it is characterized by tangible and intangible values in use and exchangeable values offered by agritourist farms. On the other hand, similar values concern the rural area subordinate to other organizations e.g. local self-governments.

In order to write the paper, the authors used the related literature and information based on their own observations and experiences.

1. THE CONCEPTS AND THE STRUCTURE OF AGRITOURIST PRODUCT

In the broadest sense, the product means everything which can be offered to customers to be consumed, used or processed further. Thus the products in-

clude physical goods, services, activities, places, people, ideas or their combinations which represent a particular value in use and exchange value. The value in use of a product is of particular interest to customers since it expresses the possibility and the degree of satisfying their needs. This suggests product utility for the consumer. Exchange value of a product arouses substantial interest from producers and contractors and determines the ability to exchange a product into another one or cash. Exchange value is defined by the price, i.e. it is a total amount of money with which a producer or contractor charges the customer for the product. The price can be a neutral price i.e. it expresses the costs of manufacturing a product or a market price, which expresses the opportunities for additional profit or loss to the producer. The market price is generated as a result of supply and demand for products (goods) and can be higher or lower than the natural price. The producer's goal is to strive for higher prices and generate profits. It is obvious that the value in use and the exchange value of a product are a unity since they must generate benefits from purchasing-sales relations to both producer and consumer.

This approach to the essence of a product in general is a basic concept and corresponds to tourist activities, including agritourist activities since product means to a consumer (tourist) everything that might ensure particular benefits and satisfaction, whereas to a producer this means something which should be sold at a profit.

Two approaches can be observed in definitions of tourist products: structural approach ('hard'), which emphasizes the multiplicity of components, their measurability, complexity, flexibility and psychosocial approach ('soft'), barely measurable, which takes into consideration benefits connected with satisfaction, which might result from the purchase of a product.

The first approach, as argued by J. Kaczmarek, A. Stasiak and B. Włodarczyk, is reflected by the following definitions:

- 'tourist product denotes all the goods and services created and purchased with respect to leaving the place of residence, both before travel, during travel and during staying apart from the person's family location' (G. Gołembski),
- 'tourist product is a complex product and covers the location, services and some physical goods' (J.Ch. Holloway, Ch. Robinson),
- 'Tourist product is any combination of services of accommodation and tourism' (L. Mazurkiewicz),

– ‘The concept of tourism product might be approached as a package of tangible and intangible components available in the market, which allows for achievement of the goal of a tourist trip’ (A. Nowakowska).[1]

The second approach to tourist product covers its psychosocial aspects (essential to tourist), such as: satisfaction, pleasure, experiences, memories, motivations, interests and expectations which create a product core. This approach (to a product in general) is emphasized by H. Mruk and I. Rutkowski, who argue that a product is a set of utility, pleasure and satisfaction to a customer, who perceives it through benefits which might result from its purchase.[2]

Tourist product was perceived in this context by e.g. V.T.C. Middleton and S. Medlik. The former researcher wrote that ‘from the standpoint of a potential customer who takes into consideration a particular form of travel, product can be defined as a product of tangible and intangible components, based on opportunities for spending time in the destination. The package is viewed by a tourist as an experience available at certain price’.[3] The author emphasizes basic benefits which can be obtained by a tourist, deposited in the essence (core) of a product. A basic benefit might mean experiencing something which is interesting and important to the customer, e.g. relax, enjoyment, adventure, knowledge, health, sense of social status etc. Thus, the product core offers major advantage to a customer, who, based on these qualities (experiencing, stimulation of imagination, familiarizing with something or someone etc.), make a decision to purchase the product. The task of a producer is to recognize the needs of a variety of customers, adaptation of the product to them and certain demonstration of the benefits so that they are convincing to potential customers’.[4]

S. Medlik highlighted tourist products *sensu stricto* and *sensu largo*. Tourist product *sensu stricto* means everything that is bought by tourists separately (e.g. transport, accommodation) or in the form of a particular package of services. *Sensu largo* tourist product is a composition of something that tourist

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[1] After: J. Kaczmarek, A. Stasiak, B. Włodarczyk, *Produkt turystyczny*, PWE, Warszawa 2005, p. 73.

[2] H. Mruk, I.P. Rutkowski, *Strategia produktu*, wyd. II zmienione, PWE, Warszawa 1999, p. 34.

[3] V.T.C. Middleton, *Marketing w turystyce*, APT, Warszawa 1996, p. 142.

[4] J. Majewski, B. Lane, *Turystyka wiejska a rozwój lokalny*, Fundacja Edukacja dla Demokracji, Warszawa 2003, p. 70.

make and the values of facilities and services they use in order to make it: from the standpoint of a tourist, tourist product covers the entirety of the experience from the moment of leaving their homes to the moment of their return.[5]

Another concept of tourist product useful in agritourism was proposed by J. Altkorn. The author suggested the product of an enterprise (agritourism farm – author's note) composed as a set of a variety of services, which are aimed at satisfying tourist's needs and which are sold in tourist enterprises (agritourism farms – author's note). Another product is a tourist product of a region (in agritourism this means a village or a municipality – author's note) which covers such elements as: natural and anthropogenic values, infrastructure and services in a destination as well as their availability, image and the price paid by a customer.[6]

The problems of a tourist product are relatively complex. These products might mean the place and area of relax, form of relax, transport services, accommodation, catering and extra services, needs and motivation for travelling, satisfaction and experience after tourist trip. They include elements of both 'hard' and 'soft' approach.

A.J. Wiatrak argues that tourist product is defined by tourist goods, which perform, depending on their type, a variety of roles that combine to create a tourist package. The package, connected with the rural area, is determined by a variety of services, activities and facilities based on the values of the countryside and the village households maintained by rural population and sold to tourists in order to satisfy their needs in terms of recreation and spending free time.[7]

Tourist product expressed in the package is composed of: tourist attractions and the environment of the destination, infrastructure of the destination, availability of this place, image and reputation of the destination, price paid by a tourist. Components and characteristics of tourist product in the country, also of agritourist product, are contained in the Table 1.

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[5] J. Kaczmarek, A. Stasiak, B. Włodarczyk, *Produkt turystyczny…*, p. 73.

[6] *Ibidem*, p. 74.

[7] A.J. Wiatrak, *Kształtowanie produktów w turystyce wiejskiej*, in: *Turystyka wiejska czynnikiem ożywienia terenów wiejskich*, Krajowe Centrum Doradztwa Rozwoju Rolnictwa i Obszarów Wiejskich, Oddział w Krakowie, Kraków 2001, p. 129.

Table 1

Components and characteristics of tourist products in the countryside

Component	Characteristics
Location	*village* – space which is conducive to freedom of moving, contact with the nature and opportunities for contacts with natural environment (usually almost unchanged); *agricultural farm* – conducive to contacts with rural community and people, domestic and wild animals and to familiarizing with farming activities and craftsmanship
Attractions	landscapes, climate, forests, lakes, games, agriculture, fresh air, peace and quiet, little traffic
Accommodation	guestrooms, flats/houses, group accommodation, tent sites, camping, youth hostels, boarding houses
Catering	full board or option to buy fresh products from the farm in order to prepare meals on your own, opportunity for familiarizing with countryside cuisine and eating regional foods
Services	*basic:* accommodation and catering *additional:* angling, hunting, picking up and drying herbs, fruit and mushrooms, horse-riding, and cycling, rental of horses, carriages, sports equipment, organization of sleigh rides, sales of crafts products, showing the region around etc.
Purchase of services	purchase directly or agritourist associations, sometimes travel offices
Services	direct and friendly contact with people who receive tourists, hospitality and the atmosphere conducive to entering into mutual relationships and future visits
Other	developing interests, new skills, familiarizing with folklore and customs of rural areas and regional culture, active relax in rural areas

Source: A.J. Wiatrak, *Kształtowanie produktów w turystyce wiejskiej*, in: *Turystyka wiejska czynnikiem ożywienia terenów wiejskich*, Krajowe Centrum Doradztwa Rozwoju Rolnictwa i Obszarów Wiejskich, Oddział w Krakowie, Kraków 2001, p. 130.

All the components and characteristics are important to creation of a product and its reception by a tourist. Therefore, they should be recognized, analysed and a particular tourist product (agritourist) should be prepared.[8]

In the light of the analysis of the agritourist product the following definition of agritourist product can be adopted: agritourist product is a combination

[8] *Ibidem*, p. 130.

of tangible and intangible assets (both advantageous and disadvantageous to a tourist) connected with staying in agritourist farm and its area and the goods and tourist services provided in the farm which allow for satisfying the tourists' needs, sensations and impressions acquired during staying in agricultural farm and after leaving it.

Complex elements of agritourist products build its structure, which is presented in the Figure below.

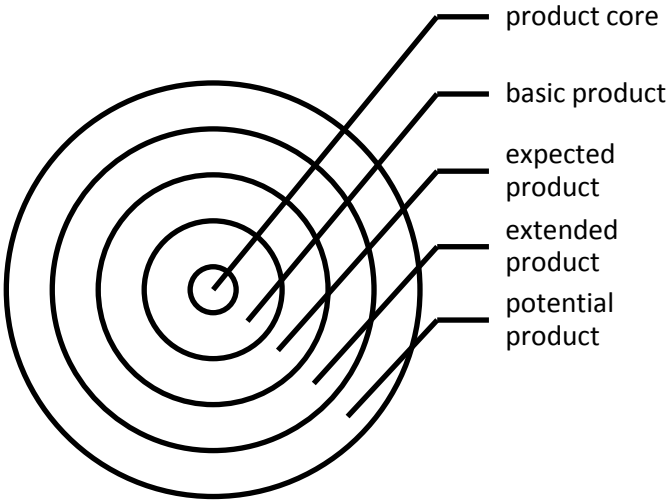

Fig. 1. Structure of agritourist product
Source: author's own elaboration.

Product core comprises motivation for trips to agritourist farms and opportunities for satisfying the needs of tourists in this farm. These benefits are perceived by tourists and cannot be the subject of sale, but can be only presented by the farm's owner in advertising materials. These benefits, which are useful to customer, might include relaxing in peace and quiet, adventure with animals, acquiring the knowledge of farming, health, experiencing something interesting.

The basic (actual) product contains a particular offer of sales which informs about what tourists can receive in agritourist farming in return for their money. This product includes the services of accommodation, catering and recreation which have their own location, duration, standard and price. The hosts

specify these services in their offers (e.g. in the form of pictograms) in order to inform customers about what they are paying for.

The expected product is connected with additional customer needs which occur during consumption of the basic product. It can be termed extended product core, created based on experiences and contact with the agritourist farm. These products may include additional motivations, tourist needs connected with improved quality of services, additional facilities, additional information and recreation offer.

The extended (enriched) product covers additional services according to the expected product or the services which are ahead of this product and tourists' expectations. It enriches the basic product and generates additional benefits to customers. This might include certain additional things and services e.g.: free rental of recreational equipment, free transport by hosts to interesting places, unpaid repair of tourists' equipment by the hosts, festive supper with the hosts, gifts from the hosts on the day of departure. The extended product is aimed at enhancing the guests' satisfaction, encouraging them to return to this destination and to make the place distinguished from the competition.

The potential product is composed of all the elements of agritourist product which can be bought by a tourist and includes opportunities for its further development and enhancing the standard in order to form tourist's satisfaction. The structure of agritourist product demonstrates that it has an actual dimension which includes actual product, extended product, potential product and a psychological dimension, created by the product core and the expected product. With the latter approach, agritourist product can be defined by an integrated system of expectations, benefits and impressions which create repeatable compositions of three travels: imagined, actual and remembered.[9]

When considering the definition of agritourist product and its structure in order to better familiarize with its specific character, one can also emphasize its other elements:

- tourist product – tangibilities (tourist equipment, souvenirs, catalogue of agritourist farms),
- tourist product – services (accommodation, catering, transport),

[9] *Ibidem*, p. 157.

- tourist product – event (exhibitions, harvest festivals, church fairs, festivals, sports events),
- tourist product – travels (trips, trekking),
- tourist product – object (museum, monument, cave, natural monuments),
- tourist product – trail (wooden churches' trail, roadside shrines' trail),
- tourist product – area (village, municipality, park).[10]

Independently of these classifications, agritourist product is complex (set of goods and services offered by a farmer), varied (goods and services are varied and diversified), flexible (is adapted to the needs and requirements of tourists), seasonal (there are some seasons of decline and growth in demand for these products).

From the standpoint of a tourist (changing needs, fashion for relax and recreation) and the owner of an agritourist farm (competition and changeable needs of different customers), agritourist product is also variable. It is characterized by a particular life in the market.

2. *AGRITOURIST PRODUCT LIFECYCLE*

Agritourist products, which are the focus of exchange of goods and cash in the market, are characterized by certain life. They go through phases which build a product lifecycle. Similarly to humans, animals and plants go through stages of development: they are born, grow and die. However, lifecycle is not the same for all agritourist products, similar to different duration of life for each human.

Market life of agritourist product depends on a number of factors. Fundamental factors include: product characteristics, character of the needs which the products is supposed to satisfy, scope of innovativeness of a product in relation to competitive products, level of substitutability and complementarity of a product and the factors connected with the level of development of technology and its innovativeness.[11]

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[10] *Ibidem*, p. 74.

[11] S. Bosiacki, J. Sikora, *Podstawy marketingu w turystyce i rekreacji*, AWF, Poznań 1999, p. 58.

Therefore, it is essential to consider agritourist product lifecycle from the standpoint of the owner of a farm. Since sales of this product and the level of profits from agritourist farms increase and reduce depending on each phase of this cycle, knowledge of the cycle provides the basis for making decisions in the area of planning, analysis, implementation and control of products.

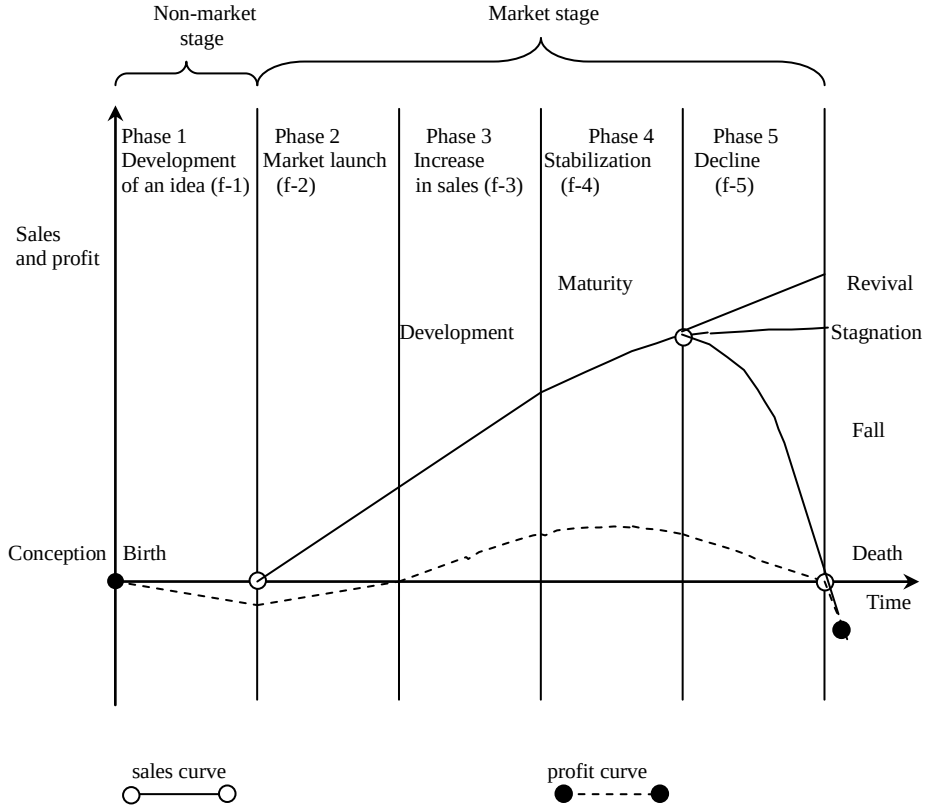

Fig. 2. The lifecycle of an agritourist product (and product in general)
Source: J. Kaczmarek, A. Stasiak, B. Włodarczyk, *Produkt turystyczny*, WE, Warszawa 2005, p. 178.

Agritourist product lifecycle (similar to other products) includes the non-market and market stages, with specific phases of lifecycle the product goes through. This idea is represented by the Figure 2.

Non-market stage covers the phase of development of an idea, conception (f–1) of the product, its design and modification. This phase includes financial

costs incurred for preparation and realization of an idea of agritourist product, thus financial profits are not generated in this case.

Market stage covers phases 2 to 5.

Phase of market launch (f–2) begins the market stage of product lifecycle. In this phase, sales of products are rising slowly since they are unknown to a wider group of customer yet. No substantial profits are generated since incomes compensate for previously incurred expenses. During this phase, it is important to provide information about product characteristics and benefits to consumers. It is more proper to adapt an agritourist product to tourists rather than tourists to the existing product.

The phase of increase in sales (f–3) is characterized by fast growth in sales and the related profits. The number of tourists who purchase the product is increasing, with a part of them becoming loyal, regular customers.

During the phase of product stabilization (f–4), sales reach maximal point: the product starts the period of market maturity, after which a slow decline in sales and profits is observed. This is connected with market saturation and appearance of other products which satisfy the same needs. Therefore, the activities should be taken in order to elongate agritourist product life, which consists in: increasing the number of product consumers, searching for new market segments, enhancing its quality and implementation of new features, extending distribution channels, changing prices and modifications of promotional activities.

The phase of decline (f–5) is characterized by three scenarios for market product lifecycle. The activities used in the previous phase might lead to sales revival. The stagnation might also occur, which shows maintaining the sales on more or less the same level, which might suggest low effectiveness of previous activities and changes in tourist preferences or increasing the role of competitors. The decline or ‘death’ of a product in the market might be also observed in this phase and, in consequence, decline in sales and profits and occurrence of loss on agritourist activities.

Individual phases of agritourist product lifecycle in the market generate problems to the owners of agritourist farms, whose solving requires knowledge of using particular marketing methods. Knowledge of financial and human resources, size and structure of demand in the market and competitors’ activeness is very useful in this case. In agritourism, product does not only mean the offer of agritourist farm sold to agritourists, but also, as emphasized before, product

is also the territory outside the farm (village or municipality) where a tourist stays and visits places.

Tourist area is a product which is specific due to its properties and the multiplicity of its creators. Tourist area is created by e.g. public administration authorities, local self-government institutions, tourist organizations, social organizations, media, local entrepreneurs, including agritourist farms, residents and the tourists themselves.

Participation of individual entities in creation of agritourist area as a product is varied. It is in common interest that cooperation of all the entities in this area is developed.

Creation of the agritourist product as an area which is varied in terms of size, quality and character leads to appearance of different types of tourist space. S. Liszewski emphasizes five types of tourist space for human:

- space of tourist exploration, which is characterized by cooperation of a tourist, a discoverer of this space, with natural environment and local community. This space includes a single agritourist farm and poorly developed recreation infrastructure in this farm and its environment. The agricultural activities taken in this space is a novelty, an innovation in the village or municipality,
- space of tourist penetration. In a particular village or municipality, after the success of first agritourist farm, several further farms are built. Agritourism as an innovation is being slowly adapted and assimilated by a small group of followers. This space is managed in natural and cultural areas at the insignificant level,
- space of tourist assimilation, which emerges as a result of establishment and popularization of more and more agritourist farms, typically based on a success of the others which were established before. A characteristic feature of this space is to become similar to other examples of agritourist activities. Tourists typically enter into contacts with local communities, and the tourist infrastructure is adapted to the requirements and possibilities of the hosts and the environment. Agritourist farms offer their products in more and more professional manner,
- space of tourist colonization, which is created by quantitatively (starting from more than ten) and qualitatively developing agritourist farms. This process causes that the space is dominated by agritourist activities and

the related investments in recreational and leisure facilities and tourist infrastructure, which have the character of permanent tourism-oriented land development,

– space of tourist urbanization, developed during last phase of tourist colonization. The rural environments are added the elements of architectonic, cultural, technical and utility urbanization, which reduces the characteristics of rural character and folk traditions of the countryside. Residents of the cities, being previously tourists in agritourist farms, move to the villages or build 'second houses'. The space of tourist urbanization of the countryside causes loss of natural and cultural values which are conducive to development of agritourism.[12]

A more detailed and synthetic comparison of the types of tourist space connected with agritourist activities was discussed by J. Wojciechowska.[13] This author strongly emphasized relationships between organizers of agritourism and tourists interested in agritourism with the previously discussed types of tourist (agritourist) space, see Table 2.

Table 2

Agritourism and types of tourist space

Types of tourist space according to Liszewski (1995, 2005)		Activities and their consequences in a particular type of tourist space at the side of:			Types of tourist space in consideration of agritourism
			tourists interested in agritourism		
spaces	considering agritourism?	organizers of agritourism	subjective approach	objective approach	
1	2	3	4	5	6
Exploration	yes	individual implementation of agritourist farms (AF) – space with a single AFs	exploration of the space with individual, several or more AFs	agritourist exploration, – numerically individual	space of agritourist exploration

[12] S. Liszewski, *Przestrzeń turystyczna*, "Turyzm" 1995, p. 87.

[13] J. Wojciechowska, *Procesy i uwarunkowania rozwoju agroturystyk w Polsce*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2009, p. 137.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Penetration	yes	adaptive popularization of AFs, – space with several AFs (2–3)	penetration of the space with individual, several or more AFs	agritourist penetration, – numerically insignificant	space of agritourist penetration
Assimilation	yes	popularization and induction of AFs – space with more than ten AFs	assimilation in the space with individual, several or more AFs	agritourist assimilation, – numerically medium	space of agritourist assimilation
Colonization	no	expansion of AFs – space dominated by AFs (agritourist villages)	–	–	space of agritourist colonization
Urbanization	no	–	–	–	–

AF – agricultural farm

Source: J. Wojciechowska, *Procesy i uwarunkowania rozwoju agroturystyki w Polsce*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2009, p. 137.

In the case of organizers of agritourism, four agritourist spaces typically develop and, in the case of agritourists, three types of agritourist space can be observed.

Agritourist space (village, municipality), treated as an agritourist product, has its own lifecycle (slightly different than in the case of physical or services-based products offered by agritourist entities), whose stages are similar to the types of tourist space (Fig. 3).

It is noteworthy in the characteristics of lifecycles of the types of agritourist space to emphasize the last stage, which might be the end of a lifecycle of an agritourist area as a product. The phase of stagnation adopts the form of lack of development of agritourist infrastructure and lack of increase in the number of tourists. The efforts are focused on maintaining the previously acquired agritourist market. In this phase, first conflicts between tourists and local community might be observed. The phase of fall is characterized by quick reduction in the number of tourists interested in a particular area, withdrawal of investors and low attractiveness of the product-space caused by low quality, underin-

vestment and lack of involvement of local authorities. Overcoming these difficulties might result in occurrence of the third phase, i.e. revival, which creates a qualitatively new agritourist or by then non-agritourist product.

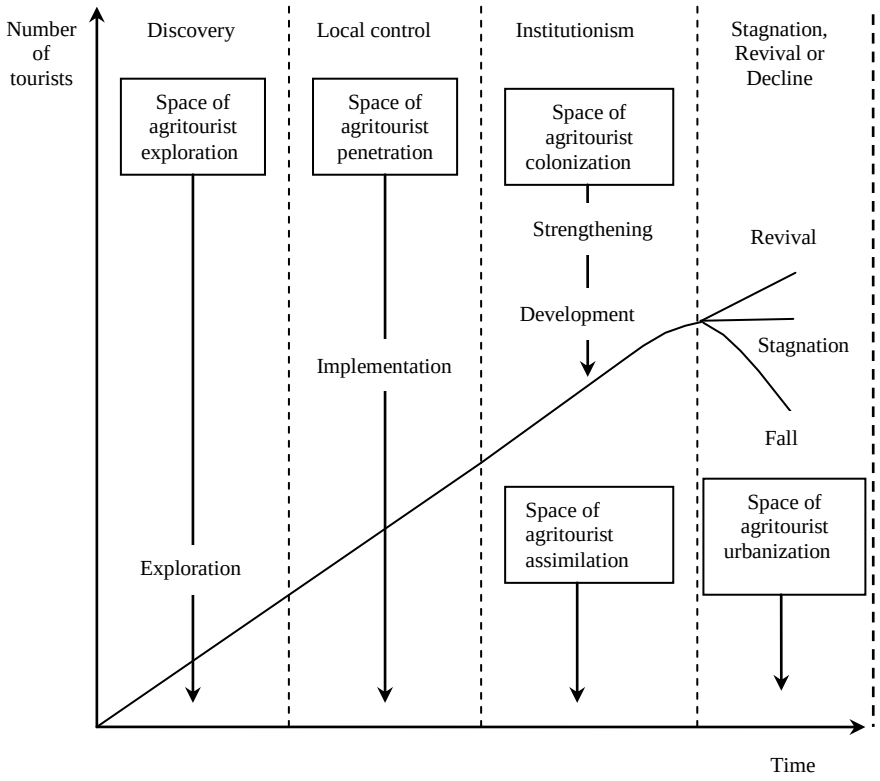

Fig. 3. Hypothetical tourist space lifecycle in consideration of its types of agritourist space

Source: author's own elaboration based on: J. Kaczmarek, A. Stasiak, B. Włodarczyk, *Produkt turystyczny*, PWE, Warsaw 2005, p. 184.

3. QUALITY OF AGRITOURIST PRODUCTS

Quality of agritourist products is a characteristic feature which distinguishes this product from other competitive products. The quality might be considered in two aspects. The first of them is physical quality (objective), which includes e.g. permanence, reliability or safety of use. The other one is emotional

(subjective) aspect, which is related to the features such as popularity, style, customs, and agreement with personal interests.[14] Therefore, the quality reflects the degree of satisfying the needs, expectations and requirements of tourists with its measure being customers' satisfaction.

Fundamental criteria for assessment of the quality of agritourist products include: availability, which covers the location and conditions of arrival, information about product, physical standard connected with technical facilities in the farm (accommodation, catering, recreation infrastructure), landscape environment (nature, culture) of the farm and village infrastructure, safety in the farm and the village, hosts' competencies, including knowledge, experience in services, hospitality and kindness, knowledge and understanding of tourists' needs, reputation, fame and popularity of the hosts and the agritourist farm. In agritourist practice, it does not always happen that the quality of offered products matches agritourists' expectations. The reasons for discrepancies include in particular poorly recognized and understood needs for activity of different tourists, i.e. recognition of the demand.

Conclusions

Characteristics of fundamental problems of agritourist product demonstrate its complexity and multifaceted nature. All the aspects of this product, such as economical, financial, legal, organizational, marketing and psychosocial aspects, reveal its complexity and flexibility. Supply of agritourist products should depend on a varied and changeable demand, which determines their phases of lifecycle. Furthermore, one should match the phases with the strategies of pricing, distribution, promotion and competitive activities.

Therefore, the product in agritourist activity has an essential dimension, which is not only cognitive and didactical, but also an application-related one, which should be of interest not only to the owners of agritourist farms and their associations but also to local self-governments and rural communities.

[14] S. Bosiacki, J. Sikora, *Podstawy marketingu w turystyce…*, p. 56.

PRODUKT AGROTURYSTYCZNY I JEGO CHARAKTERYSTYKA

Streszczenie

Ekonomiczne podejście do turystyki w ujęciu klasycznym zawsze powinno uwzględniać produkt turystyczny, jego cenę, popyt i podaż.

Celem artykułu jest zwrócenie uwagi na podstawowe, a zarazem specyficzne cechy tylko produktu agroturystycznego.

Uwzględniono w nim różne podejścia w definiowaniu tego produktu; przedstawiono strukturę, cykl życia oraz jego jakość. Charakteryzując strukturę i cykl życia produktu agroturystycznego podkreślono jego dwoistość (produkt gospodarstwa agroturystycznego i produkt obszaru wiejskiego).

Podstawą napisania artykułu była analiza wybranej literatury przedmiotu oraz wyniki własnej obserwacji i doświadczeń autorów.

AGRITOURIST PRODUCT AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS

Summary

The classical economic approach to tourism should be always oriented towards development of tourist products, their prices, supply and demand.

The goal of this paper is to present basic and specific characteristics of agritourist products.

Different types of approach to the definition of these products were also discussed, with brief presentation of its structure, life cycle and quality. When characterizing the structure and lifecycle of an agritourist product, the author stressed its duality (a product in an agritourist farm and a product in a rural area).

The paper was written based on the review of selected literature and the results of the authors' observations and experiences.

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AGROTOURIST FARMS ACTIVITY IN PODLASKIE PROVINCE: ASSOCIATION KURYŁY NEAR SOKÓŁKA AND "LOŚ" WIZNA

Introduction

Agrotourism as a form of rest has given pleasure not only among service users but also among farms for whom makes an alternative source of income. The measure of market success is the size of agrotourist product, which is taken into consideration in alliance influence from competition side.

The development of agrotourist farms belonging to Association Kuryły and "Loś" executes with different result. The farms which are in form of organizing become a chance of improving social-economic standard of countryside inhabitants in this region. Planning of improvement processes in a range of agrotourism is mainly of enlightening farm owners about possibilities and chances not only to improve families budget but as well as healthy rest. The area, on which the agrotourist farm exists, is a attractive region in case of tourist potential.

To organize such farms contribute richness of natural, cultural and scenery values and existing mankind potential. The other factor to encourage organization of such farms is poorer quality of soil in particular in region where Association Kuryły works. Productive activity does not bring expected income in

this area and there is a chance to gain additional source of income from agrotourist activity.

Taking into consideration of comparable number of agrotourist farms as well as their dynamic development is to point at doing a research of the topic of commercially viable of income of agrotourist activity. The main aim of this article is to analyse of commercial viability in two out of eleven agrotourist associations, which are working in Podlasie Province. It is worth underlining to that agrotourist farm owners unwillingly declare on their agrotourist profits saying that they do not have time or they do not have proper records or they do not have proper attitude to administration.

1. CHARACTERISTICS OF PODLASIAN AGROTOURIST KURYŁY AND BIEBRZAŃSKO-NARWIAŃSKIEGO AGROTOURIST ASSOCIATION "LOŚ" WIZNA

In Podlasian province function 826 agrotourist farms. The greatest number of them is concentrated and associated in the areas of Suwalski, Augustowski, Sejneński, Białostocki and Hajnowski districts. In Podlasian province there are eleven agrotourist associations.

Kuryły Association near Sokółka was created in 1996 with the seat of Kolonia Kuryły-Sokólski District. This Association consists of 24 agrotourist farms presented below; Agrotourist Association Biebrzańsko-Narwiański "Loś" created in 1997.[1] With its seat in Wizna district Lomza, this association combines 25 agrotourist farms presented below on the map. The aims of such associations:

- undertaking as well as supporting social, initiatives economic, cultural, scientific, ecological and ornithological initiatives as well as others which can be important to develop the province through agrotourism;
- support to local participants in organizing and running agrotourist services,
- co-operation with the others for protecting and preserving natural environment as well as cultural heritage,

[1] M. Jalinik, S.J. Starski, *Rozwój gospodarstw agroturystycznych w województwie podlaskim – fakty i mity*, in: *Innowacje w rozwoju turystyki*, ed. M. Jalinik, Politechnika Białostocka, Białystok 2008, pp. 343–353.

- prevention, applying for financial support and essential support from country's resources and foreign resources,
- forming financial systems and granting credit guarantee, local guarantee and invested founds.

Table 1

Agrotourist associations in Podlasian Province

Name of association	Year of foundation	Headquarter
Białowieskie Stowarzyszenie Agroturystyczne "Żubr"	2000	17–200 Hajnówka
Biebrzańsko-Narwiańskie Towarzystwo Agroturystyczne "Łoś"	1997	18–430 Wizna
Biebrzańsko-Rajgrodzkie Stowarzyszenie Agroturystyki "Czapla"	1999	19–200 Grajewo
Podlaskie Stowarzyszenie Agroturystyczne	1996	Kuryły 3, 16–100 Sokółka
Stowarzyszenie "Agroturystyczne Agrokresy"	2002	Załuki 3, 16–040 Gródek
Stowarzyszenie Agroturystyczne "Puszcza Mielnicka"	2005	17–307 Mielnik
Stowarzyszenie Agroturystyczne "Raj Bobra"	2006	19–100 Mońki Strękowa Góra 24
Stowarzyszenie "Biebrza Koneserom"	1999	16–075 Zawady
Stowarzyszenie "Ziemia Sejneńska"	1993	16–500 Sejny
Suwalska Izba Rolniczo-Turystyczna	1991	16–400 Suwałki
Wigierskie Stowarzyszenie Turystyczne	2003	Stary Folwark 69, 16–402 Suwałki

Source: own elaboration.

The range association activity contains:

- servant training and agrotourism organizers in region,
- accumulation, making accessible and diffusion of agrotourist information,
- organizing conferences exhibition and member of agrotourist organizations,
- standard controlling of "bed and breakfast" basis as well as rules of shaping prices in farms organizing rest,

– accumulating financial founds on organizing and financing statute activity.

Fig. 1. Seat of Kuryły (district Sokółka), Association in Wizna (district Lomza)
Source: own materials.

Membership to association is voluntary, farm agrotourist owners despite the living in other district can belong to voluntary chosen association.

Sokółka urban-rural district lies in east part of Podlasian province near boarder with Belorussia. The area of district carries out 313.62 km^2, what determines 15.27% district area. The population of the district is 26 647 people. The area is situated in the part of "Green Lungs of Podlaskie Province" and it is famous for with picturesque landscapes and forestry complexes. The unique specimen of flora and fauna, which can be met mainly in areas of Biebrzański National Park, is a part of Sokółka district, Landscape Park of Knyszyńska For-

est and area of protected Landscape of Sokółka Hills. About the tourist attractiveness of the district bears witness numerous cultural monuments, relics four Catholic, Orthodox-Catholic, Moslem, Jewish confessions.[2]

Wizna Communty (Lomza District), area 132 km^2, lies on the river Biebrza and the river Narew and as the other districts in the area of Green Lungs of Poland in the neighbourhood of Biebrzański National Park and Lomza Sceenery Park of Narwia Valley. In Biebrzański National Park borders there is situated wide, swampy area in the river Biebrza Valley, and there is the biggest and the most natural complex of peat-bogs in middle Europe. The agrotourist farms which belong to Agrotourist Association offer their clients full living and accommodation and attractive farms of rest. The beauty of Biebrzańsko-Narwiańskiego Landscape attracts tourists not only from Poland but also from all Europe. The tourists can be glad the nearness of nature, taste local cuisines and listen to traditional folk music and songs.[3]

2. THE KIND OF ASSOCIATION RENDERING SERVICES

Agrotourist farms belonging to associations do not command well-organized sporty-recreation infrastructure and do not offer various possibilities of tourist services. The trump of all researched farms are not spoilt natural environment in which they are exist, fresh and healthy food, minimal noise on their areas (small vehicle transport, there are not big factories, firms in the nearest location). In researched time mainly about buying agrotourist product decided everything what was different, meant unique. It is claimed that the success refers mainly to those, who offer attractive products and skillfully use every opportunity to contact with a client, above all they know people's psyche and they are creative. The most numerous forms of products were full accommodation with full living. The carried researches proved that the tourists used only small number of offers (Fig. 2).

[2] www.sokolka.pl, 1.9.2011.

[3] www.wizna.pl, 1.9.2011.

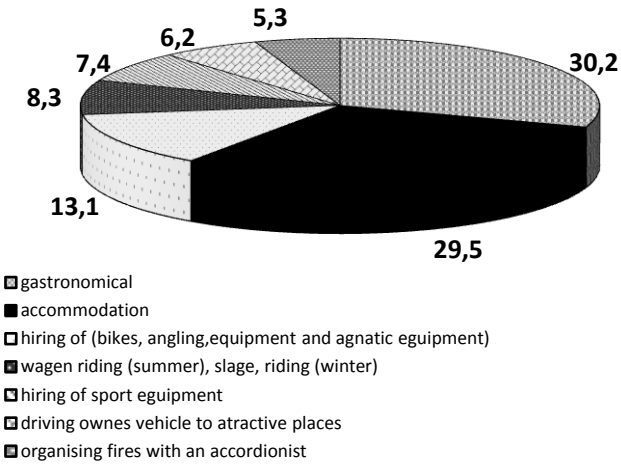


Fig. 2. Rendering services by the owners of agrotourist forms in [%]
Source: own materials.

Figure 2 presents the kind of rendering services from which clients used. There was not shown those ones which owners organized themselves such picking forestry fleece (mushrooms, blueberries and other), angling, hunting, walking, buying farm goods coming from farms.

The survey responders underlined that they often organized events or departures with other owner farm's agreement what had a big role in reduction of costs and assured the attractiveness of staying. The expectations of tourist services were higher than those which farm owners offered. The responders underlined the culinary skills of some farmers, high personal culture, taking care about aesthetic and small requirements to agrotourist farm owners. They claimed that the running of agrotourist farms and staying together with the tourists should be a pleasure but not an inconvenience. In such circumstances the services will be not efficacious.

3. ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH RESULTS

The research on efficiency of agrotourist activity was led in 2009 among 24 agrotourist farm owners of Podlasian Association "Loś" Wizna. To farm

owner were used researching tools in a farm of survey including number of 32 open and closed questions.

Kuryły Association supplied 18 surveys with replies, but "Loś" Association with 15 replies. Choosing those associations was aimed because of comparing farms and comparable number of associated farms and well-prepared managing staff, who was open for every contact with scientific workers. In sum up it was gained 33 surveys with replies for specified questions. The most important questions with the replies are exposed (Tab. 2)

Table 2

Results of research survey Kuryły Association near Sokółka and "Loś" Wizna Association

No	Questions	Answers (in %)
1	2	3
1.	Should, in your opinion, agrotourism improve in your region?	
	yes,	90.5
	no,	6.5
	no idea	3.0
2.	Did you finish any courses, training to improve agrotourist activity range?	
	yes,	66.0
	no	34.0
3.	How can you estimate possibilities of agrotourist development in your region?	
	yes, huge interest,	60.5
	rather yes,	25.3
	rather not,	8.8
	lack of interest	5.4
4.	Do you in a significant way decide about running the agrotourist farm?	
	yes,	81.5
	no,	8.2
	partly	10.3
5.	Are you satisfied of presence on the area where you live?	
	yes,	80.2
	no,	9.3
	I do not care for it	10.5

1	2	3
6.	What motives do you induce to undertake for agrotourist activity?	
	possibilities of improving family budget,	61.4
	enter into relations between people,	4.4
	willingness to sell farming products,	18.1
	make the most actual accommodation base,	8.2
	willingness to transfer local tradition of the legion locality farm,	3.5
	the test of abilities to run such business	4.4
7.	Who do you think should gain the biggest material profits because of agrotourism improvement?	
	local authorities,	4.8
	village residents,	8.8
	farm owners	86.4
8.	Are you able to improve your gastronomic and accommodation base in your farm if it is such necessity?	
	yes,	87.5
	no,	8.5
	I do not have idea	4.0
9.	In what degree income coming from has influence to increase family budget? – please, define percentage (1–100%)	50
10.	How is your yearly income shaping from agrotourist activity in your farm? Please, estimate in zlotys per you	4.5k –12k
11.	What is average cost of one person staying for a might in a farm (living, accommodation, attractions)?	45 pln
12.	Do you personally run book-keeping of your farm?	
	yes,	5.4
	no,	86.2
	it is no need	8.4
13.	How do you estimate the profit of running agrotourist activity in 2009 in comparison to former years?	
	it was lower,	9.7
	it was higher	7.5
	comparable	82.8
14.	Do tourists come mainly	
	from homeland,	83.6
	from abroad?	16.4
15.	What the number of tourist questing in your farm during the year?	
	between 40–80,	22.1
	between 80–150	61.4
	between 150–200	11.3
	over	5.2

1	2	3
16.	What are the profits does the belonging give?	
	farm promotion,	42.2
	experience exchange and activity informations,	34.4
	cooperation between farms,	9.5
	help in European financial means gaining	13.9
17.	What kind of services in your opinion are the most profitable?	
	living services,	18.7
	accommodation services,	16.8
	both living and accommodation,	52.1
	recreation services	12.4
18.	What kind of staying are the most profitable?	
	two week-length,	11.2
	a week-length,	13.3
	weekend-length,	34.1
	a day-length,	26.9
	longer that two week-length	14.5
19.	Which agrotourist activity is the most profitable?	
	farm activity (plant and animal production)	34.7
	agrotourist activity,	16.1
	farm and agrotourist activity,	40.9
	other form of activity	8.3
20.	Is agrotourist activity (out of farming one) able to main a source of income?	
	yes,	15.3
	no	84.7

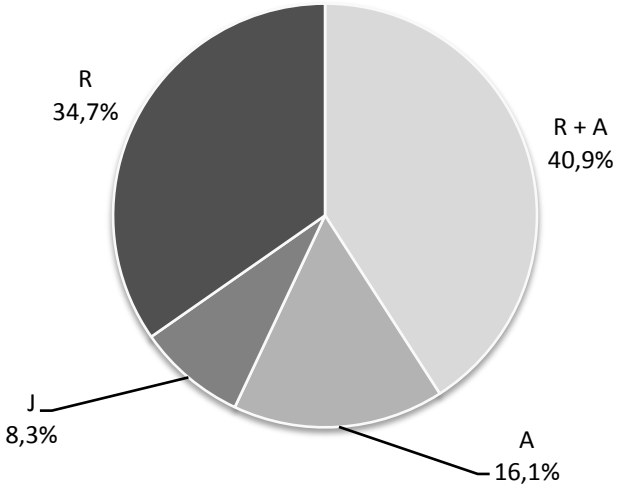
Source: own materials based on survey research results.

The percentage of replies are the average of 33 agrotourist farms. In some farms the agrotourist activity is running by pensioners and retired people, who do not run own farms. It is worth underlining that only 6% functioning farms in both associations are categorized in standard with one sun. It renders services (accommodation, living and recreation ones). If it is higher category, the farm is organized. Belonging to association better the responders estimated as a chance to promote the farms, exchanging experiences and transferring current information as well as possibilities to gain financial support for agrotourist activity.

Research results confirmed that majority of the responders (80.2%) are satisfied with tourists presence on their areas and of agrotourism improvement. Satisfaction in a higher degree is expressed by farm owners at the age under 40 years old, what results from higher tourist consciousness, interests in agrotourism, knowledge of agrotourists problems as well as creativity. Nearly one third

of responders regard that agrotourism brings material profits (34.9%). The responders claimed that earnings from agrotourist activity are not enough to financially maintain the family and it can to be the only mean resource of maintenance for a family in Podlasian Province conditions. The number was 84.7% surveyed responders. The responders regarded, that profits from agrotourist services notice not only farm owners as well as residents of reception areas.

To sum up agrotourist activity analysed in associations in confirmed that the highest profits the owners gain from farming activity (34.7%), agrotourist (16.1%), agrotourist together with farming activity (40.9%) the other (services come from mechanic, transport and specialized one) 8.3% (Fig. 3).



Symbols:
R – profits from farming activity
A – profits from agrotourist activity
R + A – profits from agrotourist and farming activity
J – profits from other service activity

Fig. 3. The structure of farm and agrotourist activities
Source: elaboration from survey researches.

In researching process it was claimed that agrotourist farm owners (excluding institutions or organization) mainly decide about the test development

in their farms, their knowledge, skills and organizing abilities in the highest degree create the success.

The negative results of agrotourist development are not supported by 86.8% of responders. The responders however are afraid of environment pollution made by the tourists, devastation of owners property, noise, robbery, thefts and brawls. The biggest amount of worries manifest the owners of agrotourist farms of Kuryły Association. They are worried about the combustion gases, washing vehicles in rivers and ponds, rubbish, not-extinguished fires, devastating forests, meadows and pastures.

The owners of agrotourist farms would mostly greet guests from west abroad countries because of gaining higher earnings. They see mostly chances gain profits from selling their farming products. Thanks to agrotourism farm owners gain new experiences and qualifications, learn undertaking business, exchanging remarks and views with guests, improve farms aesthetics, locality and district developing their financial budget.

From researches result that making decision about starting agrotourist activity decided the will of gaining additional profits. This motivation inclines 61.4% surveyed to begin such an activity. Agrotourist services give a chance to use accommodation base, technical background, widen contacts, interest tourist of the rest in rural environment or selling products from the farm. This factor was mentioned by 38.6% of surveyed. Many responders see the beauty of lying agrotourist farms. Therefore 61.3% surveyed as a motivation of such agrotourist activity steps mentioned attractiveness of farm lying.

Conclusions

For agrotourist activity influences great number of factors. To the most important ones should be considered; quality of tourist products, requirements, attractiveness of tourist products, process, promotion and fair information. Activities leading to improvement and profits from agrotourist activity should base on correct structure of running all processes, procedures in undertaking decisions and meaning of its realization. The carried out researches in 2009 concerning agrotourist activity profits in Associatious Kuryły and “Loś” let for formulation following conclusions:

- in analysed associations interests of the vest increased in agrotourist farms, there is indispensable improvement of tourist infrastructure and para-tourism in area of their functions:
- the farm owners gain the highest profits from gastronomic and accommodation services and the most profitable is farming activity together with agrotourist one,
- the farm agrotourist owners should improve attractiveness of rendering services which would guarantee higher demands
- the majority of those questioned agrotourist farms are not categorized what means of lower standard of running services
- the majority of farm owners do not run book-keeping of the agrotourist activity
- the agrotourist farms are mainly visited during the weekends and the customers of such activity are mainly homeland tourists.

DZIAŁALNOŚĆ GOSPODARSTW AGROTURYSTYCZNYCH W PODLASKIM STOWARZYSZENIU AGROTURYSTYCZNYM KURYŁY KOŁO SOKÓŁKI I „ŁOŚ" WIZNA

Streszczenie

Działalność agroturystyczna w Stowarzyszeniu Kuryły i „Łoś" jest najbardziej opłacalna w połączeniu z działalnością rolniczą (40,9%), podczas gdy sama działalność agroturystyczna stanowi 16,1%, rolnicza 34,7% i inna 8,3%. Rozpoczęcie i prowadzenie działalności agroturystycznej wynikała z chęci uzyskania dodatkowych dochodów. Ten motyw skłonił 61,4% ankietowanych. Usługi agroturystyczne umożliwiają wykorzystanie istniejącej bazy noclegowej, zaplecza technicznego, poszerzenia kontaktów i zainteresowania turystów wypoczynkiem w środowisku wiejskim oraz sprzedaży produktów pochodzących z gospodarstwa rolnego. Należy stwierdzić, że do prowadzenia działalności agroturystycznej najbardziej nadają się gospodarstwa położone wokół otaczających walorów i atrakcji turystycznych.

AGROTOURIST FARMS ACTIVITY IN PODLASKIE VOIVODESHIP: ASSOCIATION KURYŁY NEAR SOKÓŁKA AND "LOŚ" WIZNA

Summary

The business, agricultural activity in "Kuryły" and "Loś" association is more profitable in conjunction with rural activity (40.9%) while sole agricultural activity makes up 16.1%, rural 34.7% and other 8.3% of profit earned. Setting up and running agricultural activity was the incentive for earning additional money (61.4% of questioned were induced to do that). Agricultural services enable usage of current sleeping base, technical infrastructure, enlarging interpersonal contacts and attracting tourists for rest in rural environment as well as selling products produced in agricultural farms. The most attractive and more suitable are those farms located in full of attractions areas.

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ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF BRAND TOURIST PRODUCTS IN THE WEST-POMERANIAN PROVINCE

Introduction

The basis for developing tourist products is at most times formed by natural and anthropogenic values of a given environment such as climate, attractive landscape or historical buildings. These are often unique and at the same time, they easily get devastated or degraded, which in turn triggers a sharp drop in their tourist appeal. For regions where tourism is a significant economic sector, the issue of environmental protection gains more and more importance. It stems from the necessity to implement the principles of sustainable development, as well as from new trends in tourism reflecting a shift to healthy and environment-friendly lifestyle, which brings about changes in the way leisure time is spent (active leisure) and increasing expectations with regard to the quality of environment in a tourist region (rise of ecological awareness). The West Pomeranian Province, having diverse conditions conducive to the development of tourism at its disposal, is undertaking measures to create brand tourist products which would make the Province stand out from neighboring provinces and achieve a higher competitive position. The brand tourist products proposed are mostly based on natural environment resources, including protected areas of high environmental value. The objective of this paper is to identify the environmental impact of the development of brand tourist products in the West Pomeranian Province.

1. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM PRODUCT BRANDING

In modern day world the paradigm of sustainable development determines the functioning of socio-economic systems by defining the main principles these systems have to abide by. According to the most clear-cut definition, sustainable development (eco-development) is development which is economically justified, socially desired and ecologically permissible. It should be sustainable, lasting and self-sustaining. The foundation for defining its stipulations and principles were laid by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (also known as 'The Earth Summit', held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992) which put forward a vision of a new socio-economic world order that, in harmony with nature, would ensure a further progress of civilization to the whole of humanity.[1] The Conference resulted in the adoption of fundamental principles on which states should base their socio-economic development policies, taking into account environmental conditions, meaning that the principles of sustainable development should serve as a primary framework for all types of activities, including tourism.[2]

The necessity to apply the principles of sustainable development in the process of creating brand tourist products generates a number of difficulties, on the one hand, and on the other, might act as a stimulant. Limitations in the creation of tourist products stem from both the general issues which produce similar effects in various economic sectors (limited space and natural resources, environmental degradation), as well as from specifics of given areas in terms of uniqueness of their eco-systems or their low resilience to change, which make them inaccessible for tourists. Concurrently, ecologically valuable and/or protected areas are becoming more attractive to tourists due to their unique qualities, as well as tourists' growing environmental awareness and knowledge, inspiring the development of new tourist products. The principles of sustainable

[1] Ist United Nations Conference on "Man and His Environment" was held in Stockholm in 1972. For the first time drew attention to the pace necessary to have a combination of economic development with environmental considerations, and as a result of the Stockholm Declaration of the Conference established the basis for international cooperation in environmental protection.

[2] E. Pyłka-Gutowska, *Ekologia z ochroną środowiska*, Wydawnictwo Oświata, Warszawa 2004, p. 261.

development also affect entities operating in the tourist sector. The use of the environment, its resources and assimilatory capacity, as a kind of scarce and protected goods entails certain costs, which may take on a financial form (e.g. water use fee, fine for excessive emission of pollutants) or administrative form (limitations and ban on use of certain goods). In each and every case, the entities are forced to seek new, alternative solutions, which in turn very often raise the costs of operations and hinder management processes. Tourists, as addressees of environmental education, change their habits (consciously or not), which must be reflected in the nature of tourist products offered.

The creation of a regional tourist product (called also area's tourist product) is a multi-dimensional process; such a product comprises several elements, which altogether should form a coherent entirety, with a good tourist appeal. Its spatial structure is diverse, multidimensional and multilayered. A tourist product is spatially determined and comprises a complex set of elements selected with regard to their particular spatial location. An area's tourist product is mostly understood as the sum of tangible and intangible components which form a basis of the tourist's idea about a given place and expectations regarding his stay there.[3] The development of a tourist product should focus on activities resulting in the creation of an integrated regional tourist product, providing benefits to a target group of recipients, comprising both tourists and local people as beneficiaries of tourism development in the region. It can be assumed that the process of creating regional tourist product consists of the following stages:[4]

1. Analysis of external and internal conditions of the process of creating a regional tourist product;
2. Design of the regional tourist product, including:
   a) Identification and selection of target markets,
   b) Development of the concept of tourist product and product range structure,
   c) Development of the concept of brand image creation;
3. Analysis of the profitability of the venture in the following context:
   d) Economic,

[3] E. Dziedzic, *Obszar recepcji turystycznej jako przedmiot zarządzania turystycznego*, Monografie i Opracowania No. 442, SGH, Warszawa 1998, p. 9.

[4] M. Zdon-Korzeniowska, *Jak kształtować regionalne produkty turystyczne? Teoria i praktyka*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2009, p. 58.

e) Socio-environmental;

4. Development of the policy regarding price, promotion, distribution, human resources and other marketing tools referring to the product (marketing mix concept);
5. Commercialization, that is product's introduction into the market place (including monitoring of objectives set and product improvement).

The process of creating a regional tourist product depends on the relations between entities participating in such a venture. Due to the specifics of a regional tourist product, a number of entities participate in its creation, both from the private and public sector. Among them, the most numerous group is made of entities directly involved in tourism, such as accommodation or catering providers, institutions providing tourist attractions, i.e. museums or galleries, as well as tourist information centers. Entities indirectly involved in the creation of regional tourist product comprise tourist-related service providers such as service and sales units, banks, telecommunication or mail service providers. Inhabitants of the region (whose approach towards tourists affects significantly the region's tourist appeal) and tourists (whose decisions distinctly point to products they find attractive) are also involved in the process of creating a regional tourist product, as well as various other organizations supporting tourism development. Local authority plays a pivotal role in the process analyzed, as it can affect in a comprehensive way all elements and entities engaged in the creation of the area's tourist product. Local authority is particularly responsible for the quality of tourist values (e.g. the condition of natural environment), organization of entertainment, sports or cultural events, which either complement the area's tourist product or constitute its major component, as well as for the quality of the tourist-related and tourist-oriented infrastructure, the region's image and tourist business environment.

In times of increasingly fierce competition regarding not only enterprises, but also regions, the sole creation of a good product does not suffice to attain and maintain a high competitive position. Marketing activities which make the region stand out from other regions, often offering a similar tourist product, are indispensable. M. Florek points to the region's identity as the primary marketing tool, alongside other factors, such as a local tourist offer, promotion activities and partnership. A pertinent definition of the region's identity not only af-

fects the unique features and cohesion of a tourist offer, but constitutes the prerequisite for creating a desired image of the region.[5] One of the main instruments used in the process of image creation is the brand, namely a set of qualities ensuring that the product brings a tourist functional benefits and added value, attractive enough to make him purchase a product.[6] A tourist brand enables a distinct differentiation between regional tourist products and it can be identified with a brand tourist product. These can be created and developed:[7]

- for given types of tourist products (individual services, tourist packages, routes, tourist objects or events),
- for given types of tourism (business tourism, health-resort tourism, pro-active tourism, rural or cross-border tourism),
- for various fragments of the region (geographical regions, cultural and administrative regions).

The creation of a brand tourist product in a region provides a basis for creating the region's brand image, which favorably affects tourists' decisions and contributes to boosting the region's popularity and its competitive position.

2. *SUGGESTED BRAND TOURISTS PRODUCTS IN THE WEST POMERANIAN PROVINCE*

The strategic vision presented in the *"West Pomeranian Province Tourism Development Strategy until the year 2015"* stipulates that the West Pomeranian Province will become a synonym of Polish brand tourism as it comes to active leisure, health and spa holidays and inspiring cultural and historical adventure, whereas the province's brand tourist products will be listed among the most competitive offers in the market.[8]

The brand products offered fall mainly into such forms of tourism that can be developed throughout the whole of West-Pomeranian region, throughout

[5] M. Florek, *Podstawy marketingu terytorialnego w turystyce*, Wydawnictwo AE w Poznaniu, Poznań 2006, pp. 170–174.

[6] B. Marciszewska, *Produkt turystyczny a ekonomia doświadczeń*, Wydawnicwto C.H. Beck, Warszawa 2010, p. 68.

[7] *Marketing usług turystycznych*, ed. A. Panasiuk, WN PWN, Warszawa 2005, p. 89.

[8] *Strategia rozwoju turystyki województwa zachodniopomorskiego do 2015 roku*, ZROT, Warszawa–Szczecin–Koszalin 2008, p. 9.

most of the year, so as to level the disproportion between the sea coast area and other areas and reduce the seasonality of tourism in the region. Main types of tourism short listed for the creation of brand products are: pro-active tourism, water tourism, health tourism, cultural and urban tourism.

With regard to the diversity of specialist tourist values in the West Pomeranian Province, the region is particularly suitable for the development of various forms of pro-active and specialist tourism, which is reflected in the number of products proposed:

- cycle tourism – lakelands around Stettin Bay and Kamień Bay, the Oder Valley, sea coast area,
- hiking tourism – national parks (Wolin and Drawno National Parks), natural landscape parks (Barlinecko-Gorzowski, Cedyński, Drawski, Iński, Lower Oder Valley, Stettin Landscape Parks), other lakelands of high environmental values, areas close to Stettin Bay, sea coast area,
- golf – throughout the whole Province, in particular areas which already have or are about to have golf courses (Binowo, Kołczewo, Choszczno, Kołbaskowo, Postomino),
- horse tourism – Drawsko Lakeland,
- fishing – fishing can be done throughout the wholes region, including open sea fishing,
- eco-tourism – protected areas in the Province, as well as ecologically pure and scarcely developed areas,
- hunting – natural landscape parks (in particular Cedynia Park), the area stretching between Biały Bór, Bobolice and Polanów,
- sports and leisure tourism – lakelands and seaside resorts and spots with suitable sports and leisure infrastructure.

The West Pomeranian Province features an abundance and diversity of water areas and water courses, unparalleled on a national scale, which provides a number of options to create **water tourism** brand products based on canoeing rallies, boat races on lakes and Stettin Bay, Oder River canoeing tours called 'Flis Odrzański' or Tall Ship Races. It has led to the selecting of water tourism from among other types of pro-active tourism and attaching great importance to it, as it is assumed that water tourism stands a good chance to become a flagship product of the West Pomeranian tourist offer. Brand water tourism products can be implemented in seaside resorts, spots located along the Oder River, lakeside resorts at Dąbie Lake, Stettin Bay and Kamień Bay, riverside resorts (along Ina,

Drawa, Parsęta, Pilawa and Rega rivers), in the vicinity of lakes (Ińsko, Drawsko, Myślibórz and Wałcz lakelands) and in the vicinity of coastal lakes (Jamno, Bukowo, Kopań, Wicko).

The West-Pomeranian Province is perfectly suited for the development of **health tourism** for a number of reasons. Among the essential features of the region one may enumerate favorable bio-climatic conditions, therapeutic springs (brine, peat), as well as specialist facilities; as additional features it is worth listing favorable location and customer-friendly prices which entice foreign tourists to choose West Pomerania as their destination when looking for health-related services, health resorts, spa and wellness or medical services. Areas holding a formal status of a health resort were pointed to as areas of development of health and spa tourism (Świnoujście, Kołobrzeg, Kamień Pomorski, Połczyn Zdrój and Dąbki), along with seaside resorts where subsidiaries of health resorts operate (Międzyzdroje, Dziwnówek). This category includes also communes trying to qualify for the status of a health resort (Trzcińsko Zdrój, Borne Sulinowo) and seaside and lakeside resorts capable of implementing health tourism projects.

Proposals regarding brand products of urban-cultural heritage tourism are triggered by the fact that not full advantage is taken of the region's cultural values (located both in the province's capital city as well as in smaller localities), especially in the context of the present-day trend to spend more holiday time in urban areas. Brand tourist products proposed also include **leisure** and **recreational tourism**, which is at present the predominant type of tourism in the West-Pomeranian Province, as well as **transit**, **business**, **commercial**, **youth tourism** and **agrotourism**.

The types of tourism outlined in the strategy provide an opportunity for a more sustainable development of tourism in the West Pomeranian Province in terms of space and time (as well as environment), as they enable a creation of tourist products in areas whose potential is currently used, for many reasons, in a rather limited way. Moreover, such an option shall relieve the intense tourist traffic in seaside resorts and extend the tourist season. Simultaneously, focusing on products directly or indirectly linked with pro-active tourism enables to build a region's tourist brand dedicated to this type of tourism, which in turn facilitates the development of a cohesive image of the region.

3. *POSSIBLE IMPACT OF BRAND TOURIST PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT ON THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE WEST-POMERANIAN PROVINCE*

The development of tourist products in a region inevitably entails certain impact on the elements constituting the natural environment. Directly or indirectly, actions aimed at creating tourist products affect all environmental spheres through pollution and increased waste dumping, land occupancy and changes made to the landscape, as well as an increased noise level. Various types of products may bring about a specific type of environmental degradation of, specifically: the atmosphere (e.g. micro-climate changes), hydrosphere (e.g. distortion of water balance which caused by the operations of accommodation facilities and other objects, such as water entertainment parks or golf courses), biosphere (e.g. shrinkage of habitat and depletion of biodiversity caused by expansion of road and hotel infrastructure), lithosphere (e.g. depletion of geological resources caused by their exploitation in the process of fuel production used to heat buildings or meet transport needs).

The anticipated negative impact of brand tourist product development on natural environment has been identified on a direct and indirect level. Direct environmental impact is linked with:[9]

- building development of hitherto open space areas of high, well-preserved natural beauty, due to expansion of the tourist function – and as a result of implementing the indirect goal of leveling differences in the advancement of tourist functions between various areas of the province,
- ongoing urbanization taking place throughout the Province, including rising investment pressure in localities close to sites of high environmental value, construction of sports facilities and related facilities within landscape parks and buffer zones etc.,
- increased anthropopressure on the areas of high environmental value in result of, i.e. creation of new cycle routes, horse-riding and hiking routes, development of a selection of national and landscape parks tours and other offers (in spite of existent, extensive tourist packages offered by the Polish State Forest Administration and National Parks),

[9] *Strategia rozwoju turystyki województwa zachodniopomorskiego do 2015 roku…*, p. 42.

- fragmentation of sites of high environmental value in result of the marking up of new routes, paths and the constructing of new access roads leading to tourist attractions etc.,
- potential negative impact on habitat and protected species limited to certain localities.

Indirect impact refers to:

- occupancy of areas and sites caused by the development of infrastructure, including transport, accommodation and catering facilities,
- increase in the consumption of raw materials and energy,
- increase in the emission of pollution, including combustion pollutants,
- increase in the amount of waste produced in the region,
- increase in the volume of sewage produced in the region,
- deterioration of the acoustic climate (locally).

Additionally, long-term consequences of the local increase of greenhouse effect gases were identified.

The anticipated level and nature of the impact on natural environment differs depending on the type of tourist product. Majority of negative effects can be produced by water tourism as in this case the threats are related to tourism being launched in river valley areas, lakelands and coastal lakes areas of high natural beauty, so far well-preserved, which may cause the increase in water eutrofication and a range of other adverse effects triggered by increased anthropopressure. The development of water tourism requires construction or expansion of diversified tourist and tourist-related facilities, such as a network of harbors and marinas, as well as development of facilities on riverbanks in riverside resorts, which will inevitably mean intrusion in the sensitive sphere of water-land environment. Seaside dunes are the most sensitive and threatened areas, as they also deteriorate in result of extensive development that comes along with typical leisure tourism.

Environmental threats connected to the development of pro-active and specialist brand tourist products mostly refer to areas of high environmental value, most suitable for such forms of tourism. At the same time, these are areas where congested tourist traffic (and thus tourist service infrastructure) may easily upset the environmental balance, and this may result in an irretrievable loss of unique environmental values. In case of health and spa tourism and urban – cultural heritage tourism, it has been assumed that they will be developed in

urban areas, which does not pose any additional threats to the natural environment.

Although a number of potential negative effects of the development of brand tourist products on the region's environment have been identified, the creation of tourist products in line with the principles of sustainable growth should also bring about many positive implications. These may directly refer to the spatial order and aesthetic values of the landscape, while indirectly, the positive aspects prove the rising environmental awareness (as the environmental values are crucial for the region's tourist appeal) and the awareness of the need to preserve those values in the years to come, the awareness of the chance to derive pleasure from the surrounding beauty of the landscape and nature's riches (both by tourists and inhabitants of the region); such products reflect the understanding that it is necessary to protect the environment so as to preserve the region's natural beauty and thus enable a life and leisure in a clean and human-friendly environment. Long-term effects refer to the improvement in the quality of life of the inhabitants of the West Pomeranian Province, including the state the environment is in.

It must be borne in mind that the forecasted environmental effects resulting from the development of brand tourist products are of a rather general nature as the "*West Pomeranian Province Tourism Development Strategy until the year 2015*" neither indicate specific localities for future investments nor does it differentiate between various areas of the region in terms of preservation regimes that must be observed, which disables a full and detailed evaluation of environmental impacts.

Conclusions

The creation of brand tourist products in the West Pomeranian Province may be a chance for developing tourism in the region with a highly attractive location and favorable environmental conditions, which, regretfully, does not have an image appealing to tourists. However, the development of mass tourism requires a concurrent expansion of environmental protection activities whose quality is at the core of the brand tourist products to be offered. The development of the brand products should abide by the principles of sustainable development, particularly in case of protected areas of high environmental value, thus embracing most of the tourist products planned. Major environmental threats

identified in this paper relate to the risk of upsetting the ecological balance which may lead to reduction of biodiversity, progressive degradation and the areas' inaccessibility to tourists.

ŚRODOWISKOWE KONSEKWENCJE ROZWOJU MARKOWYCH PRODUKTÓW TURYSTYCZNYCH W WOJEWÓDZTWIE ZACHODNIOPOMORSKIM

Streszczenie

Kreowanie markowych produktów turystycznych w województwie zachodniopomorskim może być szansą na rozwój turystyki w regionie, który posiada wyjątkowo atrakcyjne położenie i uwarunkowania środowiskowe, ale nie dysponuje właściwie ukształtowanym wizerunkiem wśród turystów. Jednakże rozwój turystyki o charakterze masowym wymaga równoczesnego rozszerzenia działań na rzecz ochrony środowiska przyrodniczego, które stanowi podstawę proponowanych produktów markowych. Ich rozwój powinien respektować zasady zrównoważonego rozwoju, szczególnie w przypadku obszarów przyrodniczo cennych i chronionych, których dotyczy większość planowanych markowych produktów turystycznych. Główne zagrożenia identyfikowane w ich obszarze są związane z zaburzeniem równowagi ekologicznej, której konsekwencją może być zmniejszenie bioróżnorodności, postępująca degradacja i wykluczenie tych obszarów z użytkowania turystycznego.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF BRAND TOURIST PRODUCTS IN THE WEST-POMERANIAN PROVINCE

Summary

The creation of brand tourist products in the West Pomeranian Province may be an opportunity for the development of tourism in a region which possesses an extraordinarily attractive location and environmental conditionings but does not have an adequately shaped image among tourists. However, the development of tourism of a mass character demands a simultaneous increase in the number of actions taken to protect the natural environment, which is the base for the mark products being offered. Their development should respect the rules of balanced development, especially in the case of areas which

are environmentally precious and protected. Such areas are the main focus of the planned mark tourist products. The main threats identified in their area are connected with the disturbance of ecological balance, among consequences of which are the lessening of biodiversity, progressive degradation and secluding the areas from touristic use.

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PUBLIC COLLECTIVE TRANSPORT IN SERVICE OF TOURIST TRAFFIC ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE WEST POMERANIAN PROVINCE

Introduction

The requirement for the development of a tourist economy is the existence of a transport system, consisting of two subsystems: transport accessibility and inter-regional tourist transport. The purpose of the first subsystem is to ensure convenient connections with the most important sending markets, and the purpose of the second one – to facilitate use of the existing qualities, attractions and services-oriented equipment of the reception area.[1] A significant role in shaping of the transport system (with regard to tourist traffic) is performed by properly organized and efficient public collective transport.

The purpose of the article is to assess functioning of public transport (rail and road) and identification of its role in service of tourist traffic in the West Pomeranian Province. In the case of the West Pomeranian Province, the issue is

[1] More information on the role of transport in service of tourism movement may be found in: *Gospodarka turystyczna*, ed. A. Panasiuk, WN PWN, Warszawa 2008, pp. 70–108; *Obsługa ruchu turystycznego*, ed. B. Meyer, WN PWN, Warszawa 2006, pp. 120–130; *Turystyka*, ed. W. Kurek, WN PWN, Warszawa 2008, pp. 164–176; A. Konieczna-Domańska, *Biura podróży na rynku turystycznym*, WN PWN, Warszawa 2008, pp. 57–61; *Transport jako składnik produktu turystycznego*, ed. M. Turek, Europejska Szkoła Hotelarstwa, Turystyki i Przedsiębiorczości, Sopot 2009, pp. 27–40.

important especially that tourism development is one of the major goals, aiming at improvement in competitiveness of the province.[2] On the other hand, functioning of the transport system, first of all, with regard to transport accessibility and inter-regional tourist transport, has a major importance for development of tourism and, consequently, also socio-economic development of the whole region.

1. *PUBLIC COLLECTIVE TRANSPORT IN SERVICE OF TOURIST TRAFFIC – THEORETICAL DEPICTION*

In accordance with the definition included in the Act on Public Transport, this notion should be understood as "commonly available, regular transport of people, performed at specified time intervals on a given transport line, transport lines or transport network".[3] In the opinion of O. Wyszomirski, public transport should be understood as "transport service available for anyone who pays agreed price for transport and agrees to the application of some regulatory transport standards".[4] Additionally, this definition should be supplemented by a statement that public transport refers to all means of transport available for the passenger, and the only limitation indicating the scope of the quoted notion is a criterion of its availability.[5] In addition, such service is most often provided on the basis of a timetable, prepared by the carrier and announced to the general public (regular public transport). Rarely it will be performed individually, in the case of an immediate demand (irregular public transport). Considering capacity of means of transport used for provision of transport services, additionally public collective transport (e.g. bus or rail transports) and public individual transport (e.g. transport with a cab) can be distinguished.

In connection with the above considerations, the notion "collective public transport" should be understood as a service of transport of people, performed

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[2] *Strategia Rozwoju Województwa Zachodniopomorskiego do roku 2020*, Sejmik Województwa Zachodniopomorskiego, Szczecin 2005.

[3] *Act of 16 December 2010 on public collective transport*, Dziennik Ustaw 2011, No. 5, item 13.

[4] O. Wyszomirski, *Rynek przewozów pasażerskich*, Gdańsk University, Gdańsk 1994, p. 31.

[5] For more information: P. White, *Public Transport: its Planning, Management and Operation*, Routledge, Oxon 2009, p. 17.

by carriers in accordance with timetables fixed and announced to the general public, accessible to all users who pay a tariff or agreed price for transport and agree to the application of regulatory transport standards. Additionally, each time this service is offered to more than one customer.

Efficient public collective transport performs an important role, particularly in shaping of inter-regional tourist transport. This notion should be understood as a system of inter-regional transport connections, the scope of which covers both a network of linear infrastructure of transport in the region (rail lines, roads) and point infrastructure (sea ports, airports), and the number, type and condition of means of transport. The purpose of inter-regional tourist transport is to ensure convenient, from the point of view of tourist traffic's needs, transport connections within the reception area.

The level of intensity of passenger streams in public transport is closely related to the occurrence of the phenomena of seasonality of tourist traffic in the reception areas. This situation affects activities undertaken by organizers of public transport, i.e. appropriate local government units, which – noticing a growing demand for transport services – most often choose to increase supply by introduction of additional connections and more voluminous means of transport. A similar situation takes place in case of private transport companies, involved in regular transport of passengers in road transport, which – noticing the possibility of increasing revenues obtained from service of tourist traffic – decide to introduce during tourist seasons changes allowing protecting transport needs of tourists. These activities are undertaken by various entities, most often not related in any way, and their consequence is often a strong competitive fight, which disturbs functioning of the system of public transport in the region.

In the West Pomeranian Province, the system of collective public transport is composed of: road transport and rail transport, providing annually service of more than 63 million passengers.[6]

[6] *Strategia rozwoju sektora transportu województwa zachodniopomorskiego do 2020 roku*, OBET, Warszawa–Szczecin 2008, p. 157.

2. ROAD PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND RAIL TRANSPORT IN SERVICE OF TOURIST TRAFFIC IN THE WEST POMERANIAN PROVINCE

The dominant form of regional public transport in the West Pomeranian Province is road transport. As it seems from *the Diagnosis of Public Passenger Carriages in the West Pomeranian Province*,[7] in 2007 its share in service of passengers using regional public transport was estimated at ca. 65%. The basic core of functioning of public road transport in the province are still PKS (Car Transport Enterprises), however, their share in this market (79% in 2007) decreases systematically each year. On the other hand, we can notice a higher market share of small private transport companies, offering microbus transport (21% in 2007).[8] On the whole, in 2007, to all carriers operating in the West Pomeranian Province obtained total 253 licenses to carry out regular passenger carriages in road transport.

Spatial structure of passenger carriages in collective transport is characterized by a large density on traffic transport lines, ensuring access to large agglomerations of the region (Szczecin, Koszalin).

The second group of transport connections characterized by a large traffic density, in particular, in periods of tourist season, includes connections providing the service of tourists moving to and from seaside resorts as well as strictly seasonal connections, related to service of the strip of the Baltic Sea's coast. They include, in particular, the following connections:[9]

- Szczecin–Goleniów–Międzyzdroje–Świnoujście,
- Szczecin–Nowogard–Płoty–Kołobrzeg,
- Szczecin–Nowogard–Gryfice–Niechorze,
- Szczecin–Kamień Pom.–Pobierowo–Rewal,
- Międzyzdroje–Dziwnów–Pobierowo–Rewal,
- Koszalin–Kołobrzeg.

A large interest of travelers in using services of road carriers leads to an increased quantity of runs carried out by them on the most crowded lines and

[7] *Diagnoza publicznych przewozów pasażerskich w województwie zachodniopomorskim*, Uniwersytet Szczeciński, Szczecin 2007.

[8] *Ibidem.*

[9] Separation was made based on data from the Marshal Office of the West Pomeranian Province, concerning number of granted permits for regular passenger carriage in road transport.

emergence of new companies interested in conducting operations in this area. As a result, in the case of routes such as Szczecin–Goleniów–Nowogard–Gryfice or Szczecin–Goleniów–Międzyzdroje–Świnoujście, subsequent runs take place at time interval of ca. 15–20 min. This situation is additionally changed in the summer season, when a growth in the number of travelers is accompanied by a considerable increase in the number of runs performed by road carriers.

Rail transport, in spite of its smaller share in public transport in the area of the West Pomeranian Province (at the level of 35%) than in the case of road transport, services 10.3 million of people annually, and this figure grows annually on average by 3.6%.[10] The whole of transport work in the region is performed by one rail operator, i.e. "Przewozy Regionalne" ("Regional Passenger Trains" company).

The main rail routes of regional trains include, like in the case of road transport, routes permitting accesses to large municipal areas of the region and servicing seasonal tourist traffic in the province. From the point of view of tourist traffic's needs, the following routes are of particular significance:

- Kołobrzeg–Koszalin,
- Szczecin Główny–Świnoujście–Kamień Pomorski,
- Szczecin Główny–Kołobrzeg,
- Koszalin–Mielno Koszalińskie,
- Kołobrzeg–Szczecinek,
- Sławno–Darłowo.

Number of pairs of trains launched on the above routes depends mainly on two factors, i.e. on the availability of rolling stock allowing conducting transport and on the amount of compensation submitted by the local government of the province to the carrier, in order to cover the difference between revenues and costs of functioning of rail passenger carriages in the region. In practice, rail passenger carriages in the region are a service of public service character,[11]

[10] *Strategy of development of the transport sector…*, p. 159.

[11] It is a commonly available service with regard to public collective transport, performed by the operator of public collective transport, for the purpose of regular and continuous satisfaction of transport needs of the community in the given area, the provision of which, in the case of no compensation, would not be undertaken by operator of public collective transport or would not be undertaken in the same scope or on the same terms due to own legal economic interest.

which results in determined consequences when planning timetables of trains for already operating and new routes. In this case, priority is granted to routes which are to ensure access of the region's inhabitants to and from schools or work. Only then routes important from the point of view of service of tourist traffic are taken into consideration.

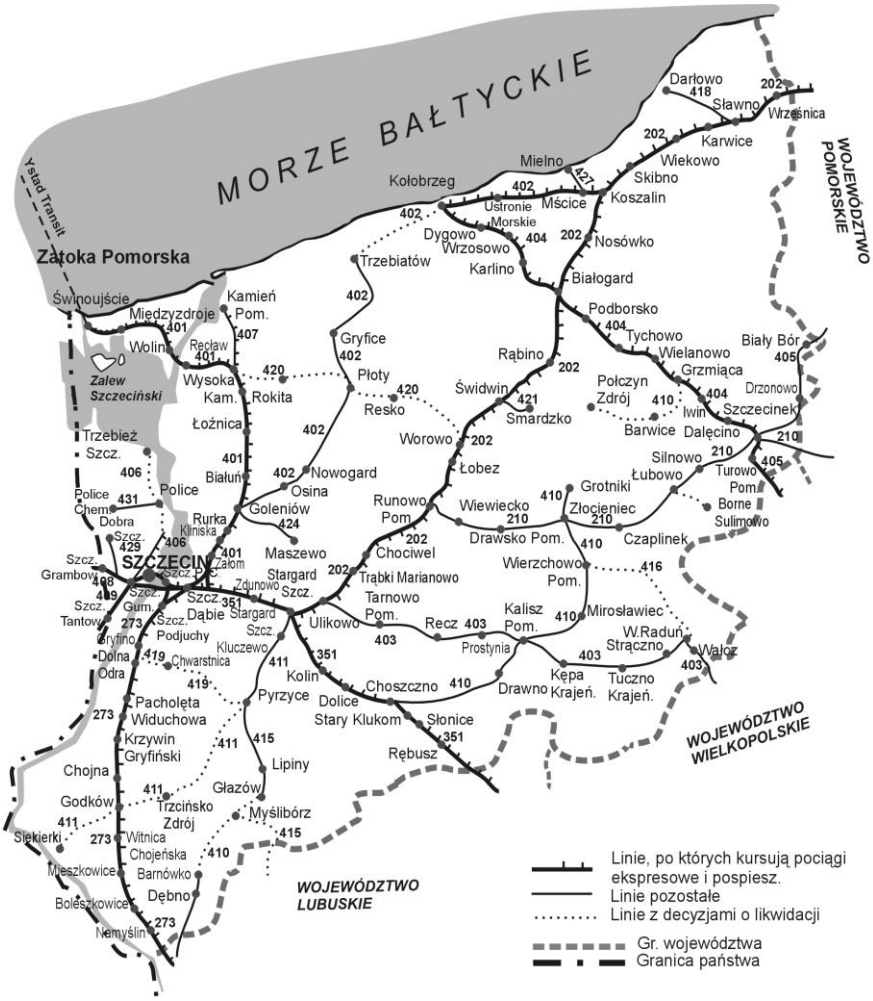

Fig. 1. Scheme of regional passenger carriages in rail transport in the West Pomeranian Province in 2007

Source: *Załącznik do Strategii rozwoju sektora transportu województwa zachodniopomorskiego do 2020 roku*, OBET, Warszawa–Szczecin 2008, p. 106.

In the West Pomeranian Province, main streams of passengers are related to service of seasonal tourist traffic and, thus, they focus on routes running to seaside resorts and along the strip of the coast. In most cases, routes conducted by both road carriers and rail carriers correspond. The exception are routes in the seaside strip, which are serviced only by public road transport. The reason for this is a bad condition of rail infrastructure or its lack. It is planned, however, to modernize and restore traffic of no longer operated section of rail line no. 402 from Trzebiatów to Kołobrzeg and of rail line no. 420 from Płoty to Wysoka Kam. (details of the route of lines are presented in Figure 1). Such a solution would be an opportunity to perform rail transport on routes: Koszalin–Kołobrzeg–Kamień Pomorski; Koszalin–Kołobrzeg–Międzyzdroje–Świnoujście.

The greatest number of passengers, especially tourists, is transported by public collective transport in the summer periods (tourist season).

However, there are no up-to-date and complete data describing the size and structure of passenger traffic operated by the system of public transport in the region – especially with regard to road transport. It results, among others, from lack of keeping statistical records of the number of passengers transported by road carriers. Taking the above restrictions into consideration, in order to estimate growth in passenger carriages in public transport in the region in the period of the largest intensity of tourist traffic, we can, among others, refer to information regarding:

- number of pairs of connections on selected routes in road transport,
- number of pairs of connections on selected routes in rail transport.

The scope of analysis has been limited, at the same time, to routes, in the case of which growth in traffic intensity in the summer season is the greatest. It should be emphasized that these routes, in the case of both forms of public transport in the province, correspond to each other, which results in specific consequences for functioning of the public transport system in the province.

As it is presented in Table 1, the number of pairs of connections on all presented routes in the case of road transport increases during the summer season, and the greatest growth can be noticed on route Szczecin–Kołobrzeg. The situation is different in the case of rail connections, where the number of connections is equal during and beyond the season. The exception are connections on routes Szczecin–Świnoujście and Sławno-Darłowo, where the number of pairs of trains during the summer season increases by 1.

Table 1

Number of connections on the selected routes in the public road and rail transport in the West Pomeranian Province in 2010

Route	Number of pairs of connections on a given route in road transport		Number of pairs of connections on a given route in rail transport	
	beyond the season	during the season	beyond the season	during the season
Kołobrzeg–Koszalin	32	34	7	7
Szczecin–Kołobrzeg	58	65	6	6
Szczecin–Świnoujście	45	50	9	10
Sławno–Darłowo	n.d.	n.d.	8	9

Source: prepared by the author on the basis of data of the Marshal Office of the West Pomeranian Province.

As a result of further analysis of the presented data, it should be stated that in the case of road transport performed under public collective transport, along with beginning of the tourist season, the number of passengers using services of carriers increases, which, in consequence, stimulates growth in the number of connections offered by them.

Increase in the number of passengers traveling in the period of tourist season can be noticed also in the case of rail transport. Additionally, as opposed to road carriages, this increase does not result from or is not determined by increasing number of connections on a given route. In this case, the service of increased passenger traffic is possible, among others, as a result of increased and better use of capacity (transport potential) of rolling stock.

Ratio of filling trains on designated routes beyond the tourist season is at the average level of ca. 45%. During the season, the value of this ratio grows to ca. 60%.[12] In addition, in the event of an increased demand for transport in the period of the tourist season, the rail carrier increases capacity of rolling stock operating on the indicated connections, extending drafts of cars. Such a solution is applied by the rail operator also because of the desire to reduce costs of conducted operations, as introduction of new connections to the timetable is an

[12] Data of the Marshal Office of the West Pomeranian Province.

operation giving rise to far more serious financial consequences than increase in the capacity of drafts of cars within these already existing connections.

It can, therefore, be concluded that tourist traffic increasing during the season determines a greater involvement of entities operating on the market of public transport in service of passenger streams. A symptom of the above are actions consisting in increasing the number of connections on routes connecting municipal areas of the region with tourist resorts or increasing capacity of means of transport within already existing connections. Notwithstanding the scope of activities, it should be stated that the public transport is one of major pillars comprising internal transport accessibility of regions, including tourist regions.

3. TRANSPORT ACCESSIBILITY OF RECEPTION AREAS OF THE WEST POMERANIAN PROVINCE

From the point of view of needs of tourist traffic, another important issue is also transport accessibility of specific reception areas (communes, towns) with the most important sending regions. For this purpose, research has been conducted, concerning rail and bus connections in communes located in specified tourist areas of the West Pomeranian Province. The accessibility with regard to rail transport has been defined by the number of rail connections from a given town (considering, at the same time also the most important town beyond the province with which the commune is connected), while the accessibility with regard to bus transport has been defined by the number of the most important towns, including those beyond the province, with which the surveyed commune is connected. Figures with regard to the surveyed communes are presented in tables 2–5.

From the conducted research, it seems that the best transport accessibility is reported in communes located in the seaside strip, and then in communes of the Drawsko Lake District. However, we can see that in these two tourist regions of the Western Pomeranian Province there are also quite clear differences between different communes. Some of them, i.e. 9 out of 23 do not have rail connections. This gap is, to some extent, covered by bus connections (for instance in Rewal or Dziwnów).

Table 2

Transport Accessibility of Communes in the Seaside Strip

Commune	Rail connections	Bus connections	Rail connections/1000 inhabitants	Bus connections/1000 inhabitants
Świnoujście	47	24	1.15	0.59
Międzyzdroje	38	28	5.78	4.26
Wolin	38	11	3.07	0.89
Dziwnów	0	30	0	7.26
Rewal	0	38	0	10.8
Trzebiatów	17	33	1.02	1.98
Kołobrzeg	24	63	0.53	1.40
Ustronie Morskie	22	3	6.12	0.83
Mielno	0	12	0	2.38
Darłowo	9	10	0.64	0.71
Postomino	0	8	0	1.14

Source: prepared by the author.

Table 3

Transport Accessibility of Communes of the Drawsko Lake District

Commune	Rail connections	Bus connections	Rail connections/1000 inhabitants	Bus connections/1000 inhabitants
Biały Bór	8	30	1.52	5.70
Szczecinek	33	66	0.86	1.73
Borne Sulinowo	0	5	0	0.53
Czaplinek	9	39	0.77	3.33
Złocieniec	14	24	0.91	1.57
Ostrowice	0	10	0	4.00
Drawsko Pomorskie	10	23	0.61	1.41
Węgorzyno	10	11	1.36	1.49
Ińsko	0	10	0	2.85
Dobrzany	0	1	0	0.20
Chociwel	30	7	4.92	1.15
Marianowo	0	2	0	0.64

Source: prepared by the author.

Table 4

Transport Accessibility of Communes of the Myślibórz Lake District

Commune	Rail connections	Bus connections	Rail connections/1000 inhabitants	Bus connections/1000 inhabitants
Choszczno	38	13	1.71	0.58
Pełczyce	0	5	0	0.63
Barlinek	0	10	0	0.51
Nowogródek Pomorski	0	4	0	1.20
Lipiany	0	10	0	1.64
Myślibórz	0	17	0	0.82
Chojna	22	7	1.56	0.50
Moryń	0	6	0	1.38
Cedynia	0	7	0	1.62

Source: prepared by the author.

Table 5

Transport Accessibility of Communes of the Wałeckie Lake District

Commune	Rail connections	Bus connections	Rail connections/1000 inhabitants	Bus connections/1000 inhabitants
Wałcz	6	12	0.23	0.46
Mirosławiec	0	16	0	2.77
Tuczno	0	1	0	0.20

Source: prepared by the author.

Definitely, the most poorly available in terms of transport are communes of the Myślibórz and Wałeckie Lake Districts. Only 4 per 16 communes have rail connections, and bus transport is also poorly developed. Thus, operating transport connections do not satisfy fully needs neither of the inhabitants nor of tourists.

Conclusions

Efficient transport service of tourist traffic, in particular during the period of its largest intensity, requires an efficient, and thereby well organized transport system, including also public collective transport.

From the conducted research, it seems that passenger streams in public transport in tourist regions are generally concentrated in the area of several routes, which additionally causes the need for their proper organization.

Currently, the system of public transport in the West Pomeranian Province is based on two types of transport system: road transport and rail transport. Road transport is still dominated by large Car Transport Enterprises operating on this market. Every year, there are, however, more and more new small private companies, having, generally, several to a dozen or so vehicles, with small capacity, which, as a result of low fixed costs of conducted operations, may, in consequence, take over a substantial part of the market belonging currently to PKS. Increase in the number of entities operating on the market of regional passenger carriages in road transport stimulates growth in competition, and, in consequence, leads to unfair practices applied in order to increase profit from conducted operations. At this point, an example may be a common practice used by carriers, consisting in arriving at bus stops several minutes before the run serviced by another company. Another example of activities conducted by road carriers is cancellation or suspension of runs on regular routes without notifying passengers and authority issuing the permit for regular passenger carriage.

According to the present legal condition, the organizer of regional public transport is the Marshal of Province. In the case of road carriages on regular routes, the Marshal decides on issuing or refusing to issue the permit for running such operations, according to agreed timetables.

Regional rail transport is mainly responsible for ensuring transport accessibility to inhabitants of the province, i.e. for provision of services of public service character. In this case, the local government of the province is the entity which both orders performance of such carriages with specification of the scope of performed tasks as well as covers the difference between revenues and costs of conducted operations for the benefit of rail operator.

For the purpose of efficient functioning of the system of public transport in the region, it is, thus, necessary to implement legal tools that will make it possible for local governments, including local government of the province, to shape its particular areas effectively. Such a tool seems to be the Act of 16 December 2010 on public collective transport, which imposes on local governments of the province the obligation of organization of the public transport system based on

transport plans.[13] On their basis, it will be possible to specify routes in the province that are characterized by the greatest streams of travellers (both during and beyond the season) and, based on these data, indicate preferred solutions.

Comparing transport availability of particular tourist regions, we can see clear disproportions in this respect, especially on the example of rail transport. Apart from seaside areas, lake district areas are the largest potential for development of tourism in the West Pomeranian Province, while their poor transport accessibility still constitutes a barrier. It is necessary to undertake actions consisting, in, among others, restoration of rail lines closed in recent years (for instance on route Wałcz – Kalisz Pomorski).

Transport problems of the West Pomeranian Province are particularly visible in the period of tourist season when the number of tourists increases dramatically. In consequence, access to the most popular tourist resorts is often strongly hindered and therefore may discourage tourists from re-arriving. Thus, it is necessary to undertake, first of all, transport investments of infrastructural character, adjustment of the network of connections to the needs of tourists as well as integration of different branches and kinds of transport with regard to transport to satisfy needs of arriving tourist traffic.

PUBLICZNY TRANSPORT ZBIOROWY W OBSŁUDZE RUCHU TURYSTYCZNEGO NA PRZYKŁADZIE WOJEWÓDZTWA ZACHODNIOPOMORSKIEGO

Streszczenie

Funkcjonowanie systemu transportowego, przede wszystkim w aspekcie dostępności transportowej regionu i wewnątrzregionalnego transportu turystycznego, ma zasadnicze znaczenie dla rozwoju turystyki i, co za tym idzie, również rozwoju społeczno-gospodarczego obszaru recepcji. Znaczącą rolę w kształtowaniu systemu transportowego (w zakresie obsługi ruchu turystycznego) odgrywa odpowiednio zorganizowany i sprawnie funkcjonujący publiczny transport zbiorowy. Celem artykułu jest ocena funkcjonowania publicznego transportu zbiorowego (drogowego i kolejowego) oraz

[13] For more information: *Act of 16 December 2010 on public collective transport…*

określenie jego roli w obsłudze ruchu turystycznego w województwie zachodniopomorskim.

PUBLIC COLLECTIVE TRANSPORT IN SERVICE OF TOURIST TRAFFIC ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE WEST POMERANIAN PROVINCE

Summary

Operation of the transport system, primarily in terms of regional transport accessibility and intra-regional tourism transport, is crucial for tourism development and, hence, the socio-economic development of the reception area. A significant role in shaping of the transport system (with regard to tourist traffic) is performed by properly organized and efficient public collective transport. The purpose of the article is to assess functioning of public transport (rail and road) and identification of its role in service of tourist traffic in the West Pomeranian Province.

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INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS OF TOURISM PROMOTION
THE CASE OF COMMUNES IN WEST-POMERANIAN PROVINCE, POLAND

Introduction

The aim of promotion of a total tourism product is first and foremost the growth of tourism flow in the region. Whoever sends a promotional message, additional tourism flow and its consequences are experienced not only by the organization or company that sends it, but very often it influences the whole economy of the region. The benefits or the costs of tourists' presence in a given destination are passed on to someone else than the producer of the promotional message. Hence, tourism promotion of a destination is considered to be a public good and is financed mostly from public sources. Public support does not imply that promotion of every destination must be conducted by same institutions. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the institutional aspects of tourism promotion in 114 communes of West Pomerania in Poland.

1. THEORETICAL SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM OF PROMOTION OF TOURISM DESTINATIONS

Public authorities have two main options in solving a problem of tourism destination promotion.[1] The first option is to leave the burden of promotion to the private sector, while the second option is public intervention which may take a form of creating or supporting financially a local authorities department, public funded tourism board etc. Private solutions have been popular until the 1960s, when tourism destination promotion was undertaken mostly by chambers of commerce, hotel groups, airlines or railways.[2] Coase[3] argued that in the presence of well-defined property rights and assuming no transaction costs bargaining will lead to an efficient outcome regardless of the initial allocation of property rights. In case of tourism destination promotion applying Coase theorem would mean that tourism enterprises which do not promote region will support those which are involved in the process of promotion as far as marginal benefit will equal marginal cost of contribution (or all enterprises will contribute a tourism organization or a specialized company that does promotional activities). If property rights are on the side of a company which promotes the region (i.e. contribution is mandatory), then tourism companies would pay for limiting the size of promotion to the same point, i.e. as far as their marginal profit will equal marginal cost of contribution. Main obstacle to this solution is the fact that numerous parties are involved in the process which eventually results in high transaction costs. In addition assessing real additional gains connected with promotion is potentially a very complex undertaking. Another limitation of private solution is, endemic in tourism, a problem of free-riding and asymmetry of information. A private solution may work when number of parties involved is relatively small, but even in the case of monopolized (privately or publicly) tourism industry in a region, not all externalities would be entirely internalized, because of impact on local community and other sectors of local

[1] A. Seaton, M. Bennett, *Marketing Tourism Products. Concepts, Issues, Cases*, Thompson, 1996, pp. 350–378.

[2] *Ibidem.*

[3] R. Coase, *The Problem of Social Cost*, "Journal of Law and Economics" 1960, No. 3, pp. 1–23.

economy. Besides this solution would consist of high welfare costs of a monopoly.

Private solutions are nonetheless still used in tourism,[4] especially when the promotional activities are aimed at a specified tourist segment, which makes calculating potential additional benefits easier for parties involved. Thus, Convention Bureaus (CBs) that are responsible for promotion of organized business tourism, more often base on private funds than marketing organizations responsible for promoting the whole city as a tourism destination.[5] In case of promoting business tourism also exclusion costs are smaller. Convention Bureau might not mention non-member hotels in their promotional leaflets and advise potential conference organizers to choose appropriate accommodation and restaurants yet in that case CB is not perceived by a potential conference organizer as a neutral adviser but rather as a representative of a group of hotels. As discussed in previous paragraph private solution would not assure optimal quantity of promotion of cultural tourism.

Public solutions to the problem of tourism destination promotion would consist of direct production, outsourcing of promotional activities or subsidies to private or semi private campaigns. Direct production is the simplest form of public intervention. It involves small transaction costs, relatively constant funding, enables long-term planning and facilitates cooperation with public authorities. This solution, alas, is sensitive to political alterations, lacks of private experience, support in both funding and know-how and, in the presence of developed tourism industry, public funded DMO may not be able to create a consistent brand because of private-driven promotional activities. Therefore, a direct production of a service is often advocated in emerging destinations where tourism industry is still developing.[6]

Previous studies that addressed the problem of institutions responsible for tourism promotion referred mostly to the big destinations like whole countries,

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[4] W. Freyer, *Tourismus, Einführung in die Fremdenverkehrökonomie*, Oldenbourg Verlag, München 1992, p. 427.

[5] Comp. A. Pawlicz, *Wybrane aspekty funkcjonowania Convention Bureau. Ujęcie instytucjonalne*, Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego, Ekonomiczne Problemy Turystyki 2011, No. 15, pp. 95–106.

[6] V. Middleton, J. Clark, *Marketing in Travel and Tourism*, Butterworth Heinemann, Oxford 2002, pp. 327–347.

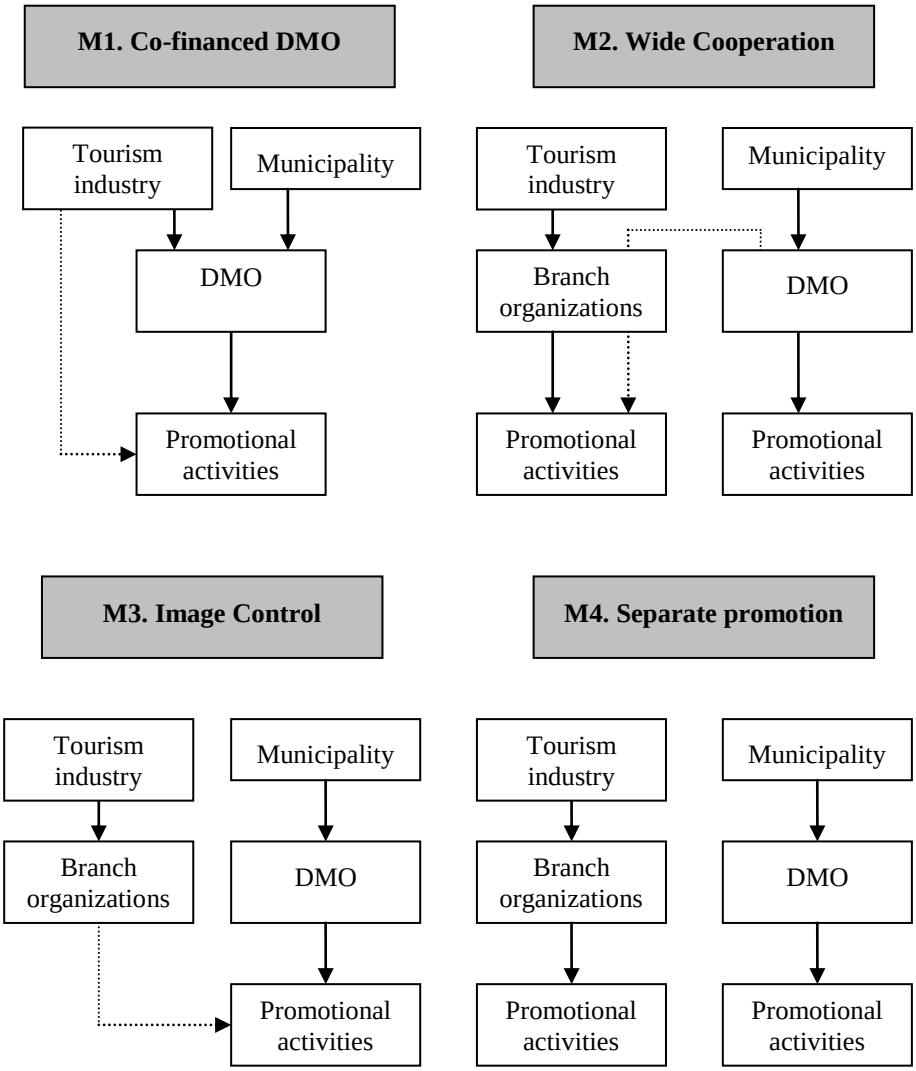
capitals or second-tier cities while aspects of tourism promotion of small communes had been neglected. Still the model of city promotion can be a useful entry point to the analysis of solutions applied in small communes. Previous research on destination promotion processes in selected Baltic cities enabled author[7] to build four models of financing DMO (Destination Marketing Organization – an organization responsible for tourism promotion) as depicted on the Figure 1.

In Gothenburg (Model 1) DMO is financed by both municipality and tourism industry. Nearly half of its budget derives from non-public sources, which indicates tourism industry's tendency to promote is high. Considering the fact that tourism industry bears jointly considerable part of promotional costs (the other part is supported by public sector), it can be assumed that in model 1 the externality problem is solved in two ways. Promotional activities are (1) an effect of private solution (joint purchase of promotion via membership fees provided voluntarily by tourism companies to DMO) and (2) public subsidization.

In model 2 (Wide Cooperation) public authorities settles and finance DMO which is responsible for tourism promotion of the city. Despite its own activities DMO lease (outsource) some projects to industry-based tourism organizations which enables DMO to partly control city's image created by private companies. In the this model tourism destination promotion is produced in three ways: directly by DMO, independently by private industries' organizations (Coase theorem) and produced by tourism industry with subsidies.

In model 3 (Image Control) a vast majority of promotional activities is shaped by publicly-financed DMO. Branch organizations are weaker than in model 2 and interested rather in lobbing than in destination promotion. However they participate in various DMO's activities connected with promotion, e.g. exhibitions. Joint participation in promotion can be viewed as a public subsidy yet most of the promotion is in this model directly produced by DMO.

[7] A. Pawlicz, *Promocja produktu turystycznego. Turystyka miejska*. Difin, Warszawa 2008.



M1 – Co-financed DMO (Gothenburg), M2 – Wide Cooperation (Gdansk, Rostock), M3 – Image Control (Klaipeda, Tallinn, Turku), M4 – Separate Promotion (Riga, Szczecin).

Fig. 1. Destination promotion processes in selected Baltic cities
Source: A. Pawlicz, *Promocja produktu turystycznego…*

Model 4 (Separate promotion) represents a situation where there is little or no cooperation between private companies and public authorities. DMO in this case conducts its promotional campaigns, while tourism industry creates its own organizations and promote the city independently. In this case despite producing promotional activities by public DMO there is still a demand for this commodity amid private companies. It is difficult to assess whether branch organizations promote city as a cultural destination in that model. In Riga CB is concerned mainly with business tourism (although their promotional message contain also references to heritage and cultural events), while in Szczecin branch organization limit its activity to few leaflets because of poor financial condition.

2. INSTITUTIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR TOURISM PROMOTION IN WEST POMERANIA COMMUNES

2.1. West Pomerania

West Pomerania Province (WPP) is situated in North-West part of Poland and is fifth biggest province in Poland in terms of area. Many lakes, long Baltic coast, Odra and other rivers together with scarcity of heavy industry make this region particularly attractive to tourists. There are over 100 thousand places in collective accommodation establishments in WPP which makes nearly 1/5 of total number of places in Poland. Still, only less than a half of them is available all year round. WPP is administrative divided into 21 counties *(pl. powiat)* which are further divided into 114 communes (*pl. gmina*). Out of all 114 communes, 51 can be called rural communes (there are no town on their territory). Average communes' area is about 200 km^2 and population is around 14 900 citizens.

2.2. Methodology of the study

The main research tool was a questionnaire the has been sent to all communes via e-mail (in February 2011). The questionnaire consisted of just 5 questions in order to assure a high response rate. Those communes that did not answer the questionnaire within 2 days had been called and inquired about the problem in question. This enabled author to obtain necessary information from all 114 communes in West Pomerania.

Additional survey had been conducted via e-mail in April 2011. It focused on the problems concerning efficiency of tourism promotion but provided also additional data to the institutional aspects of tourism promotion in West Pomerania.

2.3. Study results

Out of all 114 communes 56 (nearly half) answered the questionnaire by an e-mail. Representatives of 40 communes provided answer within 24 hours while 10 answered next day and 6 two days after receiving survey. The rest, i.e. 58 communes needed to be called to acquire data for the study. No significant differences between rural and no-rural communes could be observed (47% of rural communes answered an e-mail survey vs. 52% in others, the average response time in rural communes was 0.375 days while in others it was 0.41 days on average).

Only in 2 communes there are neither an established DMO nor even people responsible for tourism promotion. Still, in both cases the responsibility is taken over by a neighboring commune which have a proper DMO. Out of 112 remaining communes 61 respondents included in the answer the department where they are employed. Most of DMOs were just departments within the municipality, but in 8 cases it was a non governmental (NGO) organization supported from public sources (this kind of NGOs are referred in the literature as *quangos* – quasi autonomous non governmental organization, because there anyway rely heavily on public money and generally obey all suggestions from the authorities).[8] There were 9 communes where there were no DMO but their task has been performed by other departments (such as culture or sport department) (Fig. 2). The private involvement in the tourism promotion therefore seem to be marginal. No significant differences between rural and non-rural communes could be observed.

[8] Comp. J. Heeley, *Public-private sector partnerships in tourism*, in: *Tourism and Hospitality in the 21st century*, ed. A. Lockwood, S. Medlik, Butterworth Heinemann, Devon 2003, pp. 275–280.

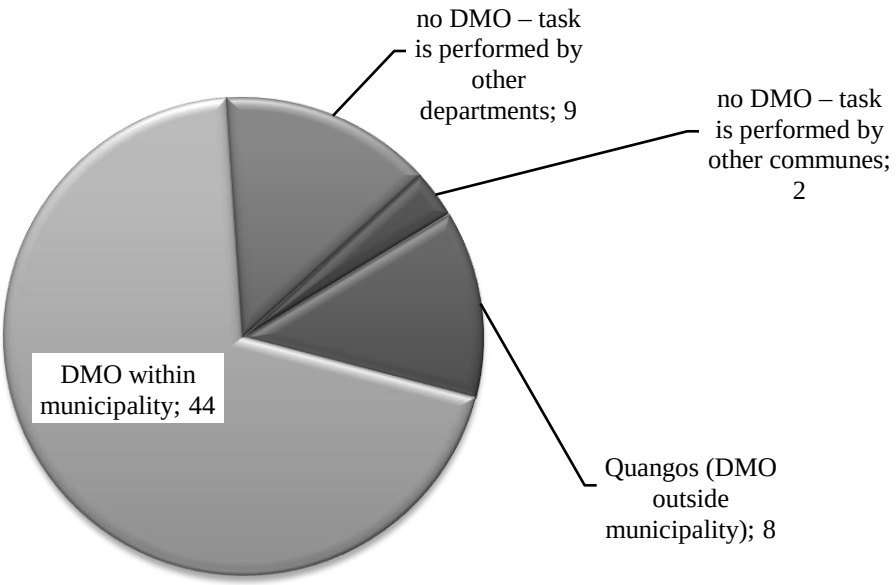


Fig. 2. Different institutional settlement of tourism promotion in West Pomeranian communes (n = 63)
DMO – Destination Marketing Organization, quangos – quasi autonomous non governmental organization.
Source: own elaboration.

It is worth noting that almost every department responsible for tourism promotion had a unique name. The most common name was "Promotion department" (*Pol*. Wydział Promocji) (17), than Promotion Section (5) (*Pol*. Dział Promocji) and among quangos Tourism Information Centre (5). The rest had a unique or almost unique (shared just with one other commune) name. This creates problems for organizations that seek a contact with DMOs (e.g. conference organizers). Since unification of departments names and organization of promotion in regions would be costly and probably inefficient, at least a common database should be created and maintained at the province level. This would facilitate cooperation also between communes and vastly decrease information asymmetry in tourism market.

People dealing with tourism promotion were mostly women. Out of 112 communes 108 provided information about gender of employee that is a head of department (or is just responsible for promotional activities). 74 (69%) of them

were women, while only 34 (31%) were male. This difference were greater in rural communes where out of 48 communes tourism promotion head was female in 36. It means that in rural communes female employees constitute 75% of communes officers responsible for tourism promotion (Fig. 3).

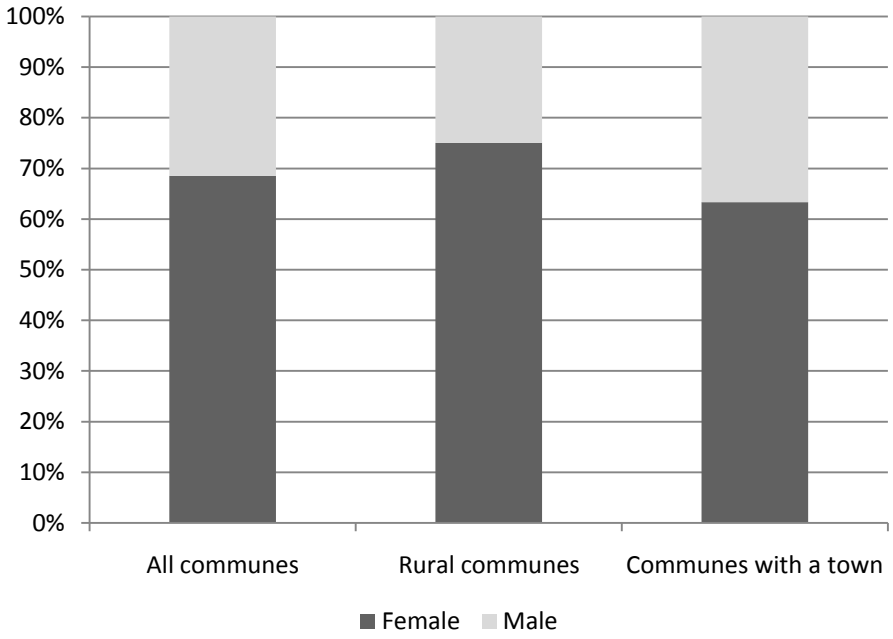


Fig. 3. Gender differences within heads of tourism departments
Source: own elaboration.

Conclusions

The findings obtained from the study generally confirm V. Middleton and J. Clark assumption that in small and developing regions the responsibility of tourism promotion is taken by public authorities. In most communes tourism promotion is steered directly from the commune's office while there just few cases where DMOs are NGOs. DMOs that are responsible for tourism promotion in communes can be only with great caution compared with those responsible for promotion in big cities. The model of their public support could resemble the model 2 and model 3 from the Figure 1 with that difference that tourism

branch in case of commune promotion are much less involved in any promotional undertakings.

Further research should be aimed at the effectiveness of tourism promotion in communes and links to the chosen institutional solution. Moreover the relationship between employment, institution and tourism flow in the region requires more research.

INSTYTUCJONALNE ASPEKTY PROMOCJI TURYSTYKI W GMINACH NA PRZYKŁADZIE WOJEWÓDZTWA ZACHODNIOPOMORSKIEGO

Streszczenie

Celem badań przedstawionych w artykule było określenie, jakie instytucje w gminach województwa zachodniopomorskiego zajmują się promocją lokalnych atrakcji turystycznych. Po omówieniu teoretycznych podstaw finansowania organizacji odpowiedzialnych za promocję obszarowego produktu turystycznego podano wyniki wcześniejszych badań autora dotyczących instytucjonalnych form promocji w dużych miastach. Następnie zaprezentowano najważniejsze wyniki badań w gminach województwa zachodniopomorskiego i dokonano odniesienia do wcześniejszych badań oraz podstaw teoretycznych.

INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS OF TOURISM PROMOTION

THE CASE OF COMMUNES IN WEST-POMERANIAN PROVINCE, POLAND

Summary

The main aim of the paper was to determine which departments of communes are responsible for tourism promotion at the local level in West-Pomeranian Province. After describing theoretical foundations of financing promotion of tourism products, article summarizes results of the survey conducted among all 114 communes in West-Pomeranian Province and author's previous studies from that area. Conclusions and managerial implications constitute the last part of the paper.

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ATTRACTIVENESS OF INVESTMENTS OF LUBUSKIE PROVINCE TRI-CITY COMMUNES

Introduction

Within the era of free market economy, soliciting for potential investors seems to be the key element of territorial policy. It does not only refer to such vast areas as the state but mostly to smaller area – i.e. provinces, and in particular – communes. Successive investments do not only bring social and economic benefits but also increase the revenues of self-government units, as well as strengthen the significance of communes within a region with a simultaneous promotion, affecting the attractiveness of investments, and consequently increasing the attractiveness of tourism. Such attractiveness is mostly dependent on self-government authorities. These are the authorities that possess the decisive and executive power within the scope of attracting an investor to their area. Also, it often happens that the nature of investment has enormous influence on the perception of a commune, not only from the perspective of investment but also tourism.

The evaluation of the attractiveness for investment and tourism using such indicators is currently very topical, and has been dealt with in studies by

D. Milewski (2005),[1] R. Pawlusiński (2008), G. Gołembski (2002),[2] M. Januszewska and R. Przeorek-Smyka (2005)[3] and A. Przybylska (2010).[4]

1. RESEARCH AIMS

The aim of the article is to present communes of Lubuskie Province Tri-city as an initiative accelerating economic development within the region. The influencing driving force is the annually conducted ranking[5] as an assessment of pre-election promises of self-government authorities. The assessment criteria of self-government authorities were prepared on the basis of synthetic indicators estimated on four values characterizing the analyzed communes: commune own revenue, the scale of investments, ability to obtain finances from the outside and the level of earnings obtained by a statistical commune inhabitants and the revenues of commune economic entities.[6] The research aims were to determine the interdependency between investment attractiveness and the commitment of the local authorities to development. The Ranking performed constitutes the basis to conclude the investments launched by self-government authorities and allows to confront the investments or lack of the investments with the level of tourist attractiveness presented by the analyzed communes. The assessment of tourist attractiveness was made on the basis of the indicators characterizing the advantages and resources of nature as well as elements of anthropogenic develop-

[1] D. Milewski, *Regionalne uwarunkowania rozwoju turystyki na przykładzie województwa zachodniopomorskiego*, Uniwersytet Szczeciński, Szczecin 2005.

[2] *Metody stymulowania rozwoju turystyki w ujęciu przestrzennym*, ed. G. Gołembski, Wydawnictwo Akademii Ekonomicznej, Poznań 2002.

[3] M. Januszewska, R. Przeorek-Smyka, *Pomiar i ocena atrakcyjności turystycznej Euroregionu Nysa*, in: *Współpraca i integracja w turystyce w Euroregionie Nysa w perspektywie członkostwa w Unii Europejskiej*, ed. A. Rapacz, Wydawnictwo Akademii Ekonomicznej we Wrocławiu, Wrocław 2005.

[4] A. Przybylska, *Rozwój turystyki w gminach dolnego odcinka doliny Obry*, PHD thesis, 2010.

[5] I Ranking of Lubuskie Voivodeship Tri-city communes, 2005; II Ranking of Lubuskie Voivodeship Tri-city communes, 2006; III Ranking of Lubuskie Voivodeship Tri-city communes, 2007; IV Ranking of Lubuskie Voivodeship Tri-city communes, 2008; lubuskietrojmiasto.pl, 2.10.2010.

[6] PIT and CIT revenues.

ment. The assessment also covered the accommodation and tourism within the area of Lubuskie Province Tri-city communes. The tourist attractiveness of these communes constituted a fragment of wide-scale research on tourist and investment attractiveness of the whole Lubuskie Province conducted by the author within the years of 2006–2009.

2. RESEARCH FIELD

Lubuskie Province Tri-city is the combination of three cities of Lubuskie Province. The area is located in the western Poland and covers the area of 87 km^2, inhabited by around 300 thousand people. A natural conjunction of the three cities is the Odra River. The location on the map of Poland and Europe is convenient enough as the area is crossed by international traffic routes, both rails and roads. The area may also be reached by plane with its Zielona Góra – Babimost airport.

"Lubuskie Province Tri-city" is at the same time an association created on the basis of the concept of Zielona Góra, Sulechów and Nowa Sól aimed at integrating local self-governments with other non-governmental organizations to obtain best results within: joint infrastructural investments, creation of new economic projects as well as common care for the labor market or cultural environment. On April the 7, 2004, an agreement was signed in Nowa Sól comprising: joint action within the scope of economy and management of municipal infrastructure of towns, the support for self-government ideas, common promotion of towns/cities, management of communication infrastructure of towns/cities and protection of natural environment and water economy. The initiative was accomplished in 2006. Since then, the administrative units covered by the Association area (19 communes) have been acting dynamically and already have advanced targets within:

- preparation of documents including procedures which will create information order at the local level,
- creation of communication tools between public services and commune inhabitants,
- providing commune inhabitants with access to public information and, thus, the possibility of controlling the authorities and influencing decisions concerning the development directions of the inhabited area,
- annually conducted rankings of Lubuskie Province Tri-city communes,

- preparation of the model of social consulting during the work on the commune development strategy,
- monitoring of the local press,
- creation of a web site.

As Lubuskie Province Tri-city is to act as a 'helping hand' held out to potential investors, and a constant development of that area is to ensure strengthening of economic and investment potential of the region apart from a wide investment offer, the self-government authorities assess and compare themselves against the other communes of the Association and publish annual rankings[7] as an element driving the improvement of investment attractiveness of the region. The rankings were prepared on the basis of official documents, Internet websites and questionnaires filled in by self-government authorities, analyzed within 2005–2008.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The reports were based on information gathered through survey questionnaires carried out in local government administrations in the region. The survey took the following indicators into consideration: human capital, level of PIT (Personal Income Tax) and CIT (Corporate Income Tax) returns achieved by the municipalities over the course of the years studied, local costs against a background of other similar units, levels of cooperation with the business sector and incentives for businesses and investors (the area of special economic zones in hectares, the number of new companies formed within the municipality based on *Regon* National Business Register numbers), the number of investments in which BIZ (Direct International Investments) were involved, a municipality's budget deficit levels, the amount of a municipality's budget allocated to investments concerning environmental protection, EU funding gained as a whole and also calculated per municipality inhabitant, spending on education, on promotion, social welfare and GDP per capita and unemployment and migration rates all within a municipality.

[7] The Ranking of Lubuskie Voivodeship Tri-city was prepared by K. Chmielnik together with the Dialog-Cooperation-Development Association.

The questionnaires[8] returned by the commune and the non-confidential sources enabled the construction of synthetic indicators, characterizing at the same time:

- the amount of commune revenue – directly connected with the amount of revenue of companies and inhabitants, constituting one of the key criteria of the management by commune administrators, mayors and presidents,
- scale of investment – often viewed as future prosperity. The research shows that it does not mean that the communes which do not invest put aside surplus funds. Such funds are usually spent on small current needs,
- capacity to obtain funds from the outside for investments – a significant indicator of the activity of self-government authorities e.g. during contacts with the UE,
- level of earnings obtained by an average commune inhabitant and the level of commune revenue obtained from the activity of economic entities. The indicator is significant as the higher the taxes paid by the inhabitants and companies, the higher the tax revenues for the commune and, at the same time, greater financial possibilities of commune authorities.

Each indicator was assigned with a hierarchy – the significance level (expressed in percentage) within the economic development of the region. The commune own revenue was established at the significance level of 10%, the level of investments accomplished at 30%,[9] the level of funds obtained from outside sources – 40%, and the amount of personal and corporate income taxes as calculated per capita – significance level of 20%.[10]

[8] In 2005 the ranking covered 14 communes, in 2006 – 18 communes, and in 2007 and 2008 – 19 communes.

[9] It is owing to investments that each commune has the potential to develop.

[10] It is this indicator that presents best the financial situation of dwellers. It also indicates a real capacity of self-government authorities of supporting local entrepreneurial skills and development of local labor market.

4. 2005 RANKING RESULTS

The size of the indicators included depends on the size and nature of a given commune, and it mostly results from the opportunities available. Considering the above, Zielona Góra received the highest values of the analyzed indicators. Only the analysis of income taxes was more beneficial for Nowa Sól, which was the next big town ranking at the second position in the remaining categories. By viewing all communes, analogical effects might be obtained. The amount of the assessed indicators is absolutely dependent on the size and the nature of a commune. Therefore, the indicator was changed for an algorithm of the previously assessed value. It was performed by recounting the amounts by presenting them per capita. Therefore, revenue, investments, EU funds and tax revenues were presented in Figures, between 2–5. The results of the changed ranking were not dependent on commune characteristics. In this case, the highest algorithm of the synthetic indicator was obtained by Bytom Odrzański, then Zielona Góra and at the third place – Trzebiechów.

5. 2006 RANKING RESULTS

Despite the same indicators applied, the ranking results were totally different than a year earlier. The best communes were respectively: Bytom Odrzański, Czerwieńsk and Nowogród Bobrzański. Zielona Góra was placed at the fourth position and Trzebiechów – the sixth. Partial results of the analyses conducted clearly indicate a vast diversity of communes within the scope of analyzing economic indicators. Within the examination of individual investments made by a commune, the best are: Świdnica, Bytom Odrzański and Babimost, while analyzing the amounts of funds received from the UE, the best communes are: Czerwieńsk, Nowogród Bobrzański and Bytom Odrzański. Apart from that, Trzebiechów is also a serious and strong leader. The indicator of obtaining funds may not be interpreted independently, as it might be unjust for most of the communes.

It so happens as the UE forces communes to invest first with their funds and upon the completion of an undertaking it returns the guaranteed outlay. The amount of tax revenue indicated that there are huge differences in earnings of inhabitants between the analyzed communes. The leading commune in this re-

spect is undoubtedly Zielona Góra, the remaining communes have the values of revenues of around 30% lower or even less.

Partial analyses make clear and visible the diversity of commune investments counted per capita. Świdnica commune is the leader in this category as it spends eight times more funds than Bojadła commune. Besides, the results of the II Ranking indicate that the area of Lubuskie Province Tri-city covers an area of relative poverty. The communes of the eastern and southern part of Lubuskie Province Tri-city, located at the eastern bank of the Odra River, are characterized by less advanced development.

Additionally, the numbers within separate numerical data shall be compared. For example, the relatively high commune own revenues shall be followed by huge investment outlays. The revenues of Zielona Góra are not proportionate with investment outlays. Communes characterized by much lower revenues show much higher investment indicator (e.g. Świdnica, Nowogard, Trzebiechów).

6. 2007 RANKING RESULTS

The third ranking in a row provides the possibility of reporting statistical changes within particular years. Such data much reduce the role of coincidence and present some processes and rules. This is the first stage where one may state whether the activities of self-government authorities performed in recent years lead to positive or negative results. What is more, the ranking is not only a source of rivalry for higher position among the communes included in the Association, but it allows for rational assessment of efforts of self-government authorities, expressed in numbers from their own budget.

The commune which achieved the highest algorithm of the synthetic indicator is Bojadła commune and respectively: Zielona Góra city, communes of Babimost, Świdnica, Sulechów and Bytom Odrzański. Bojadła owns its high position within the ranking to the amount of granted EU funds. The authors of the ranking view the top position of Zielona Góra city within the ranking due to historical reasons, depicting cities only as an area of metropolitan nature rather than operating actively.

Only three communes have revenues below the national average; however, the difference between the revenues is significant. As many as 12 communes may be considered as passive communes within the field of investment. It so

happens due to the indicator achieved, which is often lower than 20%. Still, however, in this case one may not correlate the amount of own revenues with the level of investment, as e.g. Kożuchów commune, of the lowest budget revenue, invests at the level of 27%. Bojadło commune, in this category, was awarded an additional prize for pro-investment budget which resulted from obtaining the highest investment indicator or revenues at the level of 48%.

In the ranking, additional funds were classified as outside sources (apart from the ones obtained from the EU). These were funds obtained within agreements between communes, applied for only by three communes – Zielona Góra (city), Zielona Góra (village) and Świdnica. The best applying communes were: Bojadła, Babimost, Zielona Góra, Świdnica and Bytom Odrzański. Despite receiving huge financial support, the result reduces its significance in the event of calculating it per capita, e.g. Zielona Góra received a huge financial support but the support counted per capita is small.

The results of indicators obtained within the revenues of PIT and CIT indicated positive impact of the province capital on neighboring communes. In this case, Zielona Góra obtained the highest indicator values, followed respectively by the neighboring communes of Świdnica and Sulechów. Unfortunately, the analysis also proved a huge financial disproportion between the poorest and the richest inhabitant of Lubuskie Province Tri-city.[11]

7. 2008 RANKING RESULTS

The construction of the algorithm indicated that an ideal commune may receive maximum 5 points. During the analyzed year, Świdnica approached the result obtaining an indicator at the level of 4.44. The commune received at the same time the highest values within the scope of investment. The second position was occupied by Zielona Góra and the third by Bojdała commune. A detailed character of indicators does not significantly differ from the values obtained by the commune in previous years.

The analysis of an indicator allows for drawing the following conclusions:

[11] In this case, Zielona Góra is the richest commune and the poorest – Kolsko (six times lower value).

- most communes are characterized by a strong upward trend within own budget revenue, only 6 communes within the analyzed research period experienced a decrease in revenue,
- the communes considered in 2005 as one of the weakest did not become the leading ones, but they decreased the disproportion between the other communes,
- PIT and CIT revenues depend on the pro-economic objective of a commune,
- all communes show an increase of PIT and CIT revenues. It seems that the communes might be classified according to the individual prosperity of inhabitants. The leaders are: Zielona Góra (city and commune), Świdnica and Sulechów, followed by administrative units characterized by slower pace of development: Kargowa, Babimost and Nowa Sól,
- data obtained on the basis of 2005–2008 ranking allow for the conclusion that the communes of Lubuskie Province Tri-city are experiencing economic advancement.

The above data have been compared with the tourist attractiveness of the analyzed communes against all communes of Lubuskie Province. The assessment of attractiveness was performed on the basis of the following indicators: culture and art, forestation, condition and protection of the environment and tourism. Each of the named sections included a few measures, with the total number of 11. Next, on the basis of the data[12] obtained, the estimation of the synthetic measure for each type of a commune was performed. The comparative base for the communes of Lubuskie Province Tri-city was the whole Lubuskie Province.

8. RESULTS OF TOURIST ATTRACTIVENESS OF LUBUSKIE PROVINCE TRI-CITY COMMUNES

Within the category of culture and art, the factors assessed were: the number of libraries within a commune, the number of cultural and sports events with

[12] Data obtained from Central Statistical Office, www.stat.gov.pl and the website of the Institute of Tourism – commune base 2007, as well as questionnaires.

the differentiation of scope (local, regional, national and international) as well as the number of artistic teams operating within the area.

With such indicators, the highest values among the communes of Lubuskie Province Tri-city were received by Zielona Góra, which at the same time had the second highest value of the synthetic indicator within the whole Lubuskie Province (only Gorzów Wielkopolski had higher value). The situation is rather not surprising as the analyzed measures are significantly dependent on the size and nature of a commune. The most attractive Tri-city communes within the scope of culture and art that followed were: Sulechów (g.p.[13] – 4), Kożuchów, (g.p. – 11), Nowa Sól (g.p. – 19), Czerwieńsk (g.p. – 20) and Nowe Miasteczko (g.p. – 24).

Another analyzed factor was the forestation rate of communes which comprised a percentage share of the forest area of the whole commune. Owing to the fact that the whole area of the Lubuskie Province is characterized by very high forestation rate, the indicator was of portraying nature. The communes with the highest forestation rate are: Świdnica (g.p. – 14), Nowogród Bobrzański (g.p. – 15), Nowa Sól-rural area (g.p. – 20), Zielona Góra-rural area (g.p. – 22) and Czerwieńsk (g.p. – 31). Compared to the whole province, the analyzed communes are characterized by rather lower forestation rate than an average for the whole Lubuskie Province.

Another analyzed factor was the condition and protection of the environment, which comprised a number of forms of protection: national parks, reserves and natural landscape parks. Most of the Tri-city communes are characterized by lack of various forms of environmental protection. Such forms are only present at the area of: Bytom Odrzański (g.p. – 24), Kolsko (g.p. – 35), Czerwieńsk (g.p. – 36), Babimost (g.p. – 37), Zielona Góra-rural area (g.p. – 40), Otyń (g.p. – 41), Trzebiechów (g.p. – 44) and Sulechów (g.p. – 46). Within the whole Lubuskie Province, fifty communes have legally protected areas with a different rank, which unambiguously indicates that the analyzed communes are much less environmentally attractive in the whole region.

The last partial indicator included in the research was tourism, which comprised such measures as: the total number of accommodations, the number of whole-year accommodation and the number of state and foreign tourists. Unfor-

[13] g.p. – general position within all communes of Lubuskie Province.

tunately, the communes of the Tri-city are poorly developed within the field of tourism. The highest level of tourist attractions is provided by Sulechów (g.p. – 20), Zielona Góra-rural area (g.p. – 23) and urban area (g.p. – 30), Zabór (g.p. – 34) and Nowe Miasteczko (g.p. – 40). Communes: Czerwieńsk, Trzebiechów, Świdnica, Bojadła and Siedlisko do not show, within the analyzed measure, any values. This fact may stem from two factors – firstly, lack of tourist infrastructure and at the same time lack of tourism, both national and foreign, or shortages within data obtained from the Central Statistical Office or the Institute of Tourism.

At the end of the analysis, the estimation of the synthetic measure[14] was performed, including all four previously analyzed indicators. According to this method, the attractiveness of Lubuskie Province Tri-city is as presented in Table 1.

The Lubuskie Voivodeship Tri-city communes are moderately attractive for tourists as compared with the whole Lubuskie Voivodeship. However, year by year, their activity within investment is increasing. A significant aspect of the research conducted is the fact that the initiative does not only depend on the size and nature of a commune. Undoubtedly, this is significant considering e.g. the possibility of obtaining funds from various sources, which is usually spent on tourism.

The applied criteria of the assessment of possibility of driving the economic development of the region are grounded as they are economic in nature and at the same time they are expressed in numbers – being objective. And the indicators applied allowed for meeting the criterion. The total revenue obtained by a commune reliably indicates the level of commune prosperity – which becomes the objective of the authorities in pre-election promises. Besides, the investment level will indicate the manner the authorities care for the future. And if the authorities are able to think of investments of European standards and with respect for commune budget, they will apply for EU funds. Besides, the amounts of PIT and CIT revenues indicate whether the self-governments possess the ability to create well-paid workplaces, at the same time attracting people of high salaries.

[14] Assessment made on the basis of weighted average.

Table 1

Attractiveness of Lubuskie Province Tri-city communes as compared with the province

Commune	Position of the commune within a ranking according to the values of synthetic indicator against Lubuskie Voivodeship Tri-city	Position of the commune within a ranking according to the values of synthetic indicator against Lubuskie Voivodeship	2005	2006	2007	2008
Zielona Góra-city	1	12	2	4	2	2
Sulechów	2	23	11	11	5	4
Zielona Góra-rural area	3	29	9	8	9	10
Nowa Sól-rural area	4	40	–	14	12	15
Nowogród Bobrzański	5	48	–	3	13	9
Zabór	6	52	–	12	16	8
Kargowa	7	54	8	9	10	5
Kolsko	8	57	–	–	19	19
Czerwieńsk	9	53	4	2	7	11
Świdnica	10	56	7	5	4	1
Otyń	11	59	12	13	17	18
Bojadła	12	66	–	18	1	3
Babimost	13	67	10	7	3	6
Kożuchów	14	70		17	15	17
Nowe Miasteczko	15	69	6	15	14	7
Siedlisko	16	73	–	16	18	16
Bytom Odrzański	17	72	1	1	6	12
Nowa Sól	18	71	5	10	8	13
Trzebiechów	19	81	3	6	11	14

Source: own study compiled on the basis of estimated synthetic indicators and on the basis of rankings of Lubuskie Voivodeship Tri-city communes for the years 2005–2008, www.lubuskietrojmiasto.pl, 2.10.2010.

The analysis conducted was of portraying nature due to the criteria and the number of indicators applied. Each analysis improved by other measures may result not only in a different ranking position but it will also enable to draw different conclusions and interdependence of analyzed features. At this stage of research, one cannot speak about any correlation between the tourist attractiveness of Lubuskie Voivodeship Tri-city communes and their activity within investment. The communes of higher tourist attraction occupy lower positions within the Ranking 2005–2008, only Zielona Góra is placed high with its total high values. This is probably connected with the size and the nature of the commune and the fact that the authors of Commune ranking indicated that the

city has a great impact on the neighboring communes. Świdnica commune turned out to be an interesting example as year by year it was improving its position within the ranking, which gives hope that the ranking will not serve as a rivalry but it will constitute a driving force and motivation for self-improvement. Therefore, it seems grounded to create such associations not only within investment but also within the literally understood development of tourism with the necessity of monitoring the effects of such activity. The results of this research indicate the validity of carrying out such questionnaires due to the fact that local authorities can actively direct regional investment and tourism development.

ATRAKCYJNOŚĆ INWESTYCYJNA GMIN TRÓJMIASTA LUBUSKIEGO

Streszczenie

W ostatnich latach obserwuje się coraz szybszy rozwój inwestycyjny. Rozwój ten niesie ze sobą konieczność walki o potencjalnych inwestorów, aby to właśnie oni stali się siłą napędzającą rozwój na danym terenie. Elementem składowym rozwoju inwestycyjnego jest turystyka, która również w ostatnim czasie rozwija się w dużo szybszym tempie. Dlatego upatruje się szansy na równorzędne traktowanie tych dwóch dziedzin gospodarki. Niestety jednostki administracyjne nie zawsze przeznaczają część nakładów inwestycyjnych na rozwój turystyki, często traktując ją jako dziedzinę nie tylko nieprzynoszącą należytych zysków, ale nawet niefunkcjonującą w regionie. W artykule podjęto próbę oceny stopnia zaangażowania w rozwój turystyczny w zależności od prezentowanego rozwoju inwestycyjnego. Próba dokonana na obszarze gmin Trójmiasta Lubuskiego wykazała, że podejmowanie inwestycji na obszarze badań nie koreluje z atrakcyjnością inwestycyjną.

ATTRACTIVENESS OF INVESTMENTS OF LUBUSKIE VOIVODESHIP TRI-CITY COMMUNES

Summary

In recent years investment development has visibly increased. With it comes the need to fight for potential investors in order for them to become the driving force for

development in a given region. Tourism is an integral part of investment development and it too has been growing fast. Therefore, opportunities treating these two sectors of the economy equally are being sought. Unfortunately, administrative units do not always allocate part of their investment expenditure to tourism development, often treating it as a sector which not only does not provide proper returns but frequently is not actually functioning in the region. This article attempts to evaluate the level of commitment to the development of tourism in relation to the investment development presented. The study which looked at municipalities across the Lubuskie Tri-city zone revealed that undertaking investment in the region does not reflect investment attractiveness.

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ANALYSIS OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE NAREW VALLEY

Introduction

Tourism is often regarded as a way of accelerating the socio-economic development areas. Local authorities expect that tourists will know the attractiveness of their community regardless of the degree of recognition of their potential understanding of tourism and tourism-related phenomena and at the and tourists will come. The better environmental resources has given area the greater those expectations are.

Location close to valuable areas (national parks and Natura 2000) is not a sufficient factor to increase the number of tourists. Economic and social development objectives ought to be reconciled by environmental protection objectives. This is mainly due to the fact that stability of valuable natural habitats is threatened from tourism: both tourists and tour operators. At the same time the problem seems to be unskillful use of natural assets resulting from ignorance of natural risks rather than a large number of tourists or saturation of tourist attractions.

Tourism, like other economic activities, may have harmful effects on the environment, culture and society, some of which may be irreversible.[1] Further-

[1] A. Ali, A.J. Frew, *ICT and its role in sustainable tourism development*, in: *Information and Communication Technologies in 2010*, ed. U. Gretzel, R. Law, M. Fuchs, Springer, Wien–NewYork 2010, p. 479.

more tourism is recognized as a resource-intensive industry; it needs, therefore, should be accountable in terms of sustainability at both local and global scales.[2] The purpose of this article is to analyze the current situation and possibilities of tourism development in areas characterized by the presence of natural values. Particular attention was paid to the possibility of mitigation of the pressures of tourism on the environment, without the need to limit the number of tourists visiting these areas.

1. TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN VALUABLE NATURE AREAS

Valuable nature areas form a natural exploration of space tourism. It creates the conditions for the development of many diverse forms of tourism.[3] Many of them, particularly those forms of legal protection such as national parks or scenic parks, begin to function in the minds of tourists as tourism products.[4] As a result tourist traffic is increasing, but slowly improving tourist facilities, the anthropopressure burden may cause increasing negative effects in the natural environment. It occurs that the level of tourists' environmental awareness is not directly proportional to the quality of environment in which they exists. Often the choice of place to visit, which is characterized by natural beauty, is not related to personal relationship towards the nature.[5] In conjunction with unsuited tourist offer an unintended effect is being achieved – excessive pressure and environmental degradation.

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[2] J. Lu, S.K. Nepal, *Sustainable tourism research: an analysis of papers published in the Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, "Journal of Sustainable Tourism" 2009, vol. 17, No. 1, p. 5.

[3] H. Kiryluk, *Formy turystyki na obszarach przyrodniczo cennych*, quoted in: *Zarządzanie turystyką na obszarach przyrodniczo cennych*, ed. B. Poskrobko, WSE, Białystok 2005, pp. 86–99.

[4] R. Ziółkowski, M. Jalinik, *Obszary chronione produktem turystycznym*, quoted in: *Konkurencyjność produktów turystycznych*, ed. M. Jalinik, Oficyna Wydawnicza Politechniki Białostockiej, Białystok 2009, pp. 36–47.

[5] R. Ziółkowski, *Charakterystyka aktywności turystycznej na obszarach o dominujących walorach przyrodniczych*, "Acta Scientiarum Polonorum. Oeconomia" 2010, No. 9, pp. 657–667.

In the literature one can find different proposals on how to prevent this phenomenon. Smoleński[6] proposes to limit the availability of national parks for tourists, so that only certain forms of tourism and recreation are invested in national parks, and others, by the decision of park management and local community, should be lead out of the parks. On the other hand Bohdanowicz believes that proper tourism management prevents the environment from destruction and can even support the improvement of degraded natural areas.[7] Similarly consider Kurczewski and Machnik[8] according to which the development of tourism in environmentally precious areas can not be considered as just a source of risk. In their opinion, the universal nature of tourism can facilitate the dissemination of active protection of nature among tourists. And so Szczepanowski[9] claims that the proper development of valuable natural areas tourism can influence on the comprehensive development of tourism and recreation.

Changes taking place in outlook of the management of sources of the natural environment quickly penetrate into the tourist sector.[10] More widespread is the opinion expressed by Ritchie and Crouch, that to be competitive, a destination's development for tourism must be sustainable not just economically and ecologically, but socially, culturally and politically as well.[11]

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[6] M. Smoleński, *Turystyka w parkach narodowych Polski*, quoted in: *Praktyczne aspekty rozwoju turystyki i rekreacji na obszarach przyrodniczo cennych*, ed. R. Ziółkowski, Wydawnictwo Politechniki Białostockiej, Białystok 2006, pp. 35–46.

[7] P. Bohdanowicz, *Turystyka a świadomość ekologiczna*, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2006, pp. 157–158.

[8] R. Kurczewski, A. Machnik, *Aktywna ochrona przyrody wyzwaniem dla turystyki*, quoted in: *Gospodarka turystyczna w XXI wieku. Globalne wyzwania i zagrożenia*, ed. B. Raszka, S. Bosiacki, AWF, Poznań 2006, pp. 373–377.

[9] A. Szczepanowski, *Kształtowanie turystyki zrównoważonej na obszarach przyrodniczo cennych* quoted in: *Zarządzanie turystyką na obszarach przyrodniczo cennych…*, pp. 65–85.

[10] Comp. J. Arnegger, M. Woltering, H. Job, *Toward a product-based typology for nature-based tourism: a conceptual Framework*, "Journal of Sustainable Tourism" 2010, vol. 18 , No. 7, pp. 915–928; B. Bramwell, B. Lane, *Economic cycles, times of change and sustainable tourism*, "Journal of Sustainable Tourism" 2009, vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 1–4; *Usługi ekoturystyczne w obszarach wiejskich i przyrodniczo cennych. Modułowy poradnik szkoleniowy i wyniki badań projektu*, ed. G. Chocian, Ekoton, Białystok 2008; D. Zaręba, *Ekoturystyka*, PWN, Warszawa 2006; *Praktyczne aspekty rozwoju…*

[11] J.R.B. Ritchie, G.I. Crouch, *The competitive destination: A sustainability perspective*, "Tourism Management" 2000, vol. 21, No. 1, p. 5.

This issue is more clearly outlined by Noonan.[12] In his study the political and economic tensions inherent in the national park system are emphasized. This is especially true of the tradeoffs between local and national beneficiaries of park resources, and between preservation and economic development. The discussion in that topics expands Turner[13] who considers the possibility of privatization of natural valuable areas. The most fundamental question, for him, is whether the government should provide products like national parks or if private markets would provide them more efficiently. The author said that national parks are more than recreational areas. They are also places where natural and historic resources are conserved for future generations. If the purpose of this conservation is to allow future visitors to enjoy the resources, this is viewed better as a club good than as a pure public good. If private owners know that future generations will want to visit the parks, they will conserve the parks' resources accordingly, just as the owner of any nonrenewable resource saves some of it to sell in the future. The conditions under which private markets will be dynamically efficient are slightly more stringent than the conditions for static efficiency, but it is not obvious that a government agency will do a better job of trading off the benefits of present and future visitors than would private markets.

Increasing public awareness has an impact on the business travel industry. On one hand, there are limitations in the way and the use of the goods of nature by tour operators, on the other hand – a small tourist infrastructure, which aims to neutralize the pressure on the environment caused by tourists.

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDY AREA

The analysis included a part of Narew valley located in the central part of Podlaskie province. Narew Valley belongs to the areas that have preserved many natural scenic features. In order to protect those sites, nature reserves, national parks, landscapes, and separated areas in protected landscape are

[12] D.S. Noonan, *National park creation: different agent's incentives and the antiquities act of 1906*, 2009, www.prism.gatech.edu, 11.8.2011.

[13] R.W. Turner, *Market failures and the rationale for national park*, "Journal of Economic Education" 2002, vol. 33, No. 4, pp. 347–356.

created. Formerly Narew was an important communication route but today is considered to be a navigable river and serves tourist functions.

Study field covers the area of two municipalities: Rutka and Zawada which are situated in a valley of the river Narew in a direct vicinity of the Biebrza National Park (BNP) and Lomza Narew Valley Landscape Park (LNVLK). In the near distance, there is also Narew National Park (NNP). A characteristic feature of this area is the presence of Natura 2000 sites and nature reserves.

All of those natural units are under pressure from the impact of tourism – both long-term (typical tourist) and overnight (generated by the local community and residents of the region's largest cities – Bialystok). The intensity of this movement particularly refers to the area of Biebrza National Park, which borders with the northern part of the research area. Also Narew Valley (landscape and national park) plays an important role for short-term tourism and recreational trips.

Within BNP tourist traffic is controlled, so far as channelized, takes place along communal communication routes and the designated hiking trails. Within this area tourist pressure is smaller. However, areas located outside of the BNP, are areas of excessive pressure from tourism which is characterized by wild penetration (both pedestrian and motorized), noisy way of being, arrangement of wild camping, pit stops, bonfires, picnics.

The characteristics of this area include among the others:

- proximity to the largest city in the north-eastern Poland (located just 50 kilometers away from Bialystok),
- the dominant value of nature (Valley Narew, protected landscape area, Natura 2000, nature reserves, national parks in the neighborhood – Narew and Biebrza and a landscape park),
- a potential site for day and weekend trips for residents of Bialystok (mainly due to good transport infrastructure),
- good accessibility for tourists from other parts of Poland (the area leads national road No. 8 from Warsaw to Bialystok and national road No. 64 connecting Bialystok with Łomża).

3. TOURIST STATUS ON THE BACKGROUND OF THE REGION

Podlaskie region is neither a uniform nor consistent tourist area. Due to its strong historical factors and differences as to the ownership of natural resources,

natural and cultural resources and their significance for the development of tourism this region can be divided into several areas of interest. Some of those subregions are already recognized in the domestic market and even internationally while others are still in the process of building their image.

Tourist areas of international importance in Podlaskie province are Bialowieza Forest and Augustow Forest. Areas of interest of national importance are Knyszyńska Forest, Narew Valley, Biebrza Valley, Valley of the Bug River, Lakeland Sejny and Northern Suwalszczyzna. Tourist regions of regional importance are: Kurpiowska Forest, Nurzec Valley and Valley of Pisa.

Attempting of limitation of a research area to aforementioned divided tourist space only from geographical context may focus on the areas of national importance (Narew Valley, Biebrza Valley). Moreover, natural values of this area seem to support this attempts at least in theory. Firstly due to very rare species of animals and plants present here and secondly due to high density of certain species of animals and plants. And thirdly, for its unique landscape and, above all, views of the backwaters and Narew and Biebrza.

Analyses of tourism development in the study area also provide with some information revealing the traditions of tourism in this area. In the 30s of XX century Rutka village was known as spa. People came here from Bialystok and Warsaw (mostly Jewish) to treat lung disease. With each year the number of bathers was growing. Unfortunately, the outbreak of World War II interrupted this trend which has never returned.

There are also scientific descriptions which characterize this area as an area of outstanding tourist and leisure. In particular it refers to the location in the Narew Valley which is being reported as an asset for tourism and water sports, especially canoeing.

However, after statistical data analysis it is clear that presently this area is not recognizable for tourists. It is a neglected part of the region while planning the tourism development in the whole province as well as the region (the Biebrza and Narew Valley). Number of reasons contribute to this.

First, due to geographical location, for the inhabitants of Bialystok this area is located on the outskirts of the greatest natural attractions. People heading for the Narew Valley will rather stop in Łapy, Surażu or Tykocin – places of closer location and better known, and those choosing Biebrza National Park will take a path leading to the center section, thereby bypassing this area.

Secondly, tourists coming from Warsaw to Bialystok or heading for Kurowo, Kiermus or the Biebrza marshlands, will not stay in this area as long as they are not offered any leisure or visit activities. In the absence of alternatives they will go to other parts of the Narew Valley or the Biebrza marshlands.

Thirdly, despite the attractive location near two national parks, it should be noted that both the Biebrza National Park and the Narew National Park are areas with large, but unexploited tourist potential. Within national parks in Podlaskie province those two parks characterized with the lowest tourism movement. Hence, the neighborhood of these areas should not be treated as an advantage, but rather as an opportunity which use also dependents on the actions of the management of both parks.

Fourthly, the basis for tourism development is to provide accommodation and meals for tourists visiting the region. The tourist accommodation in this area, both basic and supplementary, is very poor. Without expansion of tourism facilities in this area any development plans will remain only unrealized visions.

Fifthly, the value of nature is a necessary but not only and sufficient factor encouraging tourists to coming to this area. Tourists expect possibility of active leisure, learning about cultural values and history of the region. Therefore, the area of tourist destinations should be equipped with a small tourist infrastructure and facilities allowing bicycling, riding or canoeing should be available for tourists.

Sixthly, one will make a stop in the region if they know about it. Currently, tourism promotion of this area is not implemented and tourism values are not known to tourists.

4. REDUCING OF THE PRESSURE OF TOURISM ON THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Tourism largely depends on the environment, but the nature also somewhat depends on the tourism economy.[14] Tourism developed in accordance with the principles of sustainable development should meet needs of the local community (in relation to the improvement of living standards), expectations of tourists

[14] P. Żegleń, *Zarządzanie turystyką na obszarach cennych przyrodniczo województwa podkarpackiego*, quoted in: *Turystyka na obszarach przyrodniczo cennych…*, p. 567.

(providing them with the most interesting natural sites), allow the development of local tourism businesses (specifying conditions for the use of natural resources) and help to protect natural and cultural environment (retaining its most valuable elements in an unchanged state).

Analysis of tourism development in the study area allows to draw some general conclusions concerning the reduction of the pressure of tourism on the natural environment.

The analyzed area is characterized by poorly developed and slightly diverse base of tourism, particularly the accommodation and catering facilities. At the same time it should be clearly stated that the lack of tourist accommodation does not mean no tourists and no pressure on the natural environment. Shortage or lack of tourist accommodation is a factor adversely affecting the natural environment, increases a negative human impact on the environment by enabling a free penetration and common unaware devastation of the most valuable objects of natural environment. Therefore expansion of tourist accommodation in areas of a special nature by adjusting its intensity to observed values should be recommended.

The study area is characterized by a small tourist movement of a longer stay. Lack of accommodation and catering prevents this area from long-term tourist presence and so there is a number of short-term tourists who contribute to leaving a large amount of garbage and a small amount of money. The longer touristic stay is the greater tourist's responsibility, the less anthropopressure and the more economic benefits for residents and local authorities. The shorter touristic stay is the less responsibility of tourists, the more anthropopressure and the less money spent. Extensive accommodation and catering facilities encourage tourists to remain for a longer period which results in deeper learning about the area and increased sensitivity to its values.

Lack of a diversified offer means also a higher pressure on the natural environment because this is the only value associated with the analyzed area. The way to differentiate the product is to expand the network of hiking trails and the integration of that network with already existing trails. New routes and their marking in the surroundings with information boards, issue guides, brochures and leaflets informing about those routes, information about attractions (not just the natural) are the hallmarks of shaping a new image of the area and improve its accessibility for tourists. Development of hiking trails is part of the channe-

ling of tourism and in a clear manner reduces the pressure of tourism on the natural environment.

It is worth to note that results of Mundet and Coenders research show that trails can have a positive impact on members of local communities and on tourism activity.[15] Also, according to Ziółkowski and Jalinik[16], infrastructure should be developed linearly (what channels tourist movement within areas of valuable natural) together with parallel improvement of education among the residents of those areas, tourists and tour operators.

Nevertheless, sustainable tourism within the area of natural values and rich cultural heritage also depends on new attractions not overwhelming the original ambience.[17] Deficiency of markers guiding tourists to tourist attractions is a distillation of a problem for many tourists. Also in the case of the analyzed area, tourists going from Warsaw to Bialystok or heading for Kurowo, Kiermus or the Biebrza marshlnds, have no reason to make a stop in the area. Mainly because there is no any information – neither along the route nor in the mass media. A tourist that appears in this area has to search for tourist attractions on their own and hence looking for landmarks moves freely and chaotic causing greater interference in the natural environment.

There is also no marker that would generate tourist traffic. Being based only on an attractive location in the vicinity of the Biebrza National Park may induce tourists to choose between the "original" and "fake" and the original is always winning. Besides, it may lead to a situation in which tourists will give more attention and a greater concern to the natural environment within a national parks than to areas located in the vicinity of the parks.

Conclusions

The severity of tourism and recreation movement in environmentally precious areas and lack of control of this phenomenon leads to rapid degradation of

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[15] L. Mundet, G. Coenders, *Greenways: a sustainable leisure experience concept for both communities and tourists*, "Journal of Sustainable Tourism" 2010, vol. 18, No. 5, p. 671.

[16] R. Ziółkowski, M. Jalinik, *Obszary chronione produktem turystycznym*, quoted in: *Konkurencyjność produktów turystycznych…*, pp. 36–47.

[17] G.R. Hovinen, *Revisiting the destination lifecycle model*, "Annals of Tourism Research" 2002, vol. 29, No. 1, p. 226.

the natural environment. Uncontrolled tourism movement appears in environmentally precious areas and poses a real threat to protected species and habitats. However effective responses to such threats, requires a complex response that is not about imposing limitations. Protected area tourism is a system that comprised of three key components: a given protected area, tourists and associated communities.[18] Therefore, one should pay special attention to the need to adapt tourism to the possibility of reception of the natural environment so that they benefit residents and the environment is not subjected to any devastations. Particularly this can be achieved through the development of appropriate tourism infrastructure, which will enable:

- protection of valuable natural resources, despite the increasing number of tourists,
- relief of places of least resistance to human pressure though the most visited, through a development of a small tourism infrastructure in selected sites of the area,
- limitation of a free penetration of the area (tourism channeling) by directing tourists to the designated sites, properly prepared to handle the tourist traffic,
- development of local tourism economy and benefits from increased tourism,
- creation of conditions for joint actions of local authorities and administration of protected areas in range of environmental protection through the development of tourism.

ANALIZA ROZWOJU TURYSTYKI W DOLINIE RZEKI NAREW

Streszczenie

Turystyka jest często postrzegana jako sposób na przyspieszenie rozwoju społeczno-gospodarczego obszarów. Niezależnie od stopnia rozpoznania własnego potencjału turystycznego i zrozumienia zjawisk związanych z turystyką władze lokalne oczekują,

[18] J.K. Strickland-Munro, H.E. Allison, S.A. Moore, *Using resilience concepts to investigate the impacts of protected area tourism on communities*, "Annals of Tourism Research" 2010, vol. 37, No. 2, p. 501.

że turyści poznają się na atrakcyjności ich gminy i zaczną przyjeżdżać turystycznie. Oczekiwania te są tym większe, im lepszymi zasobami środowiska naturalnego dysponuje dany obszar.

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest analiza stanu obecnego i możliwości rozwoju turystyki na obszarach charakteryzujących się występowaniem walorów przyrodniczych. Szczególną uwagę zwrócono na możliwości łagodzenia presji turystyki na środowisko przyrodnicze, bez potrzeby ograniczania liczby turystów odwiedzających te obszary. Analizą objęto fragment doliny Narwi położony w środkowej części województwa podlaskiego. Dolina Narwi należy do obszarów, które zachowały wiele naturalnych walorów przyrodniczo-krajobrazowych. W celu ochrony tych terenów tworzone są rezerwaty, parki narodowe i krajobrazowe oraz wydzielane obszary chronionego krajobrazu. Narew zaliczana jest do spławnych rzek, dawniej była ważnym szlakiem komunikacyjnym, dziś pełni funkcję turystyczną.

ANALYSIS OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE NAREW VALLEY

Summary

Tourism is often regarded as a way of accelerating of the socio-economic development areas. Local authorities expect that tourists will know the attractiveness of their community regardless of the degree of recognition of their potential understanding of tourism and tourism-related phenomena and at the and tourists will come. The better environmental resources has the area the greater those expectations are.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the present state and opportunities for tourism development in areas characterized by the occurrence of natural values. Particular attention was paid to the possibility of mitigating the pressures of tourism on the natural environment without the need to limit the number of tourists visiting these areas. The analysis extended a part of Narew valley located in the central part of the Podlasie region. Narew valley is one of the areas that has preserved many natural values of nature and landscape while river Narew formerly was an important waterway and now serves as a tourist.

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AN INFLUENCE OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP (PPP) ON ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT BY EXAMPLE ON THE PODKARPACIE PROVINCE, POLAND

Introduction

Public-private partnerships have become a very popular approach for infrastructure development. Indeed, from the mid-1980s, the notion of partnership in urban renewal and development has attracted much discourse in Western countries.[1] In recent years the public sector has increasingly become a major factor in the revitalization of urban locations throughout the Poland. That is why public-private partnership formula is often appearing term in Poland. It is defined as a cooperation between public and private sectors on the permanent rules. There are lots of definitions concerning the term. The European Commission in Guidelines for Successful Public Private Partnerships presents a following definition: "Public-private partnership is a form of collaboration between public and private sectors in order to services' realization which are delivered

[1] *Public-Private Partnership: New Opportunities for Meeting Social Needs*, ed. H. Brooks, L. Liebman, C.S. Schelling, Bellinger, Cambridge 1984, quoted in: R. Wettenhall, *The Rhetoric and Reality of Public-Private Partnerships*, "Public Organization Review: A Global Journal" 2003, vol. 3, pp. 77–107.

only by the public sector in a traditional way".[2] In general, in that form of cooperation there is a division of a risk and responsibilities between both of sectors, it means partners. At the same time the public sector plays a supervisory role and the private sector is an executive body. Both partners have different profits from the cooperation. In the case of public partner most important are issues like: social satisfaction, shorter time of the investment realization, increase of a social trust etc. The private partner's profits are from charges and fees connected with a renting and the use of buildings, and other infrastructure being a subject in the PPP undertaking. Profits depend on the sum if involved finances.

Another definition of PPP is almost the same because this is every form of cooperation between two sectors (public and private), where these partners share profits as well as risks with each other. According to the National Council for Public-Private Partnerships[3] "PPP is an agreement between public unit and private partner based on commercial reasons." Public-Private Partnership is a permanent collaboration, unlike one-time privatization. The main rule in PPP formula is that public sector always comes into ownership of the possessions when the projects finish. PPP concerns especially public buildings in Poland. The public sector can play a significant role in assisting private partners take market-viable projects to fruition. Tax and other incentives as well as low-cost bond financing, are often used by municipalities to push returns above private equity's hurdle rate, while at the same time serving the community by supporting projects that drive economic impact.[4]

The following sections discuss forms of public-private partnership which are most popular in Poland and have an influence on the local and regional economy. The article is devoted to factors, that influence the PPP perspectives in the context of tourism economy in Podkarpacie region. The paper was prepared on the basis of research results. It characterizes a vague institutional envi-

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[2] *Guidelines for Successful Public Private Partnerships*, 2006, www.infoport.pl, 23.01.2006.

[3] www.ncppp.org, 23.01.2011.

[4] B.H. Tress, *Using public-private partnerships to fund hotel development projects. Henry Stuart Publications 1479–1110*, "Journal of Retail&Leisure Property" 2003, vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 21–31.

ronment in the context of PPP implementation. It shows a competence of PPP and penchant for application this form of projects' financing.

The main aim of the article is to verify universally repeated opinions, that PPP is a big chance for Polish economy with underlining an importance of tourism industry. An essential role is given to the partnership between the firms of the tourist channel, between these firms and firms of complementary fields and between public and private partners. The present study includes an analysis of the roles and forms of the public-private partnership in tourist destinations.

1. FUNCTIONS, FORMS AND ROLE OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP IN POLAND

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) have become an innovative solution to realize three critical strategic issues for improving the quality of urban services: the enhancement of governmental financing capacities, the improvement of public investment efficiency, and the harnessing of consumer-orientated management expertise. The author tries to show how to engage the private sector in PPPs for the benefit of society.

2. PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP – COSTS AND BENEFITS

Public-private partnership structures are often complex and require a high degree of creativity; they can involve several variables including financing techniques and structures, construction and operational responsibilities and risk. The other variables are:[5]

- ownership position and risk,
- distribution of non-tax income and tax revenue,
- quality control,
- pre-development and development scheduling.

Variables such as political interests, political instability and/or the ending of a key political leader's term in office can also affect a public-private partnership.

[5] *Ibidem*, p. 30.

Hence, for projects that are market-viable, PPP is beneficial to each partcipant. There is numerous literature on the efficiency of PPP[6] but in general in comparison to other areas of the economy, the literature is very modest. The reason is that the concept of PPP is relatively new. The most important benefits from the PPPs projects one can list:

- reduction of public expenditures, budget savings,
- more financing sources in public sector,
- higher quality of services, guaranty of quality,
- division and transfer of risk and responsibility,
- more investments, infrastructural projects,
- raising a quality of life,
- public-private trust, social satisfaction,
- intense the labour market.

While public entities can provide incentives, private firms can contribute invaluable knowledge and insight on national and local markets, vision and creativity, development and management skills. While public sector realizes its goals with respect to economic impact and community revitalization, private sector achieves its desired return on investment. A governing body – national, regional or local – must be aware of the expectations of the society it serves. On the one hand, a project is aimed at delivering a service at the expected level of quality and on the other hand, if it involves private partners, it must meet the expected payback of the invested capital.

3. THE METHODOLOGY OF CONDUCTED RESEARCH AND THE HYPOTHESIS

Sixty one units of self-governments in Podkarpackie province took part in the research. The survey's return was 69% and the analyzed units were as follows: communal self-governments, district governments, the Provincial Office of Podkarpacie and cultural institutions. From the regard on the most tourist attractions located in south districts (second level of local government administration in Poland) of the Province, the following districts were analyzed: Bie-

[6] P. Vaillancourt-Rosenau, *The Strengths and Weaknesses of Public-Private Policy Partnerships*, in: *Public-Private Policy Partnerships*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, London 2000, pp. 219–223.

szczady Mountains district, Lesko district, Krosno district, Sanok district, Jasło district, Rzeszów district, Przemyśl district. These districts are the most popular and most attractive regions in southern Poland according to the Strategy of Podkarpacie Province Development.[7]

The survey research was conducted within the period of January and April 2008.

The research methods used in the paper are as follows:

- survey research (quantity approach);
- interview (quality approach).

The survey was conducted personally by the author as well as by the post (both traditional and electronic). The interview was conducted among the employees (from public sector) who knew the PPP concept as well as among units which planned to use the concept in the near future (except cultural institutions which did not anything about the PPP idea).

The following hypothesis are proposed:

- Joint activity of public and private organizations can contribute to the intensification the tourism destination development and to the increase of their competitiveness in comparison to other areas. Specificity of modern tourism market causes, that the competitiveness of region is very important for the whole tourism branch.
- The projects realized in that formula can amass more capital (also foreign capital) than projects realized individually by the sectors.
- The public-private partnership needs to have an institutional background in form of law, good practice, transfer of information and a good staff selection.

The author used a survey and interview as the research methods. The methods above were conducted among employees of the public sector because the initiative of PPPs projects should be from that people. The main questions were asked:

1. Have you ever heard about PPP concept?
2. What's the source of information about PPP?

[7] *Strategia rozwoju województwa podkarpackiego na lata 2007–2020*, Zarząd Województwa Podkarpackiego, Rzeszów 2006, p. 27.

3. What is an actual level of PPP projects in reality? Are there any projects realized in that formula in Your district?
4. Are there any plans connected with PPPs projects realization in the future?
5. What are the benefits and forms of risks connected with PPPs projects?

The aim of the survey was to give an answer to the following leading question: if the PPPs projects can influence on the competitiveness improvement of the tourist destination? If so, how will the influence look like?

On the base of the questions above the author separated three main classifiers, which characterize the analyzed group and can create the shape of the other determinants. Having separated these classifiers made it possible to find out relationships between particular determinants within the group. These are:

- group division (communal self-governments, district governments, the Provincial Office of Podkarpacie, cultural institutions),
- the number of inhabitants in the region,
- size of accommodation base in the region.

An author tried to refer to the hypothesis put at the beginning of the work.

There also occurred a next question which was very interesting from the author's point of view; it means: does PPP formula need to have some institutional background or not? The respondents showed the possibilities which may be found thanks to PPP idea, for example: more investors interested in region's improvements and better quality of tourist services. There is a rule: the more investments the more attractive region. There were also questions about sources of tourist investments' financing, plans in the area of tourist economy, potential partners or profits from that kind of projects. Does a collaboration between public and private sectors is profitable or not? If so, who has more profits: public or private partner?

4. THE HYPOTHESIS VERIFICATION AND THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

The results of the research were a little surprising because almost every respondent heard about PPP concept but there were only few projects or even plans to do it. Coming across with the PPP concept, the respondents had a positive opinion about PPP but still it didn't correspond with the realization.

The answer for the question #1: "Have you ever heard about PPP concept?" almost 20% of respondents said that they have not heard, but it depends

on the group division and the size of the region. All the employees (100% of the respondents) of the Provincial Office of Podkarpacie Region have heard about the concept before. A little less people from local self-governments (83% of the respondents) were familiar with the concept. An exception were the cultural institutions where almost nobody has heard about the PPP idea.

In spite of this, public-private partnership is a very popular phenomenon but unfortunately in most of cases – the knowledge is only theoretical and it is not reflected in the practice. The reason is that in Poland it is quite new. Opinions about PPP are usually positive, moreover the respondents claim that there is a need of public-private collaboration because of limited budgets of many public units. One also claims, that this kind of cooperation can be less expensive than projects realized in a traditional way. PPP creates a chance for New Public Management Concept (NPM) – new organization and technological solutions introduced into the public sector.

The respondents claim that there is no incentives to PPP projects' realization and the reason is that public sector has a little knowledge about PPP. Moreover public sector feels anxious about the cooperation with private sector. In spite of this respondents claim that PPP projects can be very profitable (development of the region, competitiveness of the region, expansion of infrastructure, new technologies and solutions, collaboration with foreign firms).

The author proved that public-private partnership is only a theoretical declaration as for now and it doesn't have a reflection in a practice. There is a need of a partnership in the tourism branch but only a few partners are prepared for that type of collaboration. The opinions of the respondents connected with PPPs projects' realization are quite different. The majority of the respondents claimed that there are no stimulus from the government to make actions in PPP formula. It might be a result of lack of knowledge about PPP among decision-makers. The results of the research showed that people need some help and advises in order to PPPs projects preparation and realization. A very important issue is also a risk taken both by public and private partners. According to the respondents, the private sector should take a larger risk; the respondents also claimed that they would prefer foreign companies for partners. Among the other factors influencing on the PPPs projects' development the respondents showed a mutual trust as well as a reputation of the potential partner.

Another very important issue is a determination of public units in initiating the idea of PPP in Poland and abroad. PPPs projects are very popular and effi-

cient in Western Europe. On the basis of that one should create a Polish model of PPP projects using an experience of other countries like England, Holland, France, etc. A good co-operational climate and determination are needed to cope with that as well as an institution which would introduce the idea into the practice, make it popular and show some examples of good practice.

In the light of the conducted research the effects of PPPs projects should give only profits for tourism industry which one can list as:

- the quicker region's development,
- new infrastructure (tourist and general),
- new technologies adapted by a public sector,
- new public management rules,
- the increase of an attractiveness of the region,
- competitiveness of the region in comparison to other destinations.

Poland should follow the British model and other Western models-good practice (countries), where PPP is well developed and they benefit from PPP investments.

One can say, that Poland as for now doesn't know how to make a good use of PPP; it is hope that it will be changing. There is a need of trainings, conferences, promotion etc. Awareness about PPP is limited in Poland. In spite of this, there are some trials of PPP projects introducing in Podkarpacie and in Poland. These projects indirectly contribute to tourism development, for example sport infrastructure or public utilities.

There is a need of formal requirements, clear regulations (PPP act), popularization of effective solutions, good practice, friendly political and social atmosphere, improving of law quality, determination of public units which should be an initiator of PPP projects, etc.

The most important results were shown on Figures and Tables below.

As shown above (Fig. 1), the main source of information about PPP idea for 46.34% of the respondents is the law (PPP act) and next (almost 44% of the respondents) these are the mass media (television, radio, Internet). Many people (over 31% of the respondents) participated in different trainings and courses organized to inform about the PPP projects. Unfortunately, the knowledge about PPP formula is only theoretical, not practical. People would start some projects but do not know how to start it. Nowadays, there are groups of people who train public sector units how to cope with the subject. It is much more easier to deal with it when we can see some practical example. The respondents claimed that

there is a need of cooperation between two sectors for example because of limited finances of the public sector.

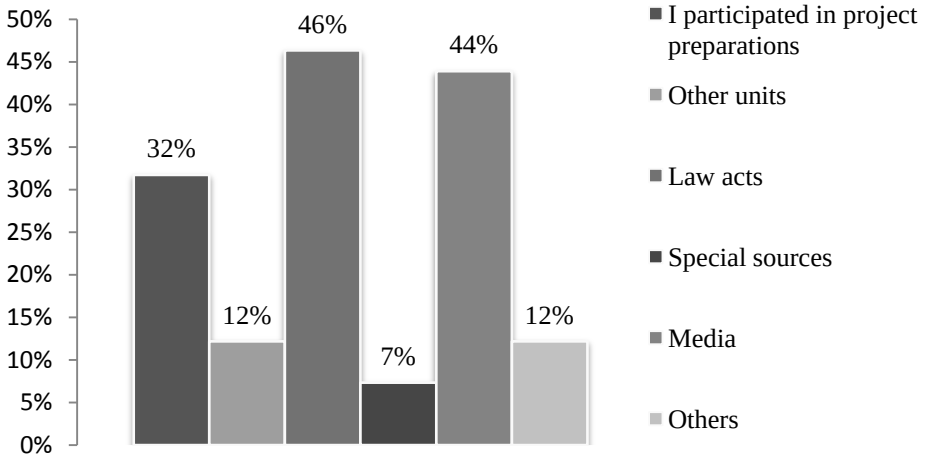

Fig. 1. Information sources about PPP concept
All the Figures were shown in order of written sources
Source: author's elaboration.

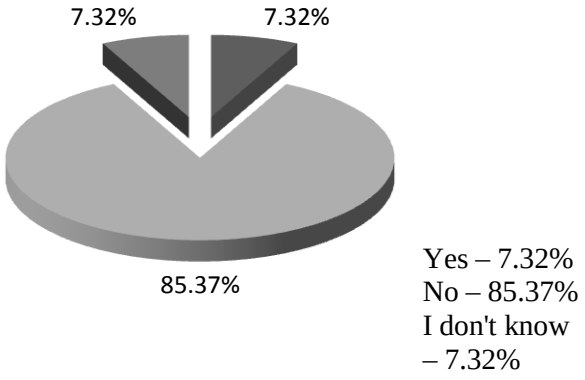

Fig. 2. The PPPs projects realized in the past
Source: author's elaboration.

Over 85% of the respondents claim that there were no PPPs projects realized in the past in their region. Simultaneously, over 7% of the respondents claim that there were realized some projects but they are not competent to say what kind of projects there were.

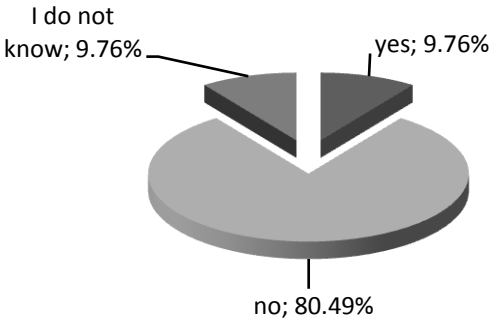

Fig. 3. Current realization of PPPs projects
Source: author's elaboration.

As one can see at the figure 3, the current realization of PPPs projects is still on unsatisfactory level (over 80% of the respondents claim that there are no projects realized in that formula). Almost 10% of the respondents claim that there are realized some projects in that formula.

Figure 4 presents an opinion about PPP concept. The majority of respondents (almost 70%) doesn't agree with an opinion that public sector has enough money for infrastructural investments; with the opinion agree only 7% of the respondents. Less than 3% of the respondents agree with the opinion, that PPP idea is more expensive than traditional investment's forms. While almost half of people (46.34% respondents) doesn't agree with the opinion. More than 40% of the respondents agree that there are social resistances towards to the solutions like PPP concept, and on the other hand more than 50% of the respondents (53.66%) think that PPP concept can influence service's quality improvement, as well as increase of investors' interest (53.66% respondents) and it can be a chance for a better effectiveness (48.78% respondents). PPP concept it is also, among majority of the respondents (almost 40%), the chance for experiences' exchange between public and private sectors as well as for getting more money

for the particular projects thanks to PPP concept (almost 60% of the respondents).

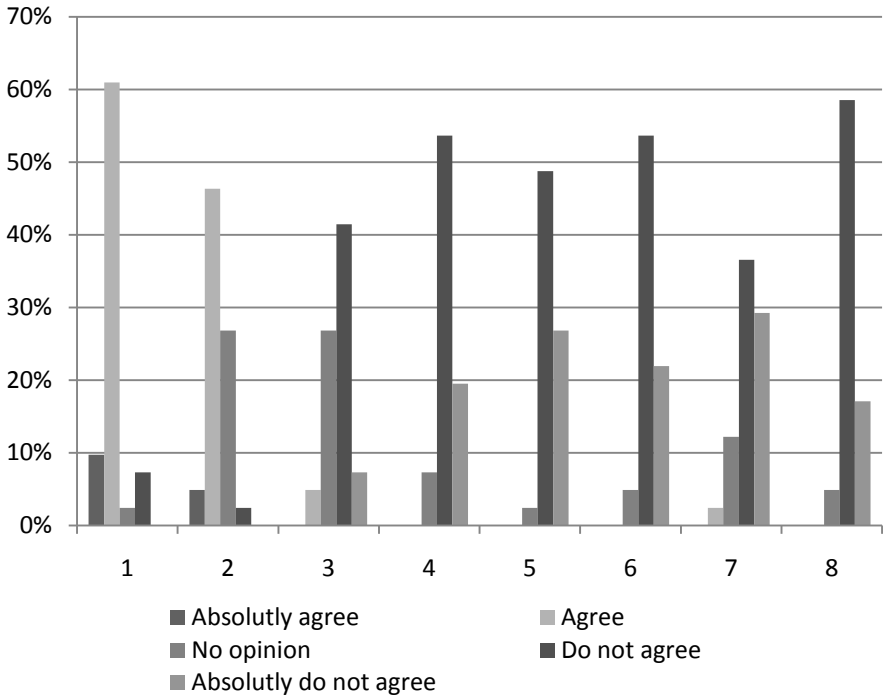

Fig. 4. The respondents' opinion about PPP concept
All the figures were shown in order of written sources
1 – public sector has enough money for infrastructural investments
2 – PPP idea is more expensive than traditional investment's forms
3 – there are social resistances towards to the solutions like PPP concept
4 – PPP concept can influence service's quality improvement
5 – PPP concept is a chance for a better effectiveness
6 – PPP concept can contribute to increase of investors' interest
7 – PPP concept can contribute to experiences' exchange between public and private sectors
8 – more money for the particular projects thanks to PPP concept
Source: author's elaboration.

Table 1

Benefits from PPPs projects for tourism branch

Unimportant (1)	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Nothing important (2)	0	3	0	0	0	5
	0.00%	7.32%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	12.20%
I don't know (3)	2	7	0	1	7	20
	4.88%	17.07%	0.00%	2.44%	17.07%	48.78%
Important (4)	22	18	11	14	21	7
	53.66%	43.90%	26.83%	34.15%	51.22%	17.07%
Very important (5)	13	9	26	23	8	2
	31.71%	21.95%	63.41%	56.10%	19.51%	4.88%
	More attractive destinations	Up-to-date technologies	Better tourist infrastructure	Faster destinations' development	Better cooperation	Higher proces

Source: author's elaboration.

According to the respondents, the most important benefit for tourism branch, thanks to PPPs project, is a better tourist infrastructure, next – faster destinations' development as well as more attractive region it becomes.

Conclusions

Tourism is more and more perceived and valued as a branch of the local and regional economy, but its development needs an engagement of both local and national authorities, entrepreneurs, local societies and different organizations and associations. An organized activity is extorted by the competition in the market, as well as in the tourism market.

The public-private partnership (PPP) is the topic of the governing body dissertations, that seek for new economic and law solutions to solve financial problems in the infrastructural investments. PPP is also a chance for Polish tourism development. It allows a creation of new tourist products and extorts some rational actions, by example on the improvement of tourist policy. It is very important to organize tourism development correctly in the region because it would allow to integrate different business groups concerning a shared aim.

Among some recommendations the author wants to say that a very important issue is to create a controlling body to manage the PPP projects all over the country. There should be clear criteria of PPP projects' and partners' selection. Consulting companies should play a crucial role in bringing know-how and expertise for the public sector, which is unfortunately afraid of doing common projects with the private partner. The situation can be changed only in case of change of view and customs.

Summing up, one should claim that public-private partnership in Poland and in the Podkarpacie, is an unused chance. The main reason for that is a lack of knowledge about PPP concept as well as lack of experience.

The results of PPP investments occurred very positive. The private capital gave a positive response about investments in economy branches in cooperation with a public partner, who guarantees the highest level of the solvency.

WPŁYW PARTNERSTWA PUBLICZNO-PRYWATNEGO (PPP) NA ROZWÓJ GOSPODARKI NA PRZYKŁADZIE WOJEWÓDZTWA PODKARPACKIEGO

Streszczenie

W opracowaniu poruszone zostały kwestie związane z gospodarką województwa podkarpackiego w odniesieniu do koncepcji partnerstwa publiczno-prywatnego (PPP). Przemyślenia poparte zostały wynikami badań empirycznych, przeprowadzonych w 2008 roku na obszarze tego województwa. Badania dotyczyły perspektyw i możliwości zastosowania idei PPP do rozwoju turystyki w Polsce, na przykładzie województwa podkarpackiego, a zwłaszcza jego najbardziej atrakcyjnych turystycznie powiatów.

AN INFLUENCE OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP (PPP) ON ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT BY EXAMPLE ON THE PODKARPACIE REGION, POLAND

Summary

The author of the article took up issues connected with the economy of Podkarpacie Region with reference to Public-Private Partnership (PPP). The reflections were

supported with empirical research conducted in 2008 in Podkarpackie Vovoideship. The research concerned perspectives and possibilities of using PPP formula to tourism development in Poland by example on the Podkarpacie Region. The most tourist attractive districts were underlined.

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NO. 658 ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF TOURISM VOL. 1 (17) 2012

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DETECTING VISITORS' SATISFACTION ENHANCERS: A CASE OF POLISH WINTER SPORT DESTINATIONS

Introduction

Service quality and customer satisfaction, and the way of measuring them are among the most popular topics among scientists not only on the field of tourism.[1] Up till now, there has been no universal and fully accepted concept, and more and more often situational approach or approach based on using few different methods emerges as the most popular.

The aim of the presented paper is examination of reasons of increased/decreased consumer satisfaction. The importance-performance analysis (IPA) was chosen as a method of product quality measurement, however, achieved results were confronted with responses to some other questions, especially those concerning an overall evaluation of a ski resort performance.

The validity of IPA for analyzing tourist product was questioned by numerous researchers,[2] and others tried to produce improved versions of.[3] Oh

[1] C. Ryan, G. Casseford, *Developing a visitor satisfaction monitoring methodology: Quality gaps, crowding and some results*, "Current Issues in Tourism" 2003, vol. 6, No. 6.

[2] H. Oh, *Revisiting importance-performance analysis*, "Tourism Management" 2001, vol. 22.

[3] C.J. Easingwood, D.C. Arnott, *Priorities in service marketing*, "International Journal of Service Industry Management" 1991, vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 59–75; A.L. Dolinsky, *Considering the*

points at the not clearly defined term "importance" as a potential source of misuse of IPA, and next proves that interpretation of importance-performance grid depends on the way of calculating the crosshair and presents examples of previous research where those different methods were used.[4] However, the strongest argument is given by Fuchs and Weiermair,[5] Oh[6] and recently Eskildsen and Kristensen[7] who found that in many situations attribute's importance perception may be strongly influenced by performance.

In spite of this criticism, carefully implemented IPA remains one of the most popular and powerful tools for quality measurement in tourism. There are numerous examples of successful implementation of this method.[8] Hudson, Hudson and Miller proved also its validity in comparison of 4 tools.[9] Hudson and Shephard argued that for tourist destinations with little market research experience (like Polish winter sports destinations) IPA, in its purest form, can be used as a powerful tool in marketing planning.[10] Their research proves also usefulness of this method for ski resorts evaluation.

Untill now, there have been just few attempts to measure the product quality of winter sports destinations. Mazanec and Zins segmented the market of visitors to Austrian ski resorts with regard to the level of guest's satisfaction and

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Competition in Strategy Development: An Extension of Importance-Performance Analysis, "Journal of Health Care Marketing" 1991, vol. 11, No. 1.

[4] H. Oh, *Revisiting…*

[5] M. Fuchs, K. Weiermair, *New perspectives of satisfaction research in tourism destinations*, "Tourism Review" 2003, vol. 58, No. 3.

[6] H. Oh, *Revisiting…*

[7] J.K. Eskildsen, K. Kristensen, *Enhancing importance-performance analysis*, "International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management" 2006, vol. 55, No. 1.

[8] See for example: S. Hudson, G.W.H. Shephard, *Measuring Service Quality at Tourist Destinations: An Application of Importance-Performance Analysis to an Alpine Ski Resort*, "Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing" 1998, vol. 7, No. 3; S. Hudson, P. Hudson, G. Miller, *The Measurement of Service Quality in the Tour Operating Sector: A Methodological Comparison*, "Journal of Travel Research" 2004, No. 42; F. Go, W. Zhang, *Applying Importance-Performance Analysis to Beijing as an International Meeting Destination*, "Journal of Travel Research" 1997; H.Q. Zhang, I. Chow, *Application of importance-performance model in tour guides' performance: the evidence from mainland Chinese outbound visitors in Hong-Kong*, "Tourism Management" 2004, vol. 25, No. 1.

[9] S. Hudson, P. Hudson, G. Miller, *The Measurement…*

[10] S. Hudson, G.W.H. Shephard, *Measuring…*

main complaints.[11] Also Fuchs and Weiermair present research conducted in Austrian ski resorts.[12] Using Vavra's model, Penalty-Reward-Contrast analysis and IPA, cited authors found that friendliness of personnel, hospitality of local people and the landscape are the performance factors of great importance for skiers visiting Austria, while customs and traditions, nostalgic atmosphere (among the others) were found to play the role of satisfiers. Traffic management is believed to be an example of basic requirement. The quality of Swiss ski destinations, particularly Verbier, was researched by Hudson and Shepard.[13] They implemented IPA method and found visitors to be rather disappointed by the offer of Verbier as 20% of researched attributes (ski slopes services, tourism information, accommodation, for example) fell into quadrant "Concentrate here".

Although there is a wide body of scientific literature devoted to the problems of winter sports, the shortage of research measuring product quality of ski resorts is quite visible. Additionally, one may observe that results of research conducted in one country or even in a single destination are not relevant for many other ski destinations. This is especially true for Polish winter sports destinations being significantly different from those in Austria or Switzerland and also visited by tourists from different market segments (almost only domestic visits with one-day ski trips prevailing). Those remarks justify the necessity of research concerning product quality in winter sports destinations in Poland, and in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe (mainly the Czech Republic, Slovakia, the Ukraine, Bulgaria and Romania) as well.

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[11] J.A. Mazanec, A. Zins, *Alpine winter tourists and guests satisfaction – an exploration of the typological relationships*, in: *Alpine Tourism. Sustainability Reconsidered and Redesigned*, ed. K. Weiermair, University of Innsbruck, Innsbruck 1996.

[12] M. Fuchs, K. Weiermair, *New perspectives…*; M. Fuchs., K. Weiermair, *Destination benchmarking: an indicator-system's potential for exploring guest satisfaction*, "Journal of Travel Research" 2004, vol. 42, No. 1.

[13] S. Hudson, G.W.H. Shephard, *Measuring…*

1. THE IMPORTANCE-PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS AND IDENTIFICATION OF SOURCES OF CUSTOMERS' SATISFACTION

Many authors use a lot of terms accompanied with even more research methodologies to evaluate how good (or how bad) is a tourism destination product. Most often when trying to evaluate subjective impression of customers, the term "satisfaction" is used, and when searching for objective measures the term "quality" appears.[14] However, service characteristics complicate quality measurement in tourism. Since milestone work of Parasuraman et al.[15] quality of services is to be measured as a difference between consumer expectations and services performance. This approach introduced brand new elements to product evaluation in tourism, which are:

1. introducing subjective element to service quality made the term "quality" much closer to customer's "satisfaction"[16] as measuring both is based on the concept of confirmation/disconfirmation developed by Oliver,[17]
2. dividing the researchers' population into advocates and critics of their approach made the term quality even more ambiguous as many authors use it in different meaning.

Plurality of approaches effects also in existence of a rather big number of methods of quality and satisfaction measurement. The most popular, created by Parasuraman et al., SEVQUAL scale is also very popular among tourism researchers.[18] Critics of SERVQUAL, Cronin and Taylor, created alternative to SERVQUAL tool called SERVPERF based on performance measurement on-

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[14] J. Lee, A.R. Graefe, R.C. Burns, *Service Quality, Satisfaction, and Behavioral Intention Among Forest Visitors*, "Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing" 2004, vol. 17, No. 1, p. 74.

[15] A. Parasuraman, V. Zeithaml, L. Berry, *SERVQUAL: A Multiple-Item Scale for Measuring Consumers Perception of Service Quality*, "Journal of Retailing" 1988, No. 64.

[16] A. Parasuraman, V. Zeithaml, L. Berry, *Reassessment of Expectations as a Comparison Standard in Measuring Service Quality: Implication for Further Research*, "Journal of Marketing" 1994, vol. 49, No. 4, p. 121.

[17] R. Oliver, *A Cognitive Model of the Antecedents and Consequences of Satisfaction Decisions*, "Journal of Marketing Research" 1980.

[18] See for example: G.R. Fick, B.R. Ritchie, *Measuring Service Quality in the Travel and Tourism Industry*, "Journal of Travel Research" 1991, No. 29; B. Snoj, D. Mumel, *The Measurement of Perceived Differences in Service Quality – The Case of Health Spas in Slovenia*, "Journal of Vacation Marketing" 2002, vol. 8, No. 4.

ly.[19] SERVPERF was implemented to tourism by Tribe and Snaith[20] and Hudson et al.[21] Other authors conducted also their researches using other adapted popular methods like importance-performance scale,[22] Kano's model of satisfaction,[23] European Fundation for Quality Management – EFQM,[24] Vavra's implicit/explicit importance model,[25] Brandt's Penalty-Reward-Contrast Analysis[26] or purpose made like HOLSAT.[27]

Introduced over 30 years ago by Martilla and James[28] importance-performance analysis (IPA) is among the oldest and most popular methods of service quality and customer's satisfaction measurement. It is a procedure that shows the relative importance of various features and performance of entity under study in providing these features.[29] It gained also a big popularity among tourism researchers due to its ease of application and appealing methods of presenting both data and strategic suggestions.[30] The crucial point of the method is preparation of a questionnaire, in which respondents are

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[19] J. Cronin, S. Taylor, *SERVPERF versus SERVQUAL: Reconciling Performance-Based and Perception-Minus-Expectation Measurement of Service Quality*, "Journal of Marketing" 1994, No. 58.

[20] J. Tribe, T. Snaith, *From SERVQUAL to HOLSAT: Holiday Satisfaction in Varadero, Cuba*, "Tourism Management" 1998, vol. 19, No. 1.

[21] S. Hudson, P. Hudson, G. Miller: *The Measurement…*

[22] S. Hudson, P. Hudson, G. Miller: *The Measurement…*; S. Hudson, G.W.H. Shephard, *Measuring…*; F. Go, W. Zhang, *Applying…*; M. Żemła, *Application of Importance-Performance Perception Maps in Major Polish Ski Resorts' Product Quality Analysis*, "Hotellink" 2005, vol. 6, No. 6.

[23] F. Bailom, K. Matzler, H.H. Hinterhuber, E. Sauerwein, *Must-be Quality and Attractive Quality*, in: *Alpine Tourism…*, pp. 336–349; M. Woods, J. Deegan, *A Warm Welcome for Destination Quality Brands: The Example of the Pays Cathare Region*, "International Journal of Tourism Research" 2003, No. 5.

[24] F. Go, R. Govers, *Integrated Quality Management for Tourist Destination: A European Perspective on Achieving Competitiveness*, "Tourism Management" 2000, vol. 21, No. 1.

[25] M. Fuchs, K. Weiermair, *New perspectives…*; M. Fuchs, K. Weiermair: *Destination…*

[26] M. Fuchs, K. Weiermair, *New perspectives…*

[27] J. Tribe, T. Snaith, *From SERVQUAL…*

[28] J.A. Martilla, J.C. James, *Importance-Performance Analysis*, "Journal of Marketing" 1977, vol. 41, No. 1.

[29] S. Hudson, P. Hudson, G. Miller, *The Measurement…*, p. 305.

[30] H. Oh, *Revisiting…*, p. 617.

asked to give their opinion on importance of several product's attributes, and also on the level of delivering it. The accent must be put on proper selection of attributes, which might be important for the consumer when evaluating researched product. Further analysis is based on aggregated results of fulfilled questionnaires.

Traditionally, the way of making conclusions is by putting attributes into a four-quadrant grid. Attribute's importance and performance are dimensions of the grid. The first quadrant called "Keep up the good work" embraces the attributes that are important for customers as well as those delivered on a satisfactory level at least. These are the main strong points of a company/destination, and main sources of customer's satisfaction. The second quadrant entitled "Possible overkill" captures attributes which are less important, but the company or destination performs well on the attributes. Attributes that fall into the third quadrant "Low priority" are company's/destination's weaknesses as they are delivered below the average, still they are not important for customers, and as such do not need decision makers' special attention. This is in opposition to attributes put in quadrant four "Concentrate here", which are of high importance for customers, and a company/destination performs badly on the attributes. Researched companies or destinations need to improve their performance on these attributes, as they are the main customers' dissatisfiers. The general idea of IPA grid interpretation is based on the assumption that a successful company or destination should perform well on the attributes that are important for customer, and does not pay too much attention and efforts to those which are perceived as less important.

However, some researchers instead of IPA grid use other form of analysis.[31] This is especially the case in research aimed to compare results of different methods of quality measurement, which needs results expressed by numbers instead of qualitative interpretation of IPA grid. The formula of calculating of customer's satisfaction[32] or product quality[33] used in cited research was P-I (performance – importance). This analogy to SERVQUAL fails to catch the

[31] S. Hudson, P. Hudson, G. Miller, *The Measurement…*; J. Tribe, T. Snaith, *From SERVQUAL…*

[32] J. Tribe, T. Snaith, *From SERVQUAL…*

[33] S. Hudson, P. Hudson, G. Miller, *The Measurement…*

main idea of IPA, as it is easy to observe that the best scores would be collected by attributes from the second quadrant of IPA grid. Much more relevant should be measuring customer's satisfaction or product quality by multiplying attribute's performance and importance (I*P), which should lead to highest positive scores for first quadrant's attributes maintaining highest negative scores for four quadrant's attributes. Such a formula was used by Gherissi-Labben and Mungall[34] and Garau-Taberner.[35]

2. DATA COLLECTION AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Presented results are based on empirical studies conducted by the Tourism Department at the Katowice School of Economics between January 2005 and March 2005 in ten Polish major ski areas, which included: Ski Arena in Szklarska Poręba, Czarna Góra in Sienna, Czyrna-Solisko in Szczyrk, Czantoria in Ustroń, Żar in Międzybrodzie Bialskie, Kasprowy Wierch and Gubałówka in Zakopane, Kotelnica in Białka Tatrzańska, Palenica in Szczawnica and Wierchomla in Wierchomla Mała. The choice of these ski areas was made taking into account several factors. The most important is that all of them are among the biggest (regarding the number and the capacity of facilities) ski areas in Poland. This choice also allowed incorporation of all major tourist regions in Polish mountains – Karkonosze (Riesengebirge) Mountains (Szklarska Poręba), Beskid Śląski (Silesian Beskid) (Szczyrk and Ustroń), Tatras (Zakopane and Białka Tatrzańska) and Beskid Sądecki (Szczawnica and Wierchomla Mała). Chosen ski resorts are spread throughout almost the entire area of the Polish mountains.

Chosen resorts, however, are all fundamentally different. Zakopane is Poland's main mountain resort town with a diversified tourist offer, however, Zakopane plays only a relatively small role in the winter sports' offer. Szlarska Poręba has a similar role to that of Zakopane, with the main differences being the larger offer of winter sports, and the fact that there are no major cultural

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[34] T. Gherissi-Labben, A. Mungall, *Competitiveness of Swiss Alpine destinations in summer season; a client satisfaction approach*, "Tourism Today Fall" 2004.

[35] J. Garau-Taberner, *Measuring Destination Competitiveness: A Case Study of the Canaries, Mainland Spain, France, The Balearics and Italy*, Paper read at International Conference of Trends, Impacts, Policies and Tourism Development, 15–18.06.2006, Heraklion, Greece.

attractions in the area. Ustroń also has a diversified offer, but is mainly geared towards the spa and one-day recreational trips (including winter sports) for the inhabitants of the nearby agglomeration of Katowice. Szczawnica is a typical spa town. Szczyrk, on the other hand is the Poland's biggest and most traditional ski resort town strongly dependent on winter tourism.

The remaining villages are newcomers to the Polish ski market with ski areas not older than 10 years – the latest being in Międzybrodzie Żywieckie, which was opened to the public at the beginning of 2004. Although these areas are still relatively new, there are already distinct differences between them. For the resorts in Sienna and Wierchomla Mała, the building of new ski areas was also the introduction of small forgotten villages to the tourist market, whereas Międzybrodzie Żywieckie and Białka Tatrzańska, located in popular tourist regions of the Silesian Beskid and the Tatra Mountains respectively, were popular and well-developed tourist destinations even before their expansion into the ski market.

Conducting research in ski resorts with different characteristics allowed to include different customers' attitudes as they might be visited by different market segments regarding both place of living, level of ski ability and behavioral factors.

In each of the ski areas mentioned, 100 skiers, or snowboarders, were asked to answer a questionnaire, in the form of an interview. Half of the data was collected on working days and half at weekends. As the interview was conducted while people were standing in ski-lift queues, and was generally perceived as an attractive way of making use of time, there were very few refusals, which is similar with other researches conducted within queuing skiers.[36] This may have also been influenced by the fact that the questionnaire itself was very short. Data was collected between 2005.01.28 and 2005.03.05.

Although collecting data among queuing skiers has a great advantage regarding the response rate, it also imposed some limitations to presented research. Due to lack of a suitable table or some other horizontal surface at skiers` disposal, as well as writing in ski-gloves or finally holding ski-poles made queuing skiers unable to complete the self-managed form. This imposed the

[36] R. Tsiotsou, *Using visit frequency to segment ski resort customers*, "Journal of Vacation Marketing" 2005, vol. 12, No. 1.

technique of short interview, which is not very suitable for importance-performance analysis as a long and very detailed list of valuated features is needed to reduce the risk of not being able to express some features precisely by customers, or just being unable to expect some of them. To overcome the difficulties, special cards with big font typed features were handed to respondents during the interview. Still the pre-test among scholars and students revealed the necessity of making some shortcuts as the interview should not last longer than five minutes. Detailed list of 27 features was reduced to 19 elements, and instead of valuating of each elements in case of its importance and performance with a Liekert scale, as it was practiced by most researchers using IPA,[37] respondents were asked only to point out the three most important features, and the three best and the three worst fulfilled by the resort, where the review was conducted. Especially, the second change seems to be important for data interpretation. Only several researched factors accumulated majority of answers, so it is easy and possible to identify those of highest importance, highest performance and lowest performance. However, we do not know about remaining features, whether they are only of lower importance (performance) but still important or just unimportant. This uncertainty could influence the reliability of achieved results of IPA, yet, in this case the aim of research was different. When looking only for factors influencing the most the overall impression of tourist product, we do not need to have the remaining features appropriately ordered, which makes achieved results more acceptable.

Apart from the IPA questions, the interview form contained some explaining questions and information about the respondent including estimation of their queuing time, evaluation of their skiing ability, frequency of skiing trips and overall evaluation of visited ski resort performance.

3. RESULTS

Respondents were given the list of 19 attributes of a ski resort as presented in Table 1. These include both typical elements of ski offer connected with ski area standard and product quality as well as widely understood elements of

[37] See for example: S. Hudson, P. Hudson, G. Miller, *The Measurement…*; S. Hudson, G.W.H. Shephard, *Measuring…*; F. Go, W. Zhang: *Applying…*

a tourist offer, which might be used by skiers during their stay in a winter destination. This is a consequence of acceptation of wide definition of winter sports destination proposed by Flagestad and Hope who described it as "a geographical, economic and social unit consisting of all those firms, organizations, activities, areas and installations which are intended to serve the specific needs of winter sports tourists."[38]

Respondents were asked to point the three most important features, the three best fulfilled ones and the three worst fulfilled ones by the resort – place of the research. Additionally they were asked to evaluate their overall satisfaction level (OSL) from their stay at the place using a 5-point Liekert scale ranging from strongly unsatisfied to highly satisfied. Percentage of indications of all features in all 4 aspects is presented in Table 1.

Concerning the results presented in Table 1 it is visible that only few features accumulated most respondents' indications regarding features' importance and fulfillment. This allowed to choose 8 features (shown in bold in Table 1) for further analysis with an assumption that the remaining ones are of lower significance.

The next step was an analysis of data accumulated for each researched ski resort for 8 chosen attributes. Results are presented in tables 2 and 3. Overall satisfaction for each resort was counted as an arithmetic mean of all answers. For each resort and for 8 selected earlier features the correlation coefficient was counted for OSL and: 1) percentage of indication of importance (I); 2) performance counted as a percentage of indication of the best fulfilled (S); 3) percentage of indication of the worse fulfilled (W); 4) performance counted as a difference between percentage of indication of the best fulfilled and percentage of indications of the worse fulfilled (P); 6) IPA (I*P).

Omitting few not significant differences, one may say that "Easy access", "Guarantee of snow-cover" and "Big quantity of diversified ski slopes" are not correlated with overall satisfaction. This might be especially surprising regarding the "Guarantee of snow-cover" as it was found as a attribute with the greatest importance among all researched features.

[38] A. Flagestad, C.A. Hope, *Strategic success in winter sports destinations: a sustainable value creation perspective*, "Tourism Management" 2001, vol. 22, No. 2, p. 449.

Rather significant and negative values of correlation coefficient of "Scenic beauty" may suggest that this feature was chosen as important and well fulfilled by those who are not satisfied. On the other hand, satisfied consumers pointed this feature as fulfilled badly. Together with low importance (10% of indications) of this feature it means that the "Scenic beauty" was used by respondents mainly in a situation when there were no other more significant for them features to point. Surprisingly enough, a similar situation may be observed regarding "Well-prepared ski slopes."

Significant values of correlation coefficients were detected between overall satisfaction level and features "No queues to lifts" (especially negative correlation with W and positive correlation with P), "Fast and comfortable lifts" (especially negative correlation with W and positive correlation with S and with P and IPA) and "Low prices of services" (especially positive correlation with I – this may suggest that price sensible customer tend to be more satisfied with Polish ski destinations than others).

Further analysis of rates given by respondents to researched ski resorts allowed to point Białka Tatrzańska as a winter sports destination perceived differently than other ones. Customers appreciated the offer of this only one of the most modern ski areas in Poland, regarding features connected directly with quality of services for skiers. Exceptionally high scores in "Well – prepared ski slopes" and "Ski-passes encompassing many lifts" made Białka Tatrzańska the second destination with the highest OSL even with the highest ratio of "strongly satisfied" visitors, despite the fact that it was at the same time the second worst regarding "No queues to lifts", outdoing only Kasprowy, which is dependent on out of time cable car transporting only 180 p/h. Nevertheless, it is necessary to point that this perception of arduousness of queues had only limited justification in standing time in a queue. Arithmetic mean of just above 20 min. was the second worst but only slightly worse than in Ustroń , where considerably fewer respondents pointed "No queues to lifts" as one of major weaknesses.

Facts presented above indicate that it is worth counting all coefficients for 9 ski resorts, omitting Białka Tatzańska. Results are presented also in Tables 2 and 3. As it was supposed correlation coefficients for "No queues to lifts" improved significantly while other coefficients changed slightly. Especially negative correlation between OSL and "No queues to lifts" regarding W (–0.94) and positive correlation regarding P (0.88) are visible. Surprisingly enough, correlation coefficients between overall satisfaction level and average time spent

queuing are not as high, yet significant (table 4). This indicates that subjective feeling of congestion is much more influencing on skiers satisfaction that the real time spent queuing.

Table 1

Results (4 most significant attributes) obtained in given resorts

Feature		Białka Tatrzańska Kotelnica	Ustroń Czantoria	Sienna Czarna Góra	Szczyrk Czyrna-Solisko	Zakopane Gubałówka	Zakopane Kasprowy	Szczawnica Palenica	Szklarska Poręba Szrenica	Wierchomla	Międzybrodzie Żar	C.C	C.C (without Białka)
Easy access	I	16	43	33	35	50	49	31	27	31	65	0.02	0.28
	S	39	50	23	46	7	6	26	11	29	63	0.14	0.09
	W	15	9	1	4	0	25	29	4	23	2	−0.11	−0.16
	P	24	41	22	42	7	−19	−3	7	6	61	0.16	0.14
	IPA	384	1763	726	1470	350	−931	−93	189	186	3965	0.20	0.26
Guarantee of snow-cover	I	37	33	11	24	89	57	17	23	11	26	0.15	0.14
	S	23	12	14	18	27	29	13	6	15	2	0.03	−0.08
	W	6	21	0	9	0	0	21	0	5	0	−0.16	−0.17
	P	17	−9	14	9	27	29	−8	6	10	2	0.13	0.06
	IPA	629	−297	154	216	2403	1653	−136	138	110	52	0.18	0.17
No queues to lifts	I	34	53	24	50	38	1	39	6	31	48	0.35	0.36
	S	1	7	5	3	16	0	4	2	25	56	0.50	0.63
	W	83	62	32	62	7	99	57	70	25	9	−0.68	−0.94
	P	−33	−46	−19	−47	−22	−1	−35	−4	−6	8	0.12	0.23
	IPA	−2788	−2915	−648	−2950	342	−99	−2067	−408	0	2256	0.31	0.52
Well prepared ski slopes	I	13	41	51	53	2	34	24	26	19	51	−0.49	−0.41
	S	36	42	38	17	6	25	36	22	31	13	−0.09	−0.21
	W	5	20	1	41	49	3	5	1	12	16	0.17	0.27
	P	23	1	−13	−36	4	−9	12	−4	12	−38	0.37	0.24
	IPA	403	902	1887	−1272	−86	748	744	546	361	−153	0.05	0.06

Source: own elaboration.

Table 2

Results counted for all interviewed regardless of researched resort location

	Feature	Importance (I)	Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (W)	Performance (P) (S–W)
1	Easy access	38	30	10	20
2	Information avialable	7	8	3	5
3	Feeling of safety in village and on slopes	18	10	4	6
4	Guarantee of snow-cover	33	16	6	10
5	No queues to lifts	32	12	51	–39
6	Big quantity of diversified ski slopes	20	20	10	10
7	Well-prepared ski slopes	31	27	15	12
8	Fast and comfortable lifts	15	9	19	–10
9	Ski pass encompassing many lifts	7	12	6	6
10	Low prices of services	18	12	18	–6
11	Separated snowboard infrastructure	6	2	13	–9
12	Additional services for skiers	4	8	2	6
13	Satisfying accommodation base	10	15	2	13
14	Satisfying gastronomic base	7	14	6	8
15	Evening entertainment	5	5	7	–2
16	Additional recreational offer	2	1	5	–4
17	Local folk/cultural events	2	6	2	4
18	Scenic beauty	10	**39**	1	**38**
19	Peaceful atmosphere	2	17	3	14

Source: own elaboration.

Table 3

Results (another 4 most significant attributes from Table 1) obtained in given resorts

Feature		Białka Tatrzańska Kotelnica	Ustroń Czantoria	Sienna Czarna Góra	Szczyrk Czyrna-Solisko	Zakopane Gubałówka	Zakopane Kasprowy	Szczawnica Palenica	Szklarska-Poręba Szrenica	Wierchomla	Międzybrodzie Żar	C.C	C.C (without Białka)
Big quantity of diversified ski slopes	I	28	25	40	23	1	15	18	23	13	18	–0.23	–0.36
	S	24	19	46	23	0	14	20	23	17	1	–0.25	–0.32
	W	6	26	0	51	15	4	16	12	7	27	–0.31	–0.25
	P	18	–7	46	–28	–15	10	4	11	10	–26	0.07	–0.02
	IPA	504	–175	1840	–644	–15	150	72	253	130	–468	0.19	0.14
Fast and comfortable lifts	I	18	34	20	26	9	0	23	6	11	7	–0.07	–0.11
	S	18	12	7	6	6	0	7	6	15	14	0.65	0.57
	W	20	41	18	41	0	4	23	35	2	2	–0.60	–0.65
	P	–2	–29	–11	–35	6	–4	–16	–29	13	12	0.76	0.76
	IPA	–36	–986	–220	–910	54	0	–368	–174	143	84	0.55	0.53
Low prices of services	I	22	17	7	11	28	24	15	7	27	26	0.56	0.54
	S	21	17	2	6	5	15	23	3	13	2	0.01	–0.18
	W	19	28	16	19	0	19	12	30	22	24	–0.47	–0.50
	P	2	–11	–14	–13	5	–4	11	–27	–9	–22	0.34	0.26
	IPA	44	–187	–98	–143	140	–96	165	–189	–243	–572	0.09	–0.01
Scenic Beauty	I	4	5	6	7	1	20	19	19	17	2	–0.50	–0.45
	S	14	36	47	14	75	72	46	36	33	16	–0.06	0.10
	W	4	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	3	0	0.36	0.16
	P	10	36	47	13	75	72	45	35	30	16	–0.08	0.09
	IPA	40	180	282	91	75	1440	855	665	510	32	–0.54	–0.49
Overall satisfaction level	OSL	1.12	0.73	0.94	0.59	1.18	0.54	0.87	0.61	1.1	1.05	1	1

Source: own elaboration.

Table 4

Correlation coefficients between overall satisfaction level and queues

	Frequency of indicating queuing as the main weakness of ski resort	Average queuing time
All ski resorts	–0.68	–0.54
Ski resorts excluding Kotelnica Białczańska	–0.94	–0.57

Source: own elaboration.

Conclusions

Consumer's perception of length of queuing time is identified as the major factor upon which customer's satisfaction level is dependent. However, the example of Białka Tatrzańska indicates that diminishing queuing time is not the sole way for boosting customer's satisfaction, which may indicate that there are rather two ways. The first characteristic for the majority of destinations is based on customer's expectation to ski as much as it is possible during their skiing day, and not wasting time queuing. Therefore, the customers will be satisfied if they have the possibility to ski as much as they want, and the skiing conditions are satisfactory. However, there are customers who agree to devote more time on queuing if during their downhill run, an extraordinary value is offered as in case of Białka Tatrzańska. Following this way of satisfying Polish skiers seems to be a very demanding task for Polish ski resorts, as customers' expectations of what could be this "extraordinary value" are set high regarding the level of development of ski infrastructure in Poland. One may support the argument that there are no more than 3 ski resorts in Poland, which may hope to be perceived as offering an extraordinary valuably offer as resorts chosen to this research are among the biggest and best in Poland, and only two (Jaworzyna in Krynica and Pilsko in Korbielów) other resorts not embraced by the research could have potential to fulfill this kind of expectations. However, one has to remember that with continuous and rapid development of winter sports infrastructure, as well as with further increase of ski trips abroad, expectations of what can be accepted as an extraordinary value will also increase. In addition, further investigation is needed into how much longer customers would accept to queue to be provided with the extraordinary value, as the difference between Białka Tatrzańska and some other researched ski resorts was not big.

For too long queuing time, customers tend to blame not efficient enough transportation facilities. Respondents usually complained of lifts in the same resorts where the perception of long queues was the highest. This also may justify the high correlation coefficients between "Fast and comfortable lifts" and overall level of satisfaction.

Presented results also encourage to make some remarks of methodological nature. The highest identified correlation coefficients were achieved correlating the OSL with W and P. Characteristically, both those indices are based upon the perception of weaknesses of a ski resort, which may suggest that interesting is

not only investigation factors that increase customer satisfaction, but also to wonder why they are dissatisfied. Nevertheless, this remark is actual only for presented research as traditional use of Likert scale would probably eliminate the dilemma of searching strong points or weaknesses only.

ROZPOZNANIE CZYNNIKÓW PODNOSZĄCYCH POCZUCIE SATYSFAKCJI U ODWIEDZAJĄCYCH POLSKIE OŚRODKI SPORTÓW ZIMOWYCH

Streszczenie

Zaprezentowany artykuł poświęcony jest tematyce jakości produktu i satysfakcji nabywcy na rynku usługowym, jednak nie jest zaprojektowany jako kolejny głos w debacie dotyczącej wzajemnych relacji tych dwóch kategorii i właściwych metod ich pomiaru. Istotą artykułu jest natomiast dogłębne rozpoznanie czynników podnoszących i obniżających postrzeganą jakość i poczucie satysfakcji. Badanie przeprowadzono za pomocą metody *importance-performance analysis* (IPA) zastosowanej w odniesieniu do polskich ośrodków sportów zimowych. Jako główny czynnik przyczyniający się do wysokiej oceny jakości produktu danego ośrodka zidentyfikowana została długość czasu spędzonego w kolejce do wyciągów.

DETECTING VISITORS' SATISFACTION ENHANCERS: A CASE OF POLISH WINTER SPORT DESTINATIONS

Summary

Presented paper is devoted to the topic of product quality and customer satisfaction on the service market. However it is not an another argument in the dispute on mutual relations between those two. Its purpose is detecting of factors increasing and decreasing level of perceived quality and satisfaction. The survey was conducted with usage of importance-performance analysis implemented to winter sports destinations. The time spent queuing was identified as the most important factor enhancing high quality evaluation.