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## Contents

# THE INFLUENCE OF REGIONAL CULINARY TRADITIONS ON THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF AGROTOURISM OFFER

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Abstract

Culinary traditions have already secured a place as an element of the tourist offer in Poland. The paper reviews the role that local foods and traditional recipes play in the process of development of agrotourism and rural tourism on the example of two selected regions: Podhale in Lesser Poland (Małopolska) and Upper Silesia (Górny Śląsk). Authors observe that rural culinary tourism seems to respond better to the needs and expectations of tourists in Poland than the mainstream rural tourism offer. One of the possible explanations of the trend points to the popularity of established culinary brand products, events and culinary trails that correspond well with the interests of a wide range of audiences.

## Introduction

The aim of the paper is to analyse how culinary traditions affect the development of agrotourism offer in selected regions of Poland. It also sets out to resolve to what extent the inclusion of culinary traditions in rural tourist products increase the attractiveness of those products. For the benefit of the paper two particular regions have been selected that stand out with regard to their gastronomic traditions: Podhale and Silesia (Śląsk). Podhale is a very specific region, even on a national scale, as it has been settled for centuries by the same people, which has resulted in a very strong local cultural identity and a feeling of relative sovereignty, as well as a striking continuity of inheritance. Silesia, in turn, was subject to a number of demographic changes in the 20th century. Geographically, Silesia is divided into the Lower and the Upper Silesia. However, both the popular notion of Silesian culture and the local cultural identity – including culinary traditions – are practically limited to the Upper Silesia and the Opole region, i.e. the former Polish-German borderland, where local traditions remain an important binding factor for local communities, despite the socio-economic upheavals that have affected the region since 1945. The methodology chosen for this article consisted predominantly of content analysis of relevant literature and a critical analysis of selected, major tourism products based on culinary traditions and local foods, typical for the studies regions.

## The phenomenon of agrotourism

The term agrotourism contains two elements: *agro*, and *tourism*. The Latin prefix *agro* derives both from an Old Greek *agros*, meaning 'rural', and *agronomos*, which was a title of the person who acted as a 'farm manager' (Sznajder, Przezbórska, 2006, pp. 15–17). Agrotourism is usually defined as a form of tourism and recreation that occurs in the countryside in a place of a distinctively rural character, where both the hospitality services and the accompanying activities are connected with farming and based around farms and their surroundings. There is a vast array of activities available to agrotourists, ranging from cultural, through adventure and qualified, to educational (Krupa, Soliński, 2004). Typically, agrotourism is dependent on local entrepreneurship and creates employment for local community members, in particular involved in rural crafts, crop cultivation and animal husbandry, and often serves as an additional source of revenue for farming communities (Kryński, 2003, p. 125).

There is a popular notion that agrotourism is synonymous with rural tourism, however the latter term has a broader meaning that encompasses all kinds of tourism that "take place in the countryside, are appropriate for local conditions, and utilise local assets" (Dębniewska, Tkaczuk, 1997, p. 15). The fundamental feature of agrotourism, in turn, are annual holidays and short, weekend stays at working farms of different kind: those specialised in crop or fruit production, but also at fishing farms etc. Agrotourism offer varies greatly and features strong regional characteristics, but in general remains relatively limited in scope as compared with city-breaks.

Promotion and development of agrotourism is usually supervised or arranged by local and regional agrotourism associations and destination management organisations (DMOs), whose members are also local farmers or representatives of farming communities. Promotion is however rarely matched by equally well developed distribution channels. The latter remains also true for generic rural tourism stays in accommodation other than that linked directly with agrotourism, typically available in the mountain regions and at the seaside. Rural tourism offer can often be limited to overnight stays, too.

Recently, both agrotourism and rural tourism in Poland have suffered a year-on-year decrease in numbers of visitors and a marked decline of business. For a number of years since the World Financial Crisis of 2008–2012, a much greater growth of both the tourist demand, and of the accommodation offer has been the feature of city tourism, which remained largely unaffected even by the falling tourism participation rates and the reduced number of trips per year recorded in Poland. It warrants an additional hypothesis that the quality and attractiveness of the tourist offer in the Polish countryside generally do not meet the evolving needs and expectations of contemporary tourists.

In this context it is interesting to note the growing reputation of culinary tourism in Poland, based on local gastronomic traditions, rural crafts and local foods (Byszewska-Dawidek, Janusiewicz, 2010). The connection between culinary traditions and rural tourism has been made by many authors. D. Orłowski (2016) concludes, drawing from a number of observations in this field, that rural areas offer vast opportunities for the creation of a variety of tourist products based on cultural and natural assets, and agrotourism in particular seems well suited to benefit from the diversity and wealth of regional culinary traditions. Travelling offers a specific setting in which one seems more eager to cross his personal or cultural barriers in order to get to know local cultures, including their food. It does not happen in the controlled, luxurious setting of a restaurant but amongst the vibrancy and sometimes chaos of a village market or a farmyard. It has been noted that majority of the traditional and regional foods is available almost exclusively directly from their producers or at agrotourism farms (Krupa, 2010; Woźniczko, Orłowski, 2009; Orłowski, 2016). Apart from being an additional promotional assets for farm-based tourism businesses, traditional foods have an economic potential. There is a noted, supra-regional demand for quality rural gastronomic products and, given sufficient organisational and financial support, the production of local foods could just as well turn from a hobby or passion into an income-earning activity (Krupa, 2010). Some producers have already spotted this opportunity. One of the suggested ways to promote the development of rural gastronomic crafts is membership of the European Network of Regional Culinary Heritage – ENRCH (Jęczmyk, Maćkowiak, Uglis, 2014). Authors also observe that ever since the link between tourism and traditional gastronomy was firmly established in Europe the early 2000s (Hjalager, Richards, 2002), culinary tourism in the Polish countryside has owed its burgeoning popularity to the ever larger number of thematic culinary trails, such as the Wine Trail, and of culinary events, such as the Apple Festival, the Bread Festival etc. A number of popular, brand products have resulted from this trend, including the Lesser Poland Fruit Tree Trail (Małopolski Szlak Owocowy), the Kurpie Honey Harvest (Miodobranie Kurpiowskie), the Lesser Poland Herb-scented Villages (Małopolska Wieś Pachnąca Ziołami), the Carp-fish Valley (Dolina Karpia in Zator), the World of Camomile (Kraina Rumianku), and many others.

Evidently, the proces of building the market for traditional foods is already under way in Poland, however, some authors observe that it might be difficult to strike the balance between development, which often goes hand-in-hand with innovation, and tradition. It has to remembered that indeed it is the tradition, along with time-tested customs, rituals and an old-fashioned lifestyle, that tourists typically associate with authenticity, quality and uniqueness of culinary heritage (Kuźniar, 2010; Puciato, Woś, 2011).

## Tourist value of traditional foods in selected regions

Rural tourism and agrotourism in the Lesser Poland Voivodship are considered one of the most important forms of tourism in the region. The current and future areas of agrotourism development can be found throughout the voivodship, with the exception of the large cities of Kraków, Tarnów, and Nowy Sącz. Areas particularly suitable for agrotourism expansion have been identified at the feet of the Tatra Mountains in Podhale, and also in Beskidy ranges: Makowski, Sądecki, Niski; also in the Wieliczka and Ciężkowice Hills, in the Gorce Mountains, around the Babia Góra Range, and around the Jurassic hills and crags between Kraków and Częstochowa (*Kierunki rozwoju turystyki*, 2008).

The regional cuisine is often seen as an important element of the total rural tourism product, even though culinary tourism also features as an autonomous tourism category in the voivodship. A vast variety of tourist products in the Lesser Poland are linked directly or indirectly with regional foods. For instance, monasteries and abbeys seem a particular regional asset that not only provides a tangible link to the glorious past through their works of art and historic buildings, but they also facilitate an intangible connection with the rich culinary tradition of the region through a range of food-related products and activities. Tourists are therefore lured to Szczyrzyc in the charming and steeped in legends Beskid Wyspowy by both the architectural heritage of a former Cistercian abbey, and by the role that it played – according to the centuries-old chronicles – in the production of a thirst-quenching beverage called *cerewizja*, a mixture of malted grain, hops and chicory. Recently, in cooperation with the brewery 'Belgia' the traditional drink has been developed into a Trappist-style beer marketed under the apt name Frater. Additionally, the Abbey farm keeps cows of a traditional breed that produce high quality milk (Tomczyk-Miczka, 2007).

In the south of the Lesser Poland region, along the border with Slovakia, are stretched vast mountain ranges that are home to a highlander cuisine – simple, hearty foods based on staples such as sheep cheese, sauerkraut soup and potato pancakes known as *moskole*. The today's highlanders lifestyle is not much different to that of their forefathers. They continue the tradition of sheep grazing throughout the Summer on high pastures and mountain meadows under the watchful eye of experienced herders and their helpers. The sheep are walked for significant distances, changing pastures as and when needed, until they are brought back home to villages in late September. During this period, tourists can sample the traditional hard, salted and smoked sheep cheese of various sizes and shapes by visiting a growing number of sheds and huts, whose construction and maintenance has been also recently co-financed by the European Union in the move to support local pastoral traditions (Tomczyk-Miczka, 2007).

A yet another example of a successful agrotourism product based on a culinary tradition are homemade strong alcoholic drinks produced in Łąck, based on plums, as well as a pine needles, fruit juice and honey mixture, produced in Łazy. Fruit harvest remains a tourist attraction throughout the Lesser Poland region, too, culminating in September, as does an opportunity to witness the production of fruit juices, such as those manufactured in the traditional fruit press in Zarzecze.

Culinary events treat tourists to excellent local dishes in such agrotourism-famous gminas (the smallest administrative unit in Poland) as Mszana Dolna, Niedźwiedź, Dobra and Tymbark in the Limanów district, and Żegocin, Łapanów and Lipnica Murowana in Bochnia district of the Lesser Poland voivodship (Tomczyk-Miczka, 2007).

The Silesian voivodship authorities also support the development of rural tourism and agrotourism, however culinary aspects play a lesser role in the tourism promotion in this case. In general, it is assumed that the agrotourism product in the voivodship is a natural combination of tangible and intangible assets linked with farming. There are, however, several rural areas officially delineated as particularly suitable for the development of agrotourism in the region:

- Beskid Śląski, Żywiecki i Mały – in Bielsko-Biała district the villages of Buczkowice, Jaworze, Kozy, Porąbka, Wilkowice; in Cieszyn district the villages of Brenna, Goleszów and Istebna; as well as the entire Żywiec district and its rural gminas,
- the area of the Krakow-Częstochowa Hills – in Częstochowa district the villages of Janów, Lelów, Mstów, Olsztyn, Przyrów; in Myszków and Zawiercie district all the rural gminas,
- the area of the Lubliniec Forest and its surroundings (Dąbrowa Zielona, Kamienica Polska, Kłomnice, Konopiska, Kruszyna, Mykanów, Poczesna, Rędziny, Starcza, Rudziniec, Wielowieś, as well as all the rural gminas in districts of Kłobuck, Lubliniec, and Tarnogóra),
- Ziemia Rybnicka, Pilchowice, and all the rural gminas of the Racibórz, Rybnik and Wodzisław districts,
- the area of the vast Pszczyna Forest and the villages of Bestwina, Jasienica, Chybie, Dębowiec, Hażlach, Gierałtowice, as well as Bobrowniki, Mierzęcice, and Psary in the Będzin district.

Additionally, in line with global standards, agrotourism can be developed in areas that are not formally rural but retain a rural character, in this case they include the towns of Szczyrk, Wisła, Pszczyna and others (*Strategia Rozwoju Turystyki...*, 2004).

By far the most important event in the Silesia voivodship that brings together tourists and gourmet aficionados alike is the annual food festival Silesian Tastes (Śląskie Smaki). Its first edition took place in Ogrodzieniec, and later it moved on to Cieszyn, Racibórz, Pszczyna, Złoty Potok and Gliwice (*Smacznie po Śląsku...*, 2017). The festival is organised by the Silesian Tourism Organisation, one of the most active DMOs in Poland. The family-friendly event showcases the vast variety of the Silesian culture and culinary traditions, heritage crafts and arts, and includes a chef teams' competition. The overall ambition of the festival organisers is to promote Silesian gastronomy, local customs and traditional recipes to the widest possible audience. The festival also actively encourages spillover events in restaurants throughout the Silesian voivodship, and is typically accompanied by traditional music and dance shows by folk artists, including the world famous dance and song assembly „Śląsk".

The cooking competition staged during the festival is organised in two categories, for amateur and professional teams. The best team is awarded the title of an Expert of Silesian Tastes and the first three winning teams receive a Golden, Silver and Bronze Sieve, respectively. Ever since the 5th edition of the festival it is also accompanied by a competition for the best homemade liquor based on locally sourced ingredients. The are no strict rules as per the mixture content, and the only limitation is the makers' imagination; every entrant can propose up to three liquors for sampling.

## Conclusions

Most regional cultures have the potential to become tourist attractions. It is especially true with regard to regions characterised by distinctive cultural features, tangible and intangible. Regional cuisine is an example of a cultural asset that can not only attract gourmet-oriented tourists but it can also assist in the promotion of the region. Numerous examples show that gastronomy can play a key role in tourism development as it responds to the natural need of every traveller to quench their thirst and satisfy their hunger during their journey and their stay in the chosen destination. Moreover, living culinary traditions can also enhance the tourist's experience by creating an opportunity for the visitor to get intimately close to the local cultural and natural heritage.

It is also notable that the use of local culinary traditions and foods produced using locally sourced ingredients fits in with the European Commission's objective to promote cultural variety of the Union, and to strengthen regional identities of the member countries. Agroutourism seems to be one of the most suitable means of doing so with regard to rural communities. Also, the preservation and popularisation of local foods and culinary traditions is one of the more effective methods of protecting cultural heritage and local biodiversity.

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# SERVICE GUARANTEES IN THE CONTEXT OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICES – CASE OF LAW FIRMS

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Abstract This article focuses on the benefits of guarantees offered by law firms, as professional service firms. Can law firms even offer service guarantees, since lawyers can't guarantee an outcome? This research expands the current knowledge on service guarantees in the context of legal services. It proves that service guarantees are considered effective means for service firms to attract and retain customers and gain a competitive edge in the marketplace. This article integrates two approaches – conceptual and empirical. The conceptual discussion of the paper draws attention on existing research and integrates the professional services (legal) and service guarantees domains. The empirical part of this study announces two examples of law firms from real business world, which are innovators in introducing their ways of doing business by service guarantees.

## Introduction

Guarantees on products, have become commonplace. But guarantees in professional services are not that popular yet. The main aim of this paper is to clarify what researchers have learned about service guarantees and what are their main benefits. The study is divided into three parts. The first one describes the nature of professional services. The second part includes theoretical context of service guarantees, and benefits of offering them both for firms and clients. In the third part, the results of empirical research (case study logic) are presented.

## The nature of professional services

The marketing of professional services is a growing area of interest in both academic and professional press (Bloom, 1984; Jones, 1997; Thakor, Kumar, 2000; Hausman, 2003; Reid, 2008). The goal of this part is to develop theoretical propositions that can help further understand the complex phenomenon of professional services In general, services such as accounting, legal, and medical services are commonly cited as the traditional professions. Gummesson (1978) identified a series of the following criteria that distinguish professional services: service should be provided by qualified people, be advisory, focus on problem solving, the service should be an assignment from the buyer to the seller, and the professional should be independent of suppliers of others goods and services. The professions are often distinguished in terms of possessing systematic theory and professional authority, being sanctioned by the community, being governed by an ethical code, and exhibiting a professional culture (Thakor, Kumar, 2000). Moreover, the professions offer services that are highly complex, intangible, highly customized, and are created and delivered by highly qualified personnel, over a continuous stream of transactions or service encounters (Jones, 1997; Thakor, Kumar, 2000). In fact, owing to its high-degree of customer contact, as well as the level of individual judgment required by the professional, this form of service is considered the most intangible (Jaakkola, Halinen, 2006). Knowledge intensiveness is another distinguishing characteristic of this business, where knowledge has a role both as a resource and as a service sold to clients (Smedlund, 2008). Professionals offer their clients a sophisticated, knowledge-based expertise (Maister, 1993), and the relationships these professionals create with their clients are the medium through which they impart this expertise to solve their clients' problems (Reihlen, Apel, 2007; Walsh, Gordon, 2010). In professional services, as in most services in general, the reason for the highlighted role of the client is related to the fact that the client provides significant inputs into the production process, making the success of the service heavily reliant on client input (Rogozinski, 2000).

## What is a service guarantee?

Service guarantees have the potential to transform service organizations. Despite their high potential value and some very successful examples they remain the exception rather than the rule for service organizations. No clear consensus exists for a definition of the service guarantee construct (Hogreve, Gremlin, 2009, p. 324). First of all, Hart, Schlesinger, and Maher (1992, p. 20) expressed that, a guarantee is simply a statement explaining [what] the service customers can expect (the promise) and what the company will do if it fails to deliver (the payout). Baker and Collier (2005, p. 197) stated that, a service guarantee promises the customer that if the service delivery system does not meet certain performance standards, the customer is entitled to an economic and/or noneconomic payout. Similarly, Sum et al. (2002, p. 348) advocated that "A service guarantee is a promise by a company to compensate the customer in some way if the defined level of service delivered is not duly met." This approach was extended by Owen (2004, p. 58), who mentioned, that a satisfaction guarantee is an affirmation by the seller that assures buyer satisfaction, promising to take the buyer to a pre-purchase state (e.g., replacement or money back) rather than offering any changes to the product if the seller is not satisfied, whether or not the product performed as intended by the seller or as wanted by the buyer." Also, Björlin-Lidén and Skalén (2003, p. 39) has taken a similar approach – to guarantee a service simply means to present measures for service quality and to offer compensation in case when the promised quality is not achieved. On the other hand, Kashyap (2001, p. 2) noticed, that a guarantee contains two typical elements: a service promise or pledge that expresses the firm's willingness to engage in behaviors considered desirable by its customers and a compensation offer in case of service failure. The definition adopted in this paper was designed by Hogreve, Gremlin (2009, p. 324) – a service guarantee is an explicit promise made by the service provider to (a) deliver a certain level of service to satisfy the customer and (b) remunerate the customer if the service is not sufficiently delivered.

## What Makes a Good Guarantee?

A good guarantee should be simple and unconditional. If client requests a guarantee, organization should quickly respond. Moreover, entire organization should embrace the operating philosophy dictated by the use of guarantees. Employees should know the clients well enough to judge when a guarantee is helpful and when it isn't. At the same time, performance of the service process should be carefully monitored to avoid surprises. This should help limiting the number of "called in" guarantees (McLaughlin, 2005). Of course, before deciding to offer a service guarantee a company must be sure that the level of service quality that it is planning to guarantee is generally achievable (Hays, 2004). Company that offer a guarantee do show clients that, they are willing to share the risk, making the relationship a true collaboration.

## The benefits of offering service guarantees by professional service firms

There are several benefits of service guarantees, both for clients and firms. When implemented appropriately, service guarantees can improve service quality, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. There are three main categories of benefits: through marketing, employee motivation and learning from its mistakes (Hays, 2004).

1. Marketing – service guarantee can have both a proactive and reactive marketing impact. Proactive marketing reflects the company's ability to attract new customers. A company can use a service guarantee to proclaim the reliability of their high-quality service and, thus, attract new customers. It puts firm a as reliable – all companies offer "great service" but not many can back it up. Without a guarantee to back up those words, though, clients just perceive them as empty promises. It also allows companies to charge a price premium for reducing (or removing) customer risk- it there are no excuses, the customer may pay way more (Baker, 2008). Reactive marketing reflects a company's ability to increase customer loyalty and customer satisfaction through customer retention and recovery efforts (Hays, 2004). Moreover, only few professional service providers are providing a guarantee of promised results, so service guarantees are important, competitive differentiator (McLaughlin, 2005). It's an enormous marketing advantage.
2. Employee motivation – another benefit of offering a guarantee is that it can enhance a firm's culture of service quality. It forces company to learn customer's expectations and to manage them. At the same time, it focuses entire firm on the customer's expectations, and allows employees to do what it takes to exceed them (Baker, 2008). Customer perceptions of quality are shaped by the courtesy, empathy and responsiveness of service employees. Motivated employees with a clear vision of the importance of service quality are more likely to provide customers with a high-quality service experience. The guarantee makes a powerful statement about the importance of service quality to the company and empowers employees to ensure customer satisfaction (Hays, 2004). Empowerment of service workers may help reduce role stress and emotional labor (Chebat, Kollias, 2000).
3. Learn from mistakes – with a guarantee in place, firm and client should reach precise agreement on project objectives, outcomes and measurements of satisfaction. This level of rigor leads to a less ambiguous proposal, a more rational price and better marching orders for those working on the assignment (McLaughlin, 2005). However, service guarantees incentivizes the customer to complain, which is a good thing, because a complaint is a second chance to repair the relationship. Moreover, encouraging and rewarding customer complaints provides feedback on service quality. A company offering a service guarantee is forced to

compensate customers for low-quality service. By “punishing” the company for less-than-quality service, they prompt the company to find the root causes of service problems and to improve service quality (Hays, 2004). It also forces company to do a better job in customers selection and deselection.

## Methodology

For empirical research, a case study logic (based on observational research – “nonparticipant” observation), which has grown in reputation as an effective methodology (Yin, 2014) was applied. Multiple sources of evidence were utilized. These include: company websites, business plans, magazine and newspaper articles, slide-shows etc. Hence, the organizations were studied in their real-life contexts (Eisenhardt, Graebner, 2007). This paper profiles two examples of contemporary law firms in real business world and how they have successfully benefited from implementing service guarantees. To the best knowledge of the Author, there are no examples of law firms in Poland offering unconditional full satisfaction guarantee strategy, therefore both of described firms operate in the US. An unconditional guarantee contains few if any provisions and states in essence “your satisfaction guaranteed or your money back” (McCollough, 2010). Both of the law firms may be considered as innovators in introducing their ways of doing business concepts that have worked in other industries, but remain rare in professional services context. Applying observational research may also help predict future trends.

## Results

In fact most of law firms (ethical and conscientious professionals) do provide service guarantees. However, just few of them explicitly advertise it as their marketing strategy. Ungaretti & Harris LLP, a firm from Chicago claimed to be the law first firm to offer service guarantee (Baker, 2008):

> We GUARANTEE that as a client of Ungaretti & Harris you will receive COST-EFFECTIVE legal services delivered in a TIMELY manner. We promise to INVOLVE you in strategic decisions and to COMMUNICATE with you regularly. We cannot guarantee outcomes, but we do GUARANTEE YOUR SATISFACTION with our SERVICE. If at any time Ungaretti & Harris does not perform to your satisfaction, we ask that you inform us PROMPTLY. We will then resolve the issue to YOUR SATISFACTION, even if it means reducing our legal fees.

Such an approach has been further developed by Denmon & Denmon Law from Tampa, who not only assure their clients of highest standards of professionalism:

> We have high expectations for the professionals that we work with. And you should have the same expectations for your lawyer. That’s why we are proud to offer a 100% service guarantee to each and every one of our clients. Now, no law firm can guarantee favorable results for the client. That would be unethical. After all, there are factors outside of our control (Judges and Juries for example) that may affect the final resolution. But we can hold ourselves to the highest standards of professionalism and service. We can make sure that your calls and questions will be promptly answered. We can make sure that you are confident with us every step of the way. And we can make sure you are treated with respect and dignity in an otherwise terribly difficult time in your life.

But also offer 30 days guarantee: (Denmon, 2017)

> If at any time during the first 30 days of representation you are not satisfied with the service we are providing and want to hire another lawyer, we will refund 100% of your money. If during any month afterward you become unhappy with our service and want to leave, we will refund that month's worth of legal service fees, no questions asked. We will honor this guarantee at any time before your case or project is completed. And when you have retained another attorney, we will share your case file digitally with your new attorney so to make the transition as seamless as possible.

Both firms managers believe that they have the best approach to how handle cases. There are confident in how they treat their customers, through the course of representation:

> This means frequent and open communication as well as transparency throughout the process. You will have access electronically to every Court pleading, Judge's order, and letters from opposing counsel in your case. But we also recognize that our clients need to have a lawyer and a firm that they feel comfortable will lead them through a dark patch in their lives and into a better place. And if it turns that we accepted your case but we were not the right fit, we want you to have the ability to switch gears and find a more suitable lawyer for your needs. We don't want you to feel "stuck" with us because you paid a fee or retainer in advance of the case. We want to shoulder some of the risk in this process with you.

## Conclusions

As competition grows more fierce in the legal services industries, many firms are eager for any means to differentiate themselves from competitors and overcome client concerns about obtaining the highest value for the money. One of the most effective ways to affect customers perception of reliability is to offer an unconditional guarantee of satisfaction. For many firms, such a guarantee has proven to be a powerful tool for building market share, strengthening customer loyalty, and improving overall service quality (Hart, Schlesinger, Maher, 1992)

Although the success of unconditional service guarantees remains hard to quantify, it is not surprising that professional service firms would express interest in them. The findings from conceptual and empirical observations suggest that law firms can incorporate service guarantees into their work and relationships with clients. The successful law firms of the future will find ways to introduce their ways of doing business concepts that have worked in other industries (Schmidt, 2004). A service guarantee may be one such strategy.

While the study has supplied useful information about service guarantees in legal services context, the chosen method and limited number of exemplary law firms, are the source of a significant limitation, that must be acknowledged. There is very little basis for generalization of findings and conclusions. Moreover, applying a different or more robust methodology might address the research problem more effectively in a future study.

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# PROBLEMS OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT IN RURAL TOURISM

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Abstract This article focuses on the concept of strategic management in the rural tourism sector. It presents the assumptions and methodology of this concept in the formulation of tourism development strategies in rural areas. It shows a relational and network approach in the development of the tourism product against the background of building distinctive regional competences. An example of practical use of the concept of strategic management in the development of rural tourism in the Wielkopolska voivodship is presented.

## Introduction

The program for tourism development up to 2020, developed by the Ministry of Sport and Tourism, emphasizes that the key strategic objective for this sector will be to strengthen the development of competitive and innovative tourism by supporting businesses, organizations and institutions as well as tourism sector initiatives, with respect to the principles of sustainable development. (Program, 2015, p. 36). The numerous operational objectives include those that relate to the creation and development of regional and local tourism products based on the existing, attractive tourist assets and resources of individual areas. Rural tourism can be undoubtedly such regional and local tourism products, providing that they will be created and developed in the modern, innovative manner and, more importantly, they will constitute an element of the general system of strategic management in the particular area. In today's practice of strategic management of the tourism sector, the most important is its perception as an important element of the socio-economic development of the region (area).

In other words, tourism is developing in a specific area, in a specific space, thus it is important to think about it in the context of an area-based tourism product. It consists of: attractions and destination environment, infrastructure and destination services, availability of destination, image and perception of destination (Gardzińska, 2009, p. 48). While offering tourists a holiday within the framework of rural tourism, various services are provided by businesses and individuals, on the basis of the existing tourism and para-tourism development, cultural and historical heritage, hospitality and goodwill of the local inhabitants, and even the ones related to the image of the area and the events that will only occur during the tourist's stay (Kaczmarek, Stasiak, Włodarczyk, 2005, p. 54). We should also agree with Lane's statement that contemporary rural tourism is an interesting market for many specialized forms of tourism. It covers not only tourism in agricultural holdings, but also trips connected with particular interests: nature holidays and ecotourism, walking, climbing and riding holidays, adventure, sport and health tourism, hunting and angling, educational tourism, arts and heritage tourism, and in some areas ethnic tourism (Lane, 1994, cited in Page, Gatz, 1997, p. 8). So it can be stated that also in rural tourism we deal with a product being an aggregate of diverse goods and services, which cater to different needs and expectations of tourists. However, in order to satisfy these needs and expectations, the cooperation between the entities and institutions working for tourists in the area (in the locality) is necessary, and the objectives previously established in the regional or local development strategy have to be implemented.[1]

The aim of this paper is to present the possibility of using a relational and network approach in strategic management on the regional basis, supporting regional competence in tourism product development.

## Relational and network approach to strategic management in rural tourism by region

The development of the concept of strategic management and the assumptions for strategy formulation, present diverse approaches that support the organization's pursuit of market objectives. The literature of the subject demonstrates the exploration of various approaches of strategic management schools as well as their relevant characteristics and relationships including planning, resource, relational and network concepts (i.a. Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2014, pp. 9–29; Gołębiewski, 2001, pp. 17–37). This paper focuses on the presentation of the assumptions of the relational and network approach in strategic management in rural tourism on the regional level, and the concept of regional network tourism product. The considerations simultaneously take into account the concept, process and attributes of strategic management. In this regard, it should also be noted that strategic management in the tourism sector on the regional basis is an interdisciplinary and complex process. As revealed, it concerns many subjects engaged in the development of tourism, representing different socio-economic and public spheres. Individual entities involved in the organization and operation of tourism formulate their own development strategies and devise appropriate functional programs. However, they have limited resources and access to the other ones while creating the shared value for the tourist. On the other hand, in a tourist's perception, the tourism offer of the area is identified as a comprehensive product having the nature of complementary goods and services, providing some specific – expected benefits. It can

[1] According to OECD list of contrasting features between urban/resort tourism and rural tourism could include the following: Much open space, Settlements under 10,000, Sparsely populated, Natural environment, Many outdoor activities, Infrastructure – weak, Strong individual activity base, Small establishments, Locally owned businesses, Much part-time involvement in tourism, Some farm/forestry involvement, Tourism supports other interests, Workers often live, close to workplace, Often influenced, by seasonal factors, Few guests, Guest relationships personal, Amateur management, Local in atmosphere, Many older buildings, Conservation/limits to growth ethic, Specialist appeal, Niche marketing (OECD, 1994, pp. 14–15).

therefore be concluded that what is important in shaping the strategy for tourism development in rural areas is the approach of mutual complementarity and common use of resources, increasing the value provided and improving the efficiency of the entities belonging to the network. As a result they build new competences of higher productivity than their competitors. Diversified tourist needs and motives, as factors driving travel to rural areas, determine the creation of various tourism products. Decisions concerning the choice of scope and type of action, oriented on target market segments, are related to the definition of strategic business units. According to Levitt, defining a domain of action in terms of market rather than a product, makes it easier to adapt to changes in the environment, modify products and develop new ones (cf. Kotler, 1999, p. 63). In this context, identification of the needs of tourists allows for the development of goods and services which, in turn, by complementing and integrating particular functions, domains of action and coordination processes can support the achievement of synergy effects. In rural tourism, activities may focus on one type of activity or several connected types which can be planned separately.

Relational and network approaches in strategic management (a relationship-oriented strategy in the tourism value chain and a network-oriented strategy for actors involved in the development of tourism in the region) are based on the assumption that resources and modes of interaction can become outstanding cross-regional competencies through co-operation or/and the integration of actors and coordination of activities. That said, it is important to bear in mind the possibility of developing various concepts of cooperation (relations), characterized by M. Ratajczak-Mrozek, such as: business networks, network organizations, clusters. As the cited author states, the essence of business networks is the relation, and formal or informal type of cooperation is a secondary issue. Their attributes are continuous interaction, interdependence of resources, entities and activities and infinity of connections, lack of clear boundaries and structure. On the other hand, network organizations are characterized by a complex organizational structure resulting from the strategic cooperation of partners (strategic alliances), including integrated, federated, contractual, and direct relations networks. The clusters' distinctive features are: the geographical proximity of cluster participants allowing for the use of the same resources and of common industry level, and frequently the formal structure and formal institution or coordinating institution (Ratajczak-Mrozek, 2009, pp. 79–89). W. Rudny points to the important aspects related to the design and operation of business networks, including: 1) pooling of resources of network participants (technical resources: products and infrastructure, organizational resources: organizational units and inter-organizational relationships) in order to create a new value; 2) analysis of the combination of resources and a formal description of the relationships between the resources, pooling of resources or a coordination mechanism; 3) forms of coordination for building relationships with other entities (lack of cooperation, cooperation or takeover), choice between the development of the resource base independently, with no external partner, or using other actors (Rudny, 2014, pp. 26–28). We should also agree with the benefits for rural tourism development resulting from the attributes of inter-organizational networks as presented by J. Matysiewicz, that concern searching for market opportunities in the scope of creating new market offers which are more integrated and more attractive in terms of prices, discovering new markets, better satisfaction of consumer needs, and are characterized by the effectiveness of a jointly implemented strategy which is higher than the effectiveness provided by individual strategies (Matysiewicz, 2013, p. 65). According to the Polish Tourist Organization, a network tourism product is a "ready-to-sell packaged offer based on a dispersed structure of entities, attractions, places, service points, objects, functioning as one coherent concept with a common, leading strong discriminant (brand) of a product (POT, 2008). In this context, the implementation of the development strategy for the network tourism product is related to the identification of relations between particular network entities which would contribute to creating the value for tourists and establishing the scope of tasks and mechanisms for coordinating the work of network actors and the monitoring system of the activities being undertaken, as well as the possibility of introducing changes. The model approach to the network tourism product is presented by M. Kachniewska, who distinguishes its three important components. Knowledge as the first component of the concept, which deals with the understanding of the essence and the process of creating a network tourism product. The second component is the subject-oriented approach and the division of roles between network participants. The third component is defining of the territorial coverage, which is specified by the substantive scope of the network product concept (Kachniewska, 2014/2015, pp. 25–44).

## Strategic management based on the Strategy for the development of tourism of the Wielkopolska Voivodship up to 2020

An example of the use of the concept of strategic management in the development of rural tourism is the study concerning a tourism development strategy in the Wielkopolska voivodship. The approach adopted by the authors of the Strategy includes selected components of strategic planning, implementation and control of undertaken actions. The division of tasks in the development of tourism assigned to the voivodship local government and other entities, refers to the theoretical approach of the strategic management concept at the regional level. The tasks of the voivodeship local government in the sector of development of tourism products listed by the authors of the Strategy, not only in rural areas, consist mainly in indicating directions of their development, creating favorable conditions for their implementation, supporting initiatives consistent with the directions, were defined as organizational, training and marketing support. On the other hand, construction of tourism products was attributed to other entities. A strategic goal was also defined, resulting primarily from the analysis of the rural resources of the voivodship, which was defined as the “Development of rural tourism products”, as well as the operational objectives oriented towards the increase in the attractiveness of rural tourism products, enhancing the quality of services provided by rural tourism facilities, and intensifying the informative and promotional activities. Measures to achieve the aforementioned objectives have also been developed, including among others supporting the construction and extension of rural tourism facilities, in particular the adaptation of historic buildings and sites for tourism purposes (e.g. memorial exhibition rooms, open air museums), specialized and competitive products emphasizing authenticity, locality and culture (local traditions and customs) including the so-called “thematic villages”, supporting events and happenings promoting local culture – traditions and customs of Wielkopolska countryside and regional cuisine, supporting projects related to improving the aesthetics of Wielkopolska countryside and rural tourism facilities, investing in appropriate equipment and appearance of the facilities and their surroundings, promoting good practice, increasing the competences and awareness of the personnel that influence the shaping of rural tourism products, intensifying promotional activities using traditional and modern forms of promotion, and the inclusion of rural tourism facilities as an integral part of the offer of business, active, cultural and natural tourism products. Quantitative measures of achievement of the strategic goal have been defined: number of agro-tourism lodging establishments, number of training courses/workshops for the administrators of rural tourism facilities and local governments, the number of organized or supported competitions and projects promoting rural tourism. The sources of financing for the planned activities were also indicated, including own funds of the local governments, the funds of the Rural Development Program for the years 2014–2020 (sub-measure 7.6), own financial resources of Wielkopolska Tourist Organization, private funds and funds from other entities involved in the achievement of the strategic goal (Strategy for the development of tourism in Wielkopolska Voivodship until the year 2020, 2016).

The development of innovative rural tourism products in Wielkopolska, based on various forms of cooperation, can contribute to more efficient and effective satisfaction of the needs of tourists. Table 1 gives the characteristics of four segments of rural tourism relating to the observed consumer and tourism trends, which appear to be an interesting option for the development of network tourism products in Wielkopolska.

**Table 1.** Chosen segments of rural tourism

| |
|---|
| Tourism consumption oriented towards the pro-ecological features of the tourist offer |
| Purchase decisions can be motivated by: 1) experiences connected with contact with nature, among others. aesthetic experiences, e.g. admiring and photographing nature, „magical" e.g. observation of unique natural phenomena (e.g. plants flowering, birds arrivals), educational, e.g. cognitive wandering related to the topic of ecosystems, workshops and ecological actions; 2) pro-ecological criteria of the tourist offer concerning, inter alia, preserving the natural landscape and its aesthetics, proper location of tourism and recreation facilities and their capacity, introduction of pro-environmental infrastructure solutions (e.g. renewable energy sources, water and energy-saving equipment, pro-environmental transport solutions, pro-environmental waste management), participation in environmental protection projects, development of ecological crops and healthy food, promotion of environmentally friendly forms of tourism and recreation in the region. Tourism needs and behaviors fit in with the trend of conscious consumption and lifestyle – slow life, slow travel* |
| Consumption of tourism products oriented on physical activity |
| Purchasing decisions can be motivated by the experiences of taking up various forms of physical activity in rural areas, including among others: taking action for health, well-being, doing something for the body and its shape (e.g. fitness/wellness, jogging, aerobics, yoga), the sense of possibility of achieving something together, meeting friends and getting to know nice people, also through passive participation in sports events (e.g. racing, hiking/ biking, team games and activities), experiencing some special emotion, „triggering adrenaline", checking one's own physical capacity/ fitness along with prestige and recognition (e.g. extreme sports). Needs and behavior are associated with an active lifestyle *** |
| *Tourism consumption motivated by the search for contact with culture, new ideas and relations in tourism* |
| Purchasing decisions motivated by the need, among others, of discovering own identity, searching for contacts with cultures, visiting family places, experiencing the authenticity such as participation in local events and behaviors from the "backstage" area, avoiding the beaten track, popular attractions, crowds of tourists, feeling of being special and unique, co-participating in the processes of making souvenirs, behavioral characteristics are coincident with Cohen's tourist types: „seeker of experiments", „existential tourist **. The second segment is Cohen's type of recreational tourist, motivated by the desire to participate in the staging of a tourism product, e.g. historical reconstruction, interactive forms of interpretation of cultural heritage, guesting, geocaching, theme parks and entertainment parks*** |
| Demonstrative consumption motivated by prestige and as expression of lifestyle |
| Purchasing decisions concern two segments of consumption of luxury tourism services offered in rural areas: 1) strong motivation according to T. Verblen with respect to goods used to signal wealth, power or social status; 2) in other segments, apart from the aspect of conspicuous consumption, conspicuous consumption the motivation is a demonstration of a unique lifestyle, and the acquisition of products shifts towards experience and a symbolic image. Consumers no longer want to ostentatiously emphasize their position (e.g. through extravagance and large expenses), but they do it through more subtle behavior in the market **** |

Source: developed on the basis of: *Zalaga (2013), **Skalska, Markiewicz, Pędzierski (2016), ***Zanger (2005), ****F. Bylok 2013.

Creation of network rural tourism products in Wielkopolska includes: 1) tourism product concept, e.g. nature based products, recreational activities, local culture, customs, regional cuisine; 2) identification of possessed key competences (material and non-material resources, including product quality, brand, distribution network: suppliers, partners) and their function in creating the value for tourists; 3) following the definition of their combinations, forms of relationship between actors and ways of coordinating actions, i.e. links between network participants and, among others with the competitors, tourism organizations and scientific and research centers, territorial self-government units (horizontal networks), relations within the tourism supply chain, e.g. based on the cooperation of co-organizers of cultural/sports events, hotel establishments, regional cuisine establishments, sports and active recreation facilities, tourist guides (vertical networks). The factors affecting the abovementioned aspects of the network's functioning, concerning the competence of cooperative entities, the structure of the local tourism economy, which constitute an important area of further research, should be taken into consideration. The research into the efficiency of networks and participating entities, as well as the benefits to local communities and the environment are also of great importance.

## Conclusion

Rural tourism is and will be a significant product on the Polish tourism market, a product with good future development prospects. This, however, depends on dealing with this form of tourism as part of an overall strategy for the development of tourism in a given area (at national, regional, commune or locality level). Without the use of strategic management methods and instruments, it will be difficult to make rural tourism a branded product on the domestic market, and even more so on the competitive international tourism services market.

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# THE LEGAL DETERMINANTS OF AGRITOURISM AND ITS LINK WITH LOCAL FARMING – EXAMPLE OF AGRITOURISM FARMS IN LOWER SILESIA

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Abstract

The aim of the paper is to answer the question how legal regulations shape the scope of agritourism activity and whether the agritourism regulation enhance the local farming. The research is based on the dogmatic method and empirical evaluation of data collected through surveys concerning agritourism farms in Lower Silesia. The research showed, that on the one hand, the law regulations providing exemptions and facilities for agritourism led to its development, but on the other hand they have conditioned the way of its conducting. The survey showed that most of the respondents run agritourism in such size and in such a way as to benefit from the legal exemptions. Despite being conducted in limited size, it is a profitable business and is an important source of income primarily for small farms. Most of the respondents also willingly take advantage of the legal possibility of selling home meals. However, the percentage of farmers engaged in agricultural production for the purpose of feeding their guests is not high. It can therefore be said that regulations do not play a role in combining agritourism with local farming.

## Introduction

Agritourism can be an outlet market for the farm's own products, contributing to keeping farm production activity by exploiting its effects. The use of own farm products in agritourism can have many beneficial effects. The aim of the paper is an attempt to answer the question how legal regulations shape the scope of agritourism activity and especially whether they enhance the local farming within agritourism farms. To achieve this goal, the rules determining the way of running agritourism and the empirical data on the actual shape of agritourism will be analysed. This in turn will allow to formulate conclusions as to how legal regulations affect the agritourism and maintenance of agricultural production for the purpose of feeding tourists.

## Literature review

The study of C.M. Hall, S. Gössling shows that agritourism plays a role in strengthening local economies and local food sources (Hall, Gössling, 2016). In economic terms, it can serve to improve the profitability of small farms whose area does not allow for commodity production. Therefore it can be an alternative to improving their area structure and their enlargement. Small farms should also exist because their presence may be very beneficial in terms of maintainance family farm heritage, rural landscape, biodiversity and sustainable production methods. Furthermore, the possibility of consuming local products is important for consumers as show surveys at national or regional scale (European Commission, 2013). Local products are one of the attraction of agritourism enhancing the tourism in rural areas contributing to local growth and development. EU research shows that “a strong local food sector can encourage tourism by strengthening the cultural identity of an area around its food products” (Augère-Granier, 2015). Local food systems are becoming popular in rural areas, especially in the USA, as a counterweight to globalization, standardization and industrial food production (Darcy, Freedman-Kimberly, 2011). Agritorusim may be an important part of them. It can not only benefit from the local food systems attractiveness for tourists but, what is more important for the present study, it can contribute to their creation and development, being a place of producing and serving of local products. In literature the chosen topic was not investigated in the proposed approach. There can be found studies on the role of traditional and regional food products in the farms development (Jęczmyk, 2015) or on the land use and agricultural production in agritouristim farms operating in the the areas of Białowieża National Park (Ciepiela, Kur-Kowalska, 2015). The above mentioned motives argue for the need to discuss the defined topic.

## Method

The research will be based on empirical evaluation of agritourism farms in Lower Silesia. For this purpose, the survey method will be used. Apart from empirical methods also the dogmatic method will be used, which is essential in the legal sciences, in order to define the legal framework of conducting agritourism.

## Characteristic of empirical research

In 2014 a survey was conducted in 50 agritourism farms which were located on rural areas of Lower Silesian Voivodeship. Research objects have been selected purposeful way. Basic criteria were: cooperation of Dolnośląski Ośrodek Doradztwa Rolniczego (Lower Silesian Agricultural Advisory Centre) with owners of agritourism farms under permission of accommodation providers to perform such extensive survey. Analysed objects have been accounted for 8% of population of all agritourism farms in Lower Silesian Voivodeship. The survey was very extensive and contained 51 detailed questions. Unfortunately, due to financial and organizational constraints, the survey was organised only in 50 objects. The majority of questions in the survey questionnaire were semi-open. The survey has been conducted by local working employees of Lower Silesian Agricultural Advisory Centre in Wroclaw, commissioned by Institute of Economics and Social Sciences of Wrocław University of Environmental and Life Sciences.

## Results of the study

Agritourism is not a legal concept, but its definition can be deduced from Article 3 para. 2 of the Act of 2 July 2004 on freedom of economic activity (hereinafter AFEA) (Dz.U. 1991, no. 80, pos. 350). This provision exempts from the subject-matter of this law the activity of renting rooms by farmers, selling home meals and providing other services related to the stay of tourists on farms. Activities performed pursuant to this provision are not subject to registration in the business register.

The possibility of running agritourism on a farm without having to register a business activity is an important facilitation which the Polish legislator introduced for the first time at the end of the socialist system, i.e. in the Act of 23 December 1988 on business, which was the first legal act directly relating to tourist services performed by a farmer in his farm (Dz.U. 1998, no. 41, pos. 324). The above exemption was maintained in the next act of 19 November 1999 the law of business activity (Dz.U. 1999, no. 101, pos. 1178). The current law of 2004, in Article 3 para. 2 AFEA almost literally reiterated the provisions of the previous provision of the Act of 1999. The ratio legis of analysed provisions is that the privilege of agritourism is justified by its link with agricultural activity (through the use of farm resources and by a farmer) to which it is secondary and not prime.

Another important facilitation is income tax exemption introduced by the Personal Income Tax Act of 26 July 1991 (Dz.U. 1991, no. 80, pos. 350). The exemption applies to the income generated by the rental of guest rooms, in residential buildings of the farm located in rural areas, to persons being on holiday as well as the income earned on feed of those persons if the number of rooms rented does not exceed 5.

Statistical data show that, after the introduction of the Business Acts of 1988 and 1999 and income tax exemptions, agritourism has been developed. The number of agritourist farms in Poland increased from 1,000 in 1993 (Sikorska-Wolak, 2004) up to 4.8 thousand in 2000 according to the data of the Institute of Tourism in 2000 (Legienis, 2002). The conducted research confirms that the indicated legal facilitations have contributed to the undertaking of agritourism activities also in Lower Silesia. According to the records of Lower Silesian Agricultural Advisory Centre in the region Dolnośląskie currently operates 630 agritouristic farms (Figure 1). In 1993 there were only 23 of them, and since 1999 there has been a dynamic increase in the number of holdings from year to year.

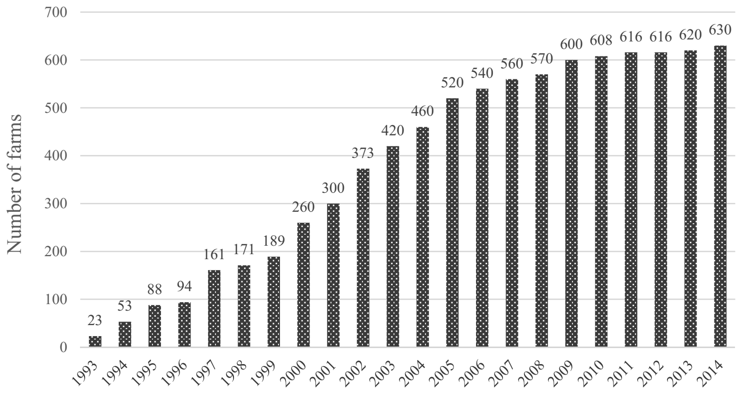


**Figure 1.** Number of agritourism farms in Lower Silesia in years 1993–2014

Source: own elaboration based on Kowalczuk-Misek (2013).

**Table 1.** Sources of Respondents' income

| No. | Specification | Number of indications | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Farm | 36 | 72 |
| 2. | Pension (Life annuity) | 9 | 18 |
| 3. | Pension | 4 | 8 |
| 4. | Business activity | 19 | 38 |
| 5. | Agritourism activity | 50 | 100 |
| 6. | Other (Contract of employment) | 10 | 20 |

Source: own research.

38% of examined farms conduct business activity (Table 1). It is important to note that among them are only 8 respondents who provide tourist services as a registered business activity. Remaining part of 84% respondents run agritourism activity as part of exemption of Article 3 para. 2 of AFEA. Due to the use in Article 3 para. 2 of AFEA of the notion of a farm, the condition of exemption from registration in the register of economic activity is to conduct agritourism on the farm and thus on the farm in which the production activity in agriculture is conducted. This condition is an important criterion for linking agritourism to local farming. Indeed, the study showed that most of the respondents (72%) are engaged in agricultural production, which is a source of income for them.

Furthermore, conducting agritourism in case of 88% of examined farms did not influence the agricultural production scale (Table 2). That means that providing touristic services in the farms does not cause a depreciation of the farm's agricultural function.

**Table 2.** The influence of agritourism activity on agricultural production scale

| No. | Specification | | Number of indications | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Providing touristic services in agritourism farm caused: | increase in agricultural production scale | 3 | 6.00 |
| 2. | | decrease in agricultural production scale | 2 | 4.00 |
| 3. | | did not influence the agricultural production scale | 44 | 88.00 |
| 4. | | resignation agricultural production | 1 | 2.00 |

Source: own research.

The results are an evidence that agritourism is an additional activity which is a supplement to agricultural income. That was the lawmaker's intention, i.e. providing for facilitations and privileges for business activity, which is connected with farming and of which remains subsidiary.

Studies have also shown that most of the respondents hire up to 5 rooms, which demonstrates the interest of farmers in the income tax exemption mentioned above (Table 3).

A very important legal determinant of linking agritourism with local farming is the possibility of selling home meals to tourists, in accordance with mentioned before Article 3 para 2 of AFEA. The weakness of the regulation's design is the lack of a clear obligation to feed guests with products from the owner's farm or nearby situated local farms. This undoubtedly undermines the link between agritourism and local products. A good example can be the Italian law on agritourism (Article 4 para. 4 legge 96/2006) which obliges to serve local products in agritourism, deriving in a part from own farm and possibly from nearby farms. However, the Polish regulation gives farmers the opportunity to use in meals homegrown products. The research shows that this is one of the main attractions of agritourism. The attractions offered often are local cuisine (54% interviewees), homegrown fruit and vegetables (54%), bread baking and homegrown eggs (over 40%). The reason of offering them is the willingness to gain new customers (for 48% of surveyed farms).

**Table 3.** Number of offered rooms.

| No. | Number of rooms | Number of indications | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| 2. | 2 | 4 | 8 |
| 3. | 3 | 10 | 20 |
| 4. | 4 | 6 | 12 |
| 5. | 5 | 19 | 38 |
| 6. | 6 | 3 | 6 |
| 7. | 7 | 2 | 4 |
| 8. | 8 | 1 | 2 |
| 9. | 10 | 1 | 2 |
| 10. | 11 | 1 | 2 |
| 11. | 15 | 1 | 2 |
| 12. | 20 | 1 | 2 |

Source: own research.

The majority of interviewees noticed that implementation of new attraction led to increase in tourists' interest (74%) and 88% of the respondents boosted their income. That is why part of farms provide manufacturing activity in agriculture in order to feed tourists. Among surveyed farms, 38% of them are running vegetables and fruit production for own and guests purposes (26% of farms up to 10 ha and 12% of farms over 10 ha) and 18% of the farms provide animal production for own and guests purposes (Table 4). However, this is not a high percentage. In the analysed objects there is a certain dependence that with increasing the surface of the farm there is less and less interest in plant production for own and tourists' needs. This data proves that agritourism does not play a big role in strengthening local production. These results are consistent with the data presented above (Table 2), indicating that in 88% agritourism did not affect the scale of agricultural production, and only 6% of farms raised this scale.

**Table 4.** Type of conducted agricultural production depending on farm size

| Specification | | Area of agricultural land | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 0–10 hectare (%) | over 10 hectare (%) |
| Share of farms in groups | | 52 | 48 |
| Type of conducted agricultural production | Commodity crop production | 12 | 30 |
| | Plant production for own needs | 18 | 16 |
| | Plant production for own needs and holiday makers | 26 | 12 |
| | Commodity animal production | 0 | 10 |
| | Animal production for own use | 14 | 14 |
| | Animal production for own needs and holiday makers | 6 | 12 |
| | No agricultural activity | 2 | 0 |

Source: own research.

It should be noted that farmers are eager to benefit from the possibility of selling home meals to tourists. It turns out that this is a more profitable business than renting rooms. Table 5 shows that in objects where meals are offered, average share of income from touristic services in personal income is greater than in the case of household where only accommodation is offered.

**Table 5.** Share of income from particular activities depending on whether they offer only accommodation or accommodation and alimentation.

| Specification | Only accommodation services | | | Accommodation with meals | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of farms | 14 | | | 36 | | |
| % population | 28 | | | 72 | | |
| Data | min (%) | max (%) | average (%) | min (%) | max (%) | average (%) |
| Farm | 5 | 85 | 33 | 5 | 80 | 35 |
| Business activity | 25 | 95 | 68 | 15 | 80 | 45 |
| Agritourism activity | 5 | 50 | 20 | 5 | 100 | 39 |
| Other (Contract of employment) | 80 | 85 | 83 | 15 | 70 | 52 |

Source: own research.

It is worth mentioning that this regulation was the first legal solution that allowed farmers to legally sell their own products without having to register a business and pay income tax. However, it only concerned feeding tourists on an agritourism farm. Relevant legislative solutions have now been introduced to enable farmers to sell their own products directly to consumers without the need of providing other touristic services as accommodation (see Article 3 para 4 of AFEA).

Lastly, it can be stated that despite the legal conditions limiting the way of running an agritourism farm, it turns out to be a profitable business and an important additional source of income, especially for small farms. The research has shown that the average share of farm income in the farmer's and his family's personal income decreases as the farm size grows, while the share of agricultural income increases (Table 6). This means that agritourism activity plays an important role in generating income in small farms.

**Table 6.** Share of income from particular activities depending on farm size [%]

| Specification | | 0–5 hectare | 5–10 hectare | 10–20 hectare | 20–30 hectare | over 30 hectare |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Farm | Min | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 30 |
| | Max | 50 | 30 | 80 | 85 | 80 |
| | Average | 17 | 17 | 32 | 48 | 58 |
| Pension (Life annuity) | Min | 20 | 25 | 15 | 0 | 20 |
| | Max | 60 | 25 | 80 | 0 | 20 |
| | Average | 32 | 25 | 48 | 0 | 20 |
| Pension | Min | 15 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Max | 60 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Average | 35 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Business activity | Min | 35 | 25 | 15 | 60 | 20 |
| | Max | 95 | 80 | 80 | 70 | 50 |
| | Average | 66 | 52 | 44 | 65 | 30 |

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Agritourism activity | Min | 5 | 10 | 5 | 15 | 10 |
| | Max | 100 | 90 | 80 | 50 | 50 |
| | Average | 38 | 42 | 35 | 26 | 21 |
| Other (Contract of employment) | Min | 15 | 50 | 0 | 0 | 60 |
| | Max | 80 | 85 | 0 | 0 | 60 |
| | Average | 53 | 68 | 0 | 0 | 60 |

Source: own research.

## Conclusions

The research showed, that on the one hand, the law regulations providing exemptions and facilities for agritourism led to its development, but on the other hand they have conditioned the way of conducting this activity. Both of the above analysed regulations (Article 3 para. 2 of AFEA and Article 21 point 43 of the Personal Income Tax Act) determine the criteria limiting the size of this activity. The survey showed that most of the respondents run agritourism in such size and in such a way as to benefit from both of the legal exemptions. Despite being conducted in limited size, it is a profitable business and is an important source of income primarily for small farms. Most of the respondents also willingly take advantage of the legal possibility of selling home meals. However, the percentage of farmers engaged in agricultural production for the purpose of feeding the guests is not high. It can therefore be said that regulations do not play a role in combining agritourism with local farming. It is worth considering introducing of such an obligation as exists in the Italian law, to serve local products in agritourism, deriving in a part from own farm and possibly from nearby farms. Such a provision would undoubtedly enhance the development and support of local farming and the creation of local food systems. Moreover it would ensure that agricultural production is actually practiced in small farms, and therefore justify the privileged treatment of agritourism in relation to other service activities that are not related to agricultural activities.

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# DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANISATIONS (DMOS) AND THEIR ROLE IN SUMMER PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT IN SELECTED ALPINE COUNTRIES

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Abstract

Appeared in the XIX century, summer mountain tourism has a very strong capital attraction for international tourist flows and constitutes the basis of leisure tourism. However, for the last several years numerous, mature Alpine destinations in particular have been losing overnight stays during summer months by cause of competition with winter tourism as well often from warmer, cheaper and more easily accessible beach destinations. Moreover, due to the globalisation pressure, summer mountain tourism development is strongly dependent on structural change in “21st century post-modern” tourist demand.

Thus, innovative tourism product development has become a central key issue for many Alpine tourism organisations. The aim of this paper is to present the result of explanatory research conducted in 2014 and 2015 in four Alpine countries. The research objective was to evaluate the role of 125 Destinations Management Organizations (DMOs) in the stimulation of summer tourism through the commercialization of various tourism products.

## Introduction

The dominance of winter tourism and the decline in summer tourism is observed since the mid-1960s, in many Alpine areas (Needham, Rollins, Ceurvorst, Wood, Grimm, Dearden, 2010; Schuckert, Möller, Weiermair, 2007). In French mountain regions for example the number of overnights in summer has decreased by 10% over the last ten years, i.e. 12 million overnights (Berthier, 2014; ODIT France, 2011). Moreover, Alpine regions in summer season are in strong competition with often cheaper and weather guaranteed destinations at seaside (Marrocu, Paci, 2013).

Besides, rapid development of communication technology (ICT) and easy access to information has radically changed the travel consumption habits (Pearce, 2011). Thanks to the easy internet access, contemporary travellers are becoming empowered consumers capable to compare the value of various tourist products and often to bundle online holiday stays themselves (Ferreira, Putnik, Cruz-Cunha, Putnik, 2012).

In this context, holistic destination management and multi-channel e-distribution of offers have become central issue especially for many mature Alpine destinations (Grissemann, Pikkemaat, Weger, 2013).

The main objective of this paper is to present the result of comparative research which was done in 2014 and 2015 into 125 Alpine DMOs, in order to evaluate their efforts regarding product commercialization to stimulate summer tourism development.

## Literature review

For many years, the trend for skiing in winter and beach stays in summer has had a direct repercussion on seasonality and disproportion between winter and summer tourist flows in Alpine areas (Bausch, Unseld, 2017; Béchet, Margretier, 2013). Despite the seasonal imbalance of tourist arrivals, winter tourism generates greater economic income and better supports development of several mountain resorts by financing of the infrastructure and job creation (Hallmann, Mueller, Peters, 2015; Zehrer, Smeral, Hallmann, 2016). However, the negative impact of seasonality affects all aspects of supply-side behaviour: finance, labour market and stakeholder operations (Boffa, Succurro, 2012; O'Mahony, Galloway, Bergin-Seers, Lee, McMurray, 2008). Hence, as stated by Beritelli, (2011) and Needham, Rollins, (2005), nowadays Alpine reception areas are multifaceted and their supply chain is often fragmented into various interest groups. Several studies show also the lack of clear positioning of Alpine regions, particularly in the development of summer tourism (Egger, Anthamatten, 2013; Muhar, Schauppenlehner, Brandenburg, Arnberger, 2007). Thus, it is very important to determine the role of DMOs and their key stakeholders in order to build common vision in long-term destination governance (Beritelli, Buffa, Martini, 2015; Leasser, Beritelli 2013). The concept of DMO has been widely described in the literature. It refers to coalition of public and private partners who are acting together to achieve mutual goals (Beritelli, Bieger, Laesser, 2007, UNWTO 2007). The main role of a DMO refers to the coordination of long-term destination marketing and management, since the consumer perceives and buys a destination as one integrated product (Bieger, Beritelli & Leasser 2009).

One of the most important challenges for Alpine tourism organisations is also the technological advances in information and communication technologies (ICT) which have radically changed the way the tourism products are created, offered and purchased (Law, Buhalis, Cobanoglu, 2014). Lack of loyalty, increasing expectations for individualized holidays (often in the form of dynamic packaging) and sharing new experiences, seem to be the most important features of contemporary tourist demand (Atembe, Akbar, 2014; Parvaneh, Arentze & Timmermans, 2012). Thus, DMOs have to face these challenges with appropriate product diversification and e-commercialization strategies (Dwyer, Edwards, 2009; Flagestad, 2006; Tanti, Buhalis, 2016).

Taking in consideration all those challenging aspects stated in literature which contemporary Alpine tourism organisations are confronted with, this research aimed at finding answers to the following questions:

- What kind of summer offers do Alpine DMOs commercialize through their websites?
- What are the drivers concerning development of summer packages in four selected countries and what type of summer offers have the greatest sales potential?

– Do Alpine DMOs implement dynamic packaging?
– What are the most important barriers concerning commercialization of dynamic solutions?

## Methodology and data collection

The literature review and discussions with managers from several Alpine DMOs have been the basis for the development of the overall study design.

The quantitative research (using benchmark study and an online survey) was conducted in 49 Austrian, 5 German, 24 French and 47 Swiss DMOs from April 2014 to October 2015. The sample selection was intentional and referred to the author's earlier studies conducted in mature Alpine destinations from 2011 to 2013 (Klimek, 2013).

The benchmark analysis of 125 Alpine DMO websites was carried out in the first step of the study. This analysis was based on the detailed criteria which refereed to the summer product development. In the second step, an online questionnaire entitled "New challenges for Alpine DMOs in summer tourism development" was created. The survey composed of 52 questions (in French and German) was sent to 125 DMO managers. The return rate amounted to 52.8%, which means that 66 organizations participated in the study. The structure of the sample by country is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Characteristics of the research sample of the survey

| Country | Number of analysed DMOs | % |
|---|---|---|
| Switzerland | 34 | 52 |
| Austria | 16 | 24 |
| France | 12 | 18 |
| Germany | 4 | 6 |
| Total | 66 | 100 |

Swiss DMO managers have responded to a greater extent to the questionnaire, which consisted 52% of the total sample. Therefore, the comparative analyses presented below were performed between two groups: Swiss and other Alpine countries tourist organisations (comprising Austrian, French and German DMOs).

## Discussion of findings

Benchmark study of Alpine DMO websites indicates the three following types of summer offers commercialized by these organizations:

1. Accommodation offers available in different type of lodging.
2. Pre-composed "static" packages, i.e. simple or multicomponent packages sold by DMOs at a flat price.
3. Dynamic packages, i.e. the combination of different travel components, bundled and priced online in real time.

More than 90% of analysed Swiss and other Alpine tourism organizations use various online engines to sell different types of accommodation. The widest range of lodging is proposed online by Austrian DMOs, i.e. stays in pensions, INNs, B&Bs, farms, holiday homes, guest houses, shelters, camping etc.

As regards the summer offers, the analysis of destination proposals show that 82.5% of DMOs under study provide through their websites a huge variety of summer packages.

Three principal types of summer offers developed by all Alpine DMOs under study refer to traditional mountain activities, i.e. hiking, biking and family stays. But, thanks to the original programming of these packages (themed walks, arranged touring, experiential stays, and 4 season health offers), as well as introduction of summer cards (offering various discounts), some destinations aim to better differentiate (e.g. Allgäu, Tyrol, Rhône-Alpes).

In addition, several mountain resorts attract tourists by a new form of water holidays.

Especially, new exploitation of Swiss, Austrian and French mountain lakes (artificial beaches, palm trees) are becoming an alternative to the overcrowded beaches of costal destinations.

However, according to the surveyed DMO managers, summer products with the greatest sales potential are the simple packages composed of two services e.g. accommodation and cable car facilities or accommodation with board (see Table 2).

**Table 2.** Sales potential of summer tourist products specified by DMO surveyed managers

| Summer tourist products | Other Alpine Countries | Switzerland |
|---|---|---|
| Summer simple packages (e.g. accommodation with board, or accommodation with cable car offer) | 4.80 | 4.91 |
| Summer multicomponent packages | 3.43 | 3.40 |
| Booking of hotel rooms | 3.61 | 3.54 |
| Booking of self-catering lodging | 3.81 | 3.95 |
| Last minute offers | 3.00 | 3.44 |
| Local attractions & animations | 4.25 | 4.54 |
| Cable car & public transport offer | 3.40 | 3.40 |
| Others summer products, e.g. MICE&group offers | 4.41 | 4.45 |

Evaluation of scale modalities: 1 (very small); 2 (small); 3 (medium); 4 (big); 5 (very big)

As regards to the multicomponent packages proposed on destination websites, they are often considered by tourists as a source of additional information about the place itself, but not as an interesting product to buy. That is the reason why for the majority (86%) of Swiss and (84%) other Alpine DMO managers, packages composed of multiple services represent sales potential of medium importance.

It could be also related to the growing importance of online travel agencies (OTAs), e.g. Booking.com, Expedia, Tripadvisor, etc., which have become key market players as regards online holiday packages (Beritelli, Schegg, 2016).

Besides, as stated by Cohen, Prayag, Moital, (2014) and many other authors throughout the literature, structural change in contemporary tourist demand, i.e. need for freedom in taking travel decisions, has a direct impact on tourists' booking habits. That is why before coming to the holiday destination, travellers mainly book simple packages, while various summer offers are purchased spontaneously during their stay (Choi, Lehto, Morrison, Jang, 2012).

Surveyed managers identified also five elements essential for successful commercialization summer offers (see Table 3).

**Table 3.** Key elements important for successful commercialization of summer travel packages in Alpine destinations

| Summer tourist products | Other Alpine Countries | Switzerland |
|---|---|---|
| Flexibility of services (related to duration of stay, number of participants, easy booking) | 3.56 | 4.06 |
| Originality of the offers based on local "learning by doing" activities | 4.56 | 4.55 |
| Quality&price optimization and good price value | 4.58 | 4.34 |
| Facilitation for client, e.g. transport of luggage | 4.60 | 4.51 |
| The importance of dynamic packaging & multi-stakeholders' cooperation | 4.61 | 4.65 |

Evaluation of scale modalities: 1 (not at all important); 2 (unimportant); 3 (fairly important); 4 (important); 5 (very important)

Besides, transport facilitation, originality and price optimization of summer offers, 59% of surveyed DMOs managers emphasized the importance of the dynamic packaging. Certainly, "tailor made" packages have become sought by tourists but, such innovative offers seem to be a challenging task for many Alpine DMOs under study. Indeed, among 66 analysed destinations, only five DMOs (four in Switzerland and one in Germany) have implemented dynamic packaging in the summer season[1].

It can be attributed to the fact that dynamic packaging requires sophisticated technical equipment and permanent supply chain management based on constant collaboration between DMOs and relevant service providers (Angst, Skalski 2016; Markus, Lassing, 2008). Moreover, for the implementation and maintenance of a dynamic system, significant financial resources are required, which especially small Alpine DMOs often cannot afford (Qirici, Theodhori, Elmazi, 2011). One-third of surveyed Alpine DMO managers find the dynamic e-solutions difficult to introduce from the financial point of view.

Besides, 38 % of Swiss and 36% of other Alpine countries DMO managers declare that currently there is not sufficient teamwork and cooperation between DMOs and their stakeholders to implement dynamic offers (Figure 1).

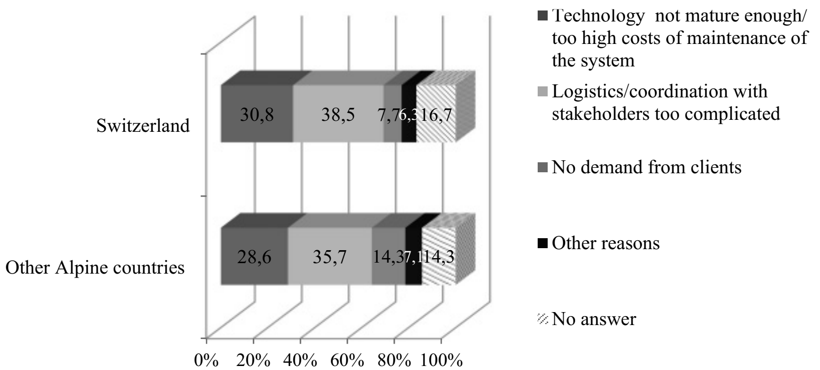


**Figure 1.** The most important barriers related to the implementation of dynamic packaging in Alpine destinations (in %)

[1] Dynamic Alpine destinations in the summer season are: Adelboden, Davos-Klosters, Flims–Laax–Falera, Verbier Saint-Bernard in Switzerland and Obersdorf in Germany.

Hence, for the majority of analysed DMOs it is much easier to commercialize their summer tourist offers in the form of pre-composed packages i.e. consisting of a determined number of services and sold by DMOs at a flat rate[2].

## Conclusion

The results show that numerous Alpine DMOs which were taken into account in the research study, fight against summer season stagnation by the development of various types of tourist offers. Internet and modern ICT solutions seem to play an important role in their summer product development portfolio. Yet, as shown by the survey results, summer Alpine offers are mostly developed in the form of pre-composed, "static" packages and their sales potential is rather moderate.

The reasons for this can be mostly associated with growing importance of OTAs and a variety of internet platforms which allow tourists to bypass DMOs offers for often cheaper and more personalised travel alternatives (Beritelli, Schegg, 2016; Wang, Fesenmaier, 2013). Thus, according to the surveyed DMO managers, the originality of summer products, their quality and price optimization and "tailor made" dynamic packages, seem to be key issues for commercialization of destination summer offers.

However, e-packaging remains a challenging task for the majority of Alpine destinations. The shift to the e-innovation will not be possible without wide and long-term collaboration between public and private stakeholders. All surveyed DMO managers have emphasized this issue as a mandatory condition on the way to overcome seasonality. Thus, despite of the revealed barriers, 61% of surveyed Swiss and 58% of other Alpine DMOs plan to introduce dynamic packaging in the near future.

Due to limited amount of study cases the generalization should be taken with care. The examples of Alpine DMOs' product development presented in the paper can, however, constitute to an interesting reference for other European peripheral, mountain areas. Indeed, it would help to develop in those areas more innovative products management system based on innovative ICT solutions.

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[2] Despite the selection of the length of stay, the number of participants, the type of accommodation and the categories of meals, the customer usually cannot change the number of services included in static package.

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# CREATING A SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE AGRITOURISM OFFER. A MARKET REQUIREMENT OR A MANIFESTATION OF SERVICE PROVIDERS' SYSTEM OF VALUES?

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Abstract

Making a profit is usually the main goal of an enterprise's activity, regardless of its size and the line of business it represents. However, due to the considerable complexity, unpredictability and changeability of the contemporary economic environment, the ways of achieving this aim are also very important. One of the conceptions considered by enterprises which include the interests of various groups into their activity is corporate social responsibility (CSR). Presumably, an enterprise which engages in activity in a conscious and planned way, gains the trust and support not only of its employees, but also clients, suppliers and local community, which may become a significant factor of its competitiveness and development.

A form of activity where corporate social responsibility can be applied is tourism.

The aim this article is to indicate the planes of implementing the assumptions of corporate social responsibility in tourism, as well as to find the answer to the question whether socially responsible activity, implemented by the owners of agritourist farms, may influence the perception of the offer attractiveness.

The question in the title concerns issues broader than the article. Due to the contributory nature of the study, the authors focused solely on presenting the results of the study on the demand side.

## Introduction

The fact that every aspect of human environment is influenced by various forms of economic activity is undeniable. This can be a positive or negative impact. It is only natural that the former is stressed more willingly and easier to accept. The latter often requires a stronger emphasis to make people aware of its existence. However, it is essential that problems are clearly stated, as it serves the purpose of building the sense of responsibility for finding solutions.

Creating the sense of social responsibility for business activity is a major issue in tourism as well. Its relations with the natural, economic and social environment are very strong (Cohen, 1978). Even though, in economic terms, the current and prospective leading trend is mass tourism, the "tourism of tomorrow" will certainly involve social responsibility (Goodwin, 2011; Leslie, 2012), whose assumptions should be taken into consideration with reference to both – the way of running the business and the tourists' behaviour.

The concept of responsible tourism is very close to the assumptions of rural tourism, but so far there has been no research on CSR implementation in this area (Sikora, 2012; Coles, Fenclova, Dinan, 2013).

The article is of contributory nature. Its aim is to indicate the planes of implementing the principles of corporate social responsibility in tourism, as well as to answer the question whether socially responsible activity of agritourist farms' owners may have an influence on the perception of offer attractiveness. Apart from the theoretical part, the article presents the results of surveys conducted among the actual and potential guests of agritourist farms.

## The idea of corporate social responsibility and its implementation in the tourism industry

Social responsibility is considered to be one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century and plays an increasingly important role in the functioning of many organizations. It is being discussed at length by researchers, both its theoretical (Friedman, 1970; Caroll, 1974 and 1991; Epstein, Roy, 2001) and empirical (Dahlsrud, 2008; Heslin, Ochoa, 2008) aspects. Corporate Social Responsibility may be understood as making and meeting economic, legal, ethical and discretionary commitments, imposed on a given organization by the parties engaged in its activity (Maignan, Ferrell, Hunt, 1999), or as considering the society's current expectations by the organization in its activity (Commission of the European Communities 2001).

A form of activity where the idea of corporate social responsibility can be applied is tourism. A growing number of tourism enterprises are incorporating this conception into their strategies, trying in this way to have a positive influence on the environment, the quality of life in the local communities and the well-being of their employees (Bohdanowicz, Zientara, 2009; Font, Walmsley, Cogotti, McCombes, Hausler, 2012; Kang, Lee, Huh, 2010).

As shown by the literature data, the main motivation causing enterprises to take interest in CSR is the reduction of costs, which gives them a competitive advantage (Knowles, Macmillan, Palmer, Grabowski, Hashimoto, 1999; Stabler, Goodal, 1997). This confirms Wheller's thesis (1991) that responsible tourism is a marketing trick rather than an ethical planning mechanism. Implementing CSR is also related, however, to the attempts to meet social expectations as regards responsibility (Bremner, 2009; Cheyne, Barnett, 2001; Ian, 1996). Studies also point to altruistic motivations of implementing CSR in tourism (Ayuso, 2006; Tzschentke, Kirk, Lynch, 2004). Socially responsible activities in the tourism sector are varied, but they most frequently concern environment management, social dialogue and working relationships (Holcomb, Upchurch, Okumus, 2007; Karani, Day, 2011).

H.Goodwin (2011) points out that responsible tourism is not a separate, isolated phenomenon, but it permeates all forms of human activity and evolves along with people's changing needs and attitudes. Preparing and providing every type of tourist product, both on and outside the market, involves specific activities as regards organization, task planning, using assets, and broadly understood cooperation, employment or finances. All these planes create an opportunity to show responsibility in the social, economic and environmental aspect.

This also concerns rural tourism and agritourism, whose greatest value shows in creating offers based on bottom-up initiatives, rooted in local communities developing on the basis of their resources. As a result, social capital is built, the inhabitants' economic situation improves, unemployment is reduced and the community becomes more integrated (Idziak, 2011).

## Research materials and method

For the purpose of collecting primary data, a survey questionnaire was used, which consisted of two questions and a personal details section. Question 2 was a matrix containing 11 detailed questions, rated on the 5-grade Likert scale.

A diagnostic survey was conducted among some inhabitants of the Wielkopolskie province, in February/ March 2017. The researchers collected 72 correctly filled out questionnaires. With respect to the term "a large sample", used in statistics, that number was considered sufficient to run a contributory quantitative study. In general, a sample is considered to be relatively large if $n > 50$ (Matykowski, 1992). According to J.T.Roscoe (1975), in most studies, an appropriate size of a sample should fall between over 30 and less than 500.

The respondents were asked to rate the significance of some examples of socially responsible activities, included in the questionnaire as determinants of the choice of an agritourist offer.

## Results

The change in the number of agritourist farms over the years has been the outcome of various factors, such as the tourist attractiveness of the area, the state policy at different levels of authority, the effectiveness and profitability of agricultural production, competition on the market, the seasonality of services, as well as the farmers' resourcefulness, motivations to engage in the activity, etc. (Konečný, 2014). The appearance of new suppliers on the agritourism market in subsequent years, as well as the large variety of goods makes it a highly competitive market.

The clear dominance of the economic elements over the social ones in the management of a small enterprise rarely motivates the entrepreneur to look for the pluses of competitive advantage in the social and intellectual sphere of activity. It turns out, however, that in the case of agritourist farms, signs of social responsibility in the legal, ethical or philanthropic aspect of activity may have an influence on the perception of the attractiveness of the offer by the actual or potential clients, who are among the most important stakeholders in the tourism business (Stawicka, 2016; Navrátilová, Lorinczová, Šišková, 2015).

Among the people participating in the survey, 41.7% were men and 58.5% were women. University education was indicated by 77.8% of the respondents, secondary education – by 19.4% and vocational education – by 2.8%.

People aged 30–39 (34.7%) and 40–49 (27.8%) made up the highest proportion of respondents. A less numerous group consisted of people aged 50–59 (13.9%) and over 60 (16.7%), while the smallest one – of those aged below 30 (6.9%).

The majority of respondents came from cities inhabited by over 500,000 people (58.3%). 45.8% described their financial situation as good, 43.1% – as average, only slightly over 8% – as very good and 2.8% – as bad.

Table 1 presents the percentage distribution of responses obtained for some examples of socially responsible activities, which could be offered by the owners of agritourist farms. The results point to its significance for the assessment of offer attractiveness.

The functioning of small enterprises largely depends on the style and effects of the owner's activity. Their knowledge, skills and experience determine the quality of company management. It is the individual system of values which are important to the owner of a small enterprise that determines his/her approach to implementing the principles of social responsibility.

It seems understandable that the respondents indicated first of all those activities the effects of which benefited them directly. The majority believed that an important sign of social responsibility on the part of agritourism service providers, which has an influence on the choice of the offer, is honest communication with clients. It is particularly important in situation when information on agritourism facilities is very diverse and confusing (Havlíček, Lohr, Benda, 2010). As many as 87.5% of the respondents claimed that a situation when the marketing information (e.g. an advertisement) agrees with the actual offer definitely has some influence on the perception of the attractiveness of a given farm. It was described as fairly significant by 8.3% of the respondents.

An equally high importance was ascribed to respecting the client's privacy (sensitive data, contact details, etc.). Such behaviour was regarded as a significant or fairly significant element of the offer attractiveness by 81.94% and 13.89% of respondents, respectively.

**Table 1** Socially responsible actions and the perception of the agritourist offer attractiveness (%)

| | Definitely yes | Rather yes | Hard to say | Rather no | Definitely no |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employment of staff on the basis of a contract (job, order, etc.) | 23.61 | 29.17 | 19.44 | 19.44 | 8.33 |
| Employment of staff from the local society | 31.94 | 41.67 | 9.72 | 12.50 | 4.17 |
| Compliance with tax law in terms of conducted business | 31.94 | 26.39 | 15.28 | 19.44 | 6.94 |
| Raising own and employees professional qualifications | 31.94 | 27.78 | 25.00 | 13.89 | 1.39 |
| Compliance of marketing information (eg advertising) with the actual offer | 87.50 | 8.33 | 1.39 | 1.39 | 1.39 |
| Respecting customer privacy (personal information, contact, etc.) | 81.94 | 13.89 | 1.39 | 1.39 | 1.39 |
| Charity and social activities | 16.67 | 31.94 | 34.72 | 11.11 | 5.56 |
| Use of environmentally friendly products | 45.83 | 44.44 | 6.94 | 1.39 | 1.39 |
| Use of renewable energy sources | 33.33 | 37.50 | 19.44 | 8.33 | 1.39 |
| Waste segregation | 48.61 | 25.00 | 15.28 | 9.72 | 1.39 |
| Encourage the consumption of organic products | 41.67 | 40.28 | 11.11 | 5.56 | 1.39 |

Source: own research.

In the respondents' opinion, other factors which have an influence on the attractiveness of the offer included solutions concerning environment protection and propagating pro-ecological behaviours, such as waste segregation or using environment-friendly products. Visible to the guests, they make assessment easier for them.

Respecting the tax law in business activity and considering various aspects related to the development of the local community are elements which the respondents believe to have a smaller impact on the attractiveness of the offer. A relatively large percentage of respondents did not see any relationship between the quality of service and the possibility of raising qualifications by the employees or the legal form of employment.

Charity activity in small enterprises is rather incidental and treated first of all as a marketing tool. Hence, it is probable that in this case, the respondents claimed more often than in the case of the other questions (34.72%) that it was difficult for them to say whether this particular type of activity done by the farm owner would improve the perception of the offer attractiveness. It must be stressed, however, that almost half of the respondents considered this element to be highly or fairly significant.

## Conclusions

Enterprises are obliged to observe moral and social norms and models of behaviour at each stage, as well as in every dimension of their activity, and not only after reaching the desired profit threshold. However, the choice between the two standpoints depends on the entrepreneur, and practically results from his/her knowledge and level of awareness.

Social responsibility in tourism may be manifested on multiple planes. This does not mean, however, that enterprises wishing to take decisions in compliance with this conception must show responsibility on all planes at the same time. In the case of small enterprises, which agritourist farms certainly are, the level of the farm owners' awareness of the role of social responsibility and their readiness to react properly to the emerging social problems, may result in gaining a competitive advantage related, for instance, to the perception of the offer attractiveness by potential clients.

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# TOURISM ADVISORY SERVICES IN THE CONTEXT OF NEW INSTITUTIONAL ECONOMICS

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Abstract

New institutional economics focuses on the role of institutions, (such as advisory institutions), in economic development and influencing human behaviour. The aim of this paper is to present the role played by agricultural advisory institutions in stimulating development processes in rural areas. The study involves an analysis of the operations of Mazowiecki Agricultural Advisory Centre in Warsaw underpinned by scientific literature review which illustrate changes in the scope of advisory services provided in the field of rural tourism and the impact this institution has had on entrepreneurial attitudes of rural residents.
Agricultural consultancies, through their operations, influence the change of attitudes of the rural population – from the attitude involving merely 'waiting for grants' to entrepreneurial, cooperative attitudes, open to innovations and tailored to market needs. The effectiveness of advisory services in Mazowieckie voivodeship (Mazovia province) is proved by the increased number of agritourism farms regularly cooperating with advisors. The most popular forms of delivered advice promoting agritourism included training provided in-house or as a study visit and individual consultations.

## Introduction

The theory of new institutional economics focuses on the role institutions play in economic development and influencing human behaviour. People's needs and the resulting human behaviour are greatly determined by both the social environment and institutional context. Therefore, an important role in the regulation of human behaviour is played by institutions which provide professional advice.

The aim of this paper is to present the role played by agricultural advisory institutions in stimulating development processes in rural areas in the field of tourism. The paper examines the operations of a selected advisory institution-

Mazowiecki Agricultural Advisory Centre in Warsaw (MODR) - involving educational activities conducted in years 2005–2016 aimed to enhance the development of rural tourism in Mazovia region. The study involves the analysis of the operations of Mazowiecki Agricultural Advisory Centre in Warsaw underpinned by scientific literature review which illustrate changes in the scope of advisory services provided in the field of rural tourism and the impact this institution has had on entrepreneurial attitudes of rural residents.

## The Concept of New Institutional Economics

The assumptions of the new institutional economics (NIE) seem appropriate to discuss the importance of agricultural advisory centres in the development of rural tourism and agritourism in Mazovia region in Poland. The term new institutional economics was coined by Oliver Williamson, who wanted to emphasize the difference between his new theory and old institutionalism (Stankiewicz, 2012). Other scholars who contributed to the theory include R. Coase, D.C. North, E. Williamson, E. Ostrom and G. Hodgson. The advocates of new institutional economics theory (Rosinska, 2008) argue that the world is changing, and the theory of economics should be changing too. Their approach, thus, builds on the achievements of neo-classical economics as well as on traditional institutionalism. In new institutional economics, economic analyses are supplemented by new approaches that let economic processes be explored from different angles. T. Legiędź (Legiędź, 2013) argues that the study of economic phenomena through econometric models has resulted in the simplification of socio-economic phenomena, which especially from the perspective of new institutional economics had a negative impact on the analysis itself. By narrowing the concept of institution to economic field, political domain or just a single institutional problem, researchers may present a fragmented and deformed picture of a problem, which in fact is much more complex. Therefore, the researchers working within NIE framework believe that problems in economics should be examined from interdisciplinary or trans-disciplinary perspective, which requires new methodological approach. New institutional economics assumes that the process of economic development is historically conditioned and the transformation of the institutional system is slow. In addition, it is influenced by the whole system of formal and informal institutions. As a consequence, the mere improvement of certain aspects of formal institutions does not necessarily have a positive impact on the entire institutional system, especially in the short run (Godłów-Legiędź, 2011). It is still unclear how institutions should be transformed to ensure economic growth. So far this issue has remained open.

Evaluation of an institution can be carried out from different perspectives (Brzozowski, Gierałtowski, Milczarek, Siwińska-Gorzelak, 2006):

- Does it fulfil the functions for which it was established?
- Does it distribute services/ attract customers effectively?
- Does it reduce uncertainty and support effective markets?

According to Miłaszewicz, good institutions create a structure of stimuli that reduce uncertainty and support effective markets for goods and factors of production, thus contributing to the improvement of economic performance (Miłaszewicz, 2011). For Wilkin, however, a good institution should be rooted in people's mind and influence their behaviour regularly and permanently (Wilkin, 2016).

## Agricultural Advice in the Development of Rural Tourism

Agricultural consultancies in Poland have supported rural development for over 100 years and have been integrated into the socio-cultural background of Polish agriculture for a long time. As an institution, agricultural advisory centres are well identified and trusted by farmers. The audit conducted by the Supreme Audit Office (NIK) showed that as many as 80% of farmers who have decided to use the advice of regional agricultural advisory centres are satisfied with the quality of provided services (NIK, 2014).

From the economic point of view, agricultural advice indirectly contributes to the transformation of certain microeconomic structures (agricultural holdings) and macroeconomic structures (agriculture, national economy) into efficient economic systems (King, 2013). According to Czyżewski and Matuszczak, future agriculture will follow dual path of development: some farms will adopt production methods that ensure high economic efficiency respecting only basic environmental requirements and minimizing undesirable social consequences, while other farms will go for more eco-friendly solutions (Czyżewski, Matuszak, 2009). The latter group of farmers follow the trend towards multifunctional agriculture, diversifying by adding non-agricultural business activities (including tourism) to traditional farming in the rural areas. Agricultural consultancies have played, a significant role in the development of rural tourism, including agritourism. Nowadays, the advisory services provided by agricultural advisory centres do not solely focus on agriculture. Agricultural advice now covers an extended scope of issues related to multifunctional rural development, including rural tourism. Tourism advice provided by agricultural advisory centres within the framework of agricultural advisory system involves assisting rural residents with various tourism initiatives such as: starting up and running agritourism farms, providing accommodation, organizing visitor transportation, developing tourist facilities, creating tourism products etc. The overarching objective of tourism advisory services is to equip people who run tourism businesses or have a plan to do so with sufficient know-how enabling them to take decisions and implement their projects independently (Parzonko, Sieczko, 2007).

The advisory services concerning tourism have evolved with time. Tourism advisory assistance focuses on the know-how of product offering to provide the visitors with knowledge, excitement, emotions and memorable experiences.

## Tourism Consultancy: Case of Mazowiecki Agricultural Advisory Centre

Mazowieckie voivodeship (Mazovia province) in many respects is unique among Polish provinces. It is home to the city of Warsaw, which is the capital of Poland, the biggest Polish city and also a significant European metropolis. It is also the voivodeship with the biggest area (35.6 thousand square kilometres - nearly one eighth of Poland), the most populous (with a population over 5.2 million), with the highest GDP per capita, but also - the biggest development discrepancies in the country, with the capital city of Warsaw representing one end of the continuum and numerous areas outside the metropolis being at the other end (Strategy..., 2014). Even though Mazowieckie voivodeship is an area with low natural recreational value, (the natural conditions for recreation in the summer season are average and in the winter season - below average), in terms of the number of visitors' overnight stays it is comparable to voivodeships with more favourable natural conditions.

**Table 1.** Number of overnight stays in total and in agritourism accommodation in Poland in 2015 by voivodeships

| Voivodeship (province) | Total | Agritourism farms |
|---|---|---|
| Polska | 71,234,421 | 452,071 |
| Dolnośląskie | 6,829,669 | 45,490 |
| Kujawsko-pomorskie | 3,625,536 | 15,633 |
| Lubelskie | 1,711,623 | 13,758 |
| Lubuskie | 1,289,145 | 22,490 |
| Łódzkie | 2,302,010 | 10,503 |
| Małopolskie | 10,942,837 | 41,482 |
| Mazowieckie | 7,069,596 | 22,556 |
| Opolskie | 730,094 | 9,634 |
| Podkarpackie | 2,772,613 | 37,119 |
| Podlaskie | 1,128,140 | 29,396 |
| Pomorskie | 7,880,472 | 48,079 |
| Śląskie | 4,945,725 | 25,650 |
| Świętokrzyskie | 1,466,752 | 15,050 |
| Warmińsko-mazurskie | 2,831,860 | 37,183 |
| Wielkopolskie | 3,378,292 | 57,327 |
| Zachodniopomorskie | 12,330,057 | 20,721 |

Source: Turystyka w 2015 r.[Tourism in year 2015], Wydawnictwo GUS, Warszawa 2016, p. 215.

Rural tourism is a significant tourism trend in Mazowieckie voivodeship developing alongside other forms of tourism. It is part of multifunctional development of rural areas and allows for the diversification of income sources of the local population. The Mazowiecki Agricultural Advisory Centre with its registered office in Warsaw is one of the institutions which contribute to the economic development of rural areas in Mazovia through providing advice, education and information. In 1990s the Mazowiecki Agricultural Advisory Centre focused on looking for additional sources of income for rural residents in the Mazovia region and promoted agritourism and rural tourism. As a result in 2002 the advisors cooperated with 225 agritourism farms. The effectiveness of consultancy services in Mazowieckie voivodeship is evidenced by an increase in the number of agritourism farms regularly cooperating with advisors, which reached 347 in 2010. In 2016 The MODR in Warsaw provided services to 295 agritourism farms and other 25 rural tourism providers. Most of them are classic agricultural holdings which offer visitors hands-on experience of farm life, local culture, natural assets and healthy rural food.

The development of rural tourism reveals certain trends emerging from the changing visitors' needs. In addition to basic services like food and accommodation rural tourism providers develop packages of tourist services (network products in rural tourism) including leisure activities aimed to meet cognitive, emotional and social needs of the visitors. Agricultural advisors use a variety of methods, like trainings, demonstrations, exhibitions, fairs, competitions, regional food tastings, folk band concerts and artist shows, to encourage farm owners to diversify out of agriculture and support existing agritourism farms in expanding and enhancing their offer to meet the new trends in tourism. The MODR activity reports for the years 2005–2016 show that the most popular form of consultancy services delivered in the field of agritourism are in-house trainings and study visits.

**Table 2.** Training courses on agritourism and their participants in 2005–2016 organized by the MODR in Warsaw

| | | 2005 | 2007 | 2010 | 2013 | 2016 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| In-house trainings and study visits | Number of courses | 59 | 56 | 56 | 42 | 42 |
| | Number of participants | 930 | 883 | 801 | 611 | 919 |

Source: Sprawozdania z realizacji programu działalności Mazowieckiego Ośrodka Doradztwa Rolniczego w Warszawie za lata 2005–2016. [Reports on the implementation of the program of Mazowiecki Agricultural Advisory Center in Warsaw for the years 2005–2016].

In 2005the training was mainly designed to address the needs of farmers planning to start an agritourism business, therefore mostly basic courses ending with the issuance of relevant certificates were provided. The farm and agritourism advisors cooperated with farmers preparing for a start-up. They provided advice, demonstrations and individual consultations delivered directly on the farm. Training materials such as 'Legal and Tax Aspects of Agritourism and Rural Tourism', 'Farm Holidays', 'Good Hygienic Practice (GHP) on Agritourism Farm' were developed and published. By contrast, as early as 2010, most of the training was focused on finding opportunities to expand the potential of the existing agritourism offer. The provided advice addressed such issues as categorization of venues, marketing and promotion, organization of various forms of active recreation and protection of the natural environment. In 2016, the provided training additionally focused on the need to create networking products and still promoted rural tourism as the additional source of income.

Each year the MODR staff provided advice concerning rural tourism. For example, in 2010 there were 4790 consultations, in 2013–4515 and in 2016–5331. The advisory programs most often focused on the quality of rural tourism and agritourism, the aesthetics of the farm and food served to tourists.

Additionally, the MODR in Warsaw also prepared:

1. Seven theme trails, which involved verification and analysis of the cultural and natural assets of Mazovia region;
2. Geocaching, a new tourist product, which is an outdoor recreational activity that involves seeking for hidden containers (caches) with the use of GPS devices.

The MODR is the only institution which for years has kept the register of agritourism farms and rural tourism facilities which they supervised and they published the catalogue 'Agritourism and Rural Tourism in Mazovia', which presents the offer of local rural tourism providers. In addition, the MODR is the organizer of competitions addressed to owners of agritourism farms, such as 'From Agritourism to Rural Tourism', which is recapped annually at a scientific conference 'Successes and Problems of Rural Tourism in Mazovia'.

Evaluation of the effectiveness of an institution, such as agricultural advisory centers, can focus on two dimensions: the assessment of an organization quality and customer satisfaction. The standard ISO 9001: 2008 is the most popular of all international standards for quality management also used to evaluate advisory organizations. Because the advisory centers are primarily acting for and in the interest of their clients, additional methods are needed to measure customer satisfaction. Such tools as a survey and focus interviews could give a deeper insight into the satisfaction of service recipients.

## Conclusions

The operations of the Mazowiecki Agricultural Advisory Centre in Warsaw have served as an example to illustrate what role institutions can play in socio-economic development, in this case – the development of rural tourism. The advisory institutions, through their activities, stimulate the change of attitudes of the rural population - from the attitude involving merely waiting for grants to entrepreneurial, cooperative attitudes, open to innovations and tailored to market needs.

Being an institution which has actively supported rural development for years, the MODR in Warsaw has earned trust. This has been confirmed by the audit conducted by the Supreme Audit Office. It stimulates the development of rural tourism. As a result, there has been an increase in the number of organizations operating in rural tourism which cooperate with advisors by over 40% compared to 2002.

Demand persists for training and advice regarding starting businesses in the field of rural tourism. Support for the existing rural tourism service providers should also include actions focusing on dissemination of information.

Advisory bodies, including MODR in Warsaw, try to evaluate the effectiveness of their activities. It motivates employees to work effectively as well as positively influences their perception by customers. There is a need for a unified evaluation standard for advisory institutions, taking into account both the technical and functional dimension.

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# REGIONAL ASPECTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM IN THE CARPATHIAN REGION OF UKRAINE (THE EXAMPLE OF LVIV PROVINCE)

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Abstract

Rural tourism in the Carpathian Region of Ukraine is developing very unevenly and spontaneously without clearly defined strategic plans. Over 90% of rural households providing tourist services operate in three provinces: Lviv, Zakarpattia and Ivano-Frankivsk. However, their activity does not result from the smooth functioning of the institutional environment, which consists in the effective co-operation of business, local governments and public organizations. Owners of rural tourism accommodation establishments are increasingly encountering problems related to the legality of their activities, lack of knowledge, gaining new experiences of guest services, tourist products that don't meet customer requirements, scope of additional services, using of marketing tools, improving the quality of tourist offer, participation in national and international programs supporting local initiatives, environmental protection as well as historical and cultural heritage protection, understanding the importance and the role of rural tourism in local development.

## Introduction

The Carpathian Region (CR) has the necessary premises for the development of modern tourism, including rural tourism (RT) (Lypczuk, Kotliński, Dydiv, 2015). The positive impact of RT on the local economy is largely dependent on the concentration of the tourism flows. Tourist attractiveness and good transport accessibility are important for the development of local infrastructure (Kozak, 2009). The wider the offer and the attractiveness of the tourist facilities of individual areas, the greater the influence and importance of tourism for the local economy

(Krzyżanowska, 2005). According to Kornak, Rapacz (2001), efficient functioning of tourism entities in rural area may be achieved by: stimulation of the local agriculture and the agro-food industry development, development of sectors strictly related to tourism, development of technical and social infrastructure, and the protection of natural environment. Once the above criteria have been met in a specific area, the impact of tourism on the socio-economic development of the countryside and the economic effect can be expected (Krzyżanowska, 2005).

## Rural Tourism in the Carpathian Region

RT and recreation in the CR has a long history, but its future has not yet been determined. It would be highly probable that in the absence of state policy in this sector, rural tourism will continue to be semi-legal, without a clear organizational structure, without the appropriate level of information and marketing activities but as a separate complement to other types of tourism. On the other hand, according to optimistic forecasts, RT in the CR, should create a powerful service market and control 35–45% of all tourist flows in this region (Kudla, Hamkalo, 2011). According to the official statistics the number of tourists visiting the Ukrainian Carpathians amounts about 1.4 mill people a year, including over 100 thous. of foreigners. Lviv province (LP) has all the necessary conditions for the development of RT, but at present this development occurs occasionally and unevenly, without clearly defined development plans and strategies. Under such conditions, there is a continuing need for research of RT market in the CR and its regional peculiarities and territorial structures, as well as the main problems and possible solutions. LP is regarded as one of the five most attractive tourist and recreational regions of Ukraine. The only official source of information on RT activities in Ukraine is the State Statistical Service, which in 2012 introduced for the first time a special model of statistical reporting with the purpose of keeping records of rural tourist services. Nevertheless, even a preliminary analysis of the numbers of rural holdings providing tourist services does not reflect the actual state of affairs (Lypczuk at al., 2015). The analysis of information from various web sources suggests that official statistics are significantly underestimated. According to the official statistics in LP there were 23 RT establishments (about 10% of the total number from all over Ukraine) with an average of 13.9 beds (Tourist accommodation in Ukraine in 2014). The occupancy rate of the beds in RT was about 23%.

## Materials and method

The objective of the study was to analyze conditions and problems of RT development in the CR on the example of LP in the context of the concept of tourism development and evolution of RT product. Data used in the paper originated from own survey conducted in LP. For the analysis of the current state of RT in LP, administrative territorial units of the mountain areas were selected (Figure 1).


**Figure 1.** Location and structure of Lviv Province*

* Lviv province (i.e. Lviv Oblast, Львівська область) is administratively subdivided into 20 districts (raions), and 9 cities which are directly subordinate to the province government

Source: Wikipedia.

The materials of websites were studied, because they are the most suitable to the real situation of RT in LP (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Rural Tourism accommodation establishments in the surveyed area of Lviv Province

| Districts | Number of establishments according to the following websites: | | | | Est. number of beds |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Regional administration | Karpaty Info | Rest in Ukraine | Union for Promotion of Rural Green Tourism in Ukraine | |
| Drohobych | 12 | 52 | 24 | – | 312 |
| Skole | 28 | 242 | 105 | – | 2,420 |
| Starosambirskyi | 7 | 8 | – | 1 | 80 |
| Turkivskyi | 30 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 256 |
| Total | 77 | 307 | 133 | 2 | 3,068 |
| Lvive Province | 82 | 355 | 138 | 3 | 3,359 |
| The area covered by the survey (%) | 94.0 | 86.4 | 96.4 | 66.6 | 91.3 |

Source: own elaboration.

## Results

The author's own survey allowed to identify about 375 RT facilities in 67 rural localities, and their overall capacity was around 3,4 thousand beds. They are located mostly in localities of high tourist attractiveness. The main centers of development of this type of tourism in LP are concentrated in the mountain areas.

Skole district is the leader in this area (248 RT enterprises), then there are: Drohobych and Turkivskyi districts and no RT establishments in 9 districts of LP. Development of RT in the area of surveyed province seems to be extremely uneven. All districts of LP can be divided into 3 main groups according to the level of RT development (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Classification of the districts of Lviv Province according to the level of Rural Tourism development

| Rural Tourism establishments | Level of development | Districts |
|---|---|---|
| ≤5 | Very low | Busk, Brody, Horodok, Zhydachivskyi, Zolochivskyi, Kamianka-Buzka, Mykolaiv, Mostyska, Peremyshliany, Pustomyty, Radekhiv, Sambir, Sokal, Stryiskyi, Yavorivskyi |
| 6–10 | Low | Starosambirskyi, Zhovkivskyi, the surroundings of Lviv |
| 11–50 | Average | Drohobych, Turkivskyi |
| 50 ≤ | High | Skole |

Source: Own elaboration.

In Skole district there are 28 establishments providing RT services. The number of RT establishments per 1,000 rural inhabitants is 7.34. The main centers for the development of RT in Skole district are settlements of urban type, including Slavsko (184 establishments), Skole, Volosianka, Oriawczyk, Plavie and Tucholka. There are several factors influencing the number of RT establishments, e.g. winter sports facilities, tourist and cycling paths, preserved natural values and good transport accessibility. Most of the mentioned centers of RT are also known as ski resorts, so in winter, private RT establishments specialize in providing ski services. The National Park "Skole Beskidy" is of great importance in the development of RT in this district. In the approach to the management of the National Park, a new paradigm of the importance of protected areas has recently been justified. Protected areas have not only to fulfill the function of preserving the diversity of natural ecosystems and ensuring their continued development, but also preserving the ethnographic, historical and cultural heritage of Boykos (the ethnographic group located in the Carpathian Mountains of Ukraine and Poland. They differ from their neighbors in dialect, dress, folk architecture, and customs).

Drohobych district is characterized by an average level of development of RT. Out of 77 localities, RT services were recorded in 12. The main centers are Schodnica and Truskavets, known for their balneological spas and then the village of New Kropyvnyk. Development of RT services in the district is closely linked to the presence of mineral waters, providing an alternative accommodation facilities to the hotels and sanatoria. Most of the RT establishments offer not only accommodation facilities, but also full board, and some extra services, e.g. mineral waters, herbal teas, massages, doctor's or dietician consultation, and in individual cases – special medical therapies. Some RT establishments offer alternative therapeutic services, including api-therapy or yoga classes.

Turkivskyi district is characterized by an average level of development of RT with great potential. There are 42 RT establishments located in 12 out of 67 localities. The establishments are scattered more or less evenly throughout the area of the district (e.g. Borynia, Rozlucz, Verchnie Husne and Verchnie Vysockie). The prerequisites for the development of RT in the area is a picturesque mountain landscape, a large number of monuments of wooden sacred architecture, preserved traditions of Boykos, mineral waters and several ski lifts.

## Rural Tourism products of Lviv Province

The tourist product in RT is a set of accommodation and catering services, trip organization, leisure services and other services provided by owners of RT establishments. The package of RT services consists of basic services, including accommodation and catering, and various additional services. According to the results of the research all the accommodation options in LP can be divided into 3 main groups:

– Rural house or farmhouse – accommodation in separate rooms in the host house or the whole floor in the host house, sometimes with separate entrance;
– Guest house – a separate building in a farmyard, often built especially for year-round accommodation services;
– Cottage – wooden building in the mountain style, which is designed for one family with the possibility of self-catering.

The last two types of rural accommodation are the most widespread in the surveyed region. They are particularly characteristic for areas with developed tourist infrastructure and considerable tourist flows, for example in the spa areas, ski resorts and in the localities of special value of natural environment. The first type (rural house/farmhouse) is quite rare, usually in villages that are located outside of the popular resorts (e.g. in the following districts: Starosambirskyi, Zhovkivskyi, Brody, Zolochivskyi, and partly Turkivskyi). This type of accommodation seems to be the most appropriate for RT, as it provides the possibility of direct contact with the host family. Number of beds of the studied accommodation establishments usually varied 4–30 (Figure 2). The most of accommodation establishments have 9–12 beds, where several families can be comfortably accommodated. There are also quite many small rural houses with 5 to 8 beds and much less cottages for families up to 5 people and for groups of more than 30 people (Figure 2).

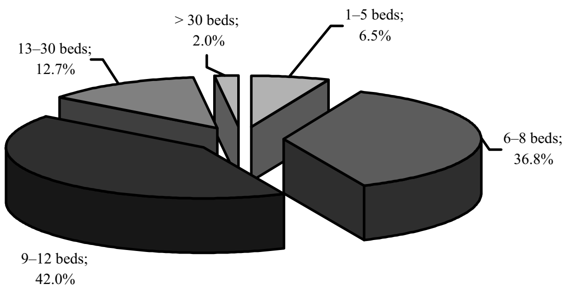


**Figure 2.** Structure of Rural Tourism accommodation establishments in Lviv Province by the number of beds

Source: Own elaboration.

The quality of accommodation and rooms offered in RT in LP are diversified. There are economy class rooms, standard quality accommodation, semi-lux facilities, studios, luxury accommodation, and suites (two-room, double-floor). A tourist can quite often rent a cottage with a common living room and kitchen, 2 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms (comfortable accommodation of 1–2 families). Prices for accommodation vary widely and depend on two main factors: category and season. The minimum price per night per person in 2016 was 50–90 UAH in summer and 150–350 UAH in winter (in Dec., 2016, 1 USD ≈ 26.7 UAH). In ski resorts in Skole district winter prices were about 1.5–2 times higher than summer, and in the peak season of Christmas and New Year's Eve prices could grow up to 2–4 times. In the other regions, winter and summer accommodation prices are more or less the same, and lower prices are noticeable between seasons. When renting the entire cottage, depending on its capacity and level of comfort, the price can range 600–1,000 UAH per night in summer and 3,500–4,000 UAH per night at the peak of the season in winter.

Catering for tourists in RT establishments of the surveyed region is organized according to one of the following models:

1) full board, i.e. 1–3 meals per day, including traditional Ukrainian dishes prepared by family members of the hosts;
2) meals ordered by tourists in the accommodation establishment, paid separately;
3) self-catering facilities with access to the kitchen, kitchen utensils and tableware etc.;
4) meals at restaurants not far from the accommodation establishments.

In Drohobych district, some areas of Skole district as well as in Turkivskyi district the most of the RT establishments operate according to the model 1 or 2. Tourists can buy traditional Ukrainian dishes and in individual cases dishes of Boykos. In some agritourism farms dishes are prepared from local farm products. Catering services are offered in 32% of RT establishments. The prices of full board for 1 person vary 75–150 UAH. As a rule, breakfast and dinner are included in the price of accommodation during winter, and in summer catering is a more optional service. Model 3 or 4 is more often offered in accommodation establishments oriented for tourists who come to ski. However, the possibility of self-catering is often practiced.

Additional services are the other group of services provided both internally and externally. Internal services are provided directly in accommodation establishments and comprise organization of sports and cultural events, children's games as well as the participation of tourists in activities of the farm or participation in the daily life of the farmer's family. External services are connected with the use of natural, cultural and historical attractiveness of rural areas. RT establishments offer a wide variety of services, however the hosts of most of the establishments are not very original about the choice of leisure arrangements and they usually offer standard set of services, including: ski rental, mountain trips, mushroom picking, horse riding, winter sleigh rides. Only individual farms offer specific hiking trails, e.g. to the top of the mountains, e.g. Mt. Parashka, Mt. Lopata, etc., through the Watershed-Vierchovinsk Carpathians and the Ruski Trail Pass. The are several attractions of the region e.g. Dowbysz rocks, Tustan fort, Swiatoslav tomb, Kamianka waterfall, Chashevske lake, mineral water of Skole district and zoo in Medenycze. There are also trips to Transcarpathia. Coach trips are the most often ordered by local travel agencies. Rental of ski equipment is offered by every third RT enterprises, which are located near the ski lifts. Instructors are often provided, and a transfer to the lifts is organized. Among the other types of active leisure, cycling and bike rentals, quads, snowmobiles and jeep safaris are frequent. A large number of RT enterprises offer horse riding, but only one farm in Slavske has its own stables with Hucul horses and offers qualified instructors. Sauna is the most popular health service (offered in 43.1% of RT establishments). Healing vats with mineral water, herbal teas etc. are becoming more and more popular. Some households with their own apiaries offer api-therapy services, namely sleep on the hives. Some of the RT establishments offer consultations with the doctors and in particular cases - even specialist treatments under the control of a specialist. In some establishments fishing services are offered, as well as participation in the folk crafts workshops (pottery, Easter eggs' painting) and traditional folk festivities are held (Boykos' evening parties). The assortment of additional services in RT enterprises in LP is quite standard and limited, often based on the resources outside the farm and the countryside. Active leisure, recreation and health resort services are quite popular among tourists, but ethnic, cultural, entertainment and agritourism services, which play an important role in RT, are undeveloped.

## Conclusions

In modern conditions, the development of RT in LP faces a number of problems, both general and regional. The general problems typical for Ukraine include: lack of law regulation in RT, insufficient co-operation between state authorities and RT hosts, high level of shade RT business, imperfect tax and licensing policies, terminological problem, and lack of information system. There are also some specific regional problems in LP, including: chaotic development of RT market, unequal distribution of RT establishments in the province, lack of own brands, orientation of majority of RT establishments to external resources and insufficient use of own resources and insufficient information about RT outside the popular tourist centers. Development of RT in the CR seems to be inevitable, because of unpolluted natural environment, nature, hospitality of the rural population, traditions, crafts, tasty food, rural architecture. CR attract and will continue to attract tourists despite the poorly developed social and technical infrastructure (Lypczuk at al., 2015). The rural population needs support from local authorities and other institutions, both financial as well as institutional and advisory as well as business support (Kudla, 2006). Mastery of the region's recreational and tourism potential will inevitably lead to positive changes in other areas, enabling favorable conditions for settling social problems and increasing the standard of living of the rural population. Improving the level of tourist and recreational services can be achieved by: increasing development of leisure and tourism and employment in tourism, implementation of market mechanisms, increasing economic efficiency of tourism to the level of the most effective branches of the national economy, increasing quality of services, attracting foreign investment in the CR, faster development of tourist business and development of modern infrastructure, activating nature conservation activities to create civilized living standards for local population and visitors and improving ecological safety of the region, large-scale undertakings in the field of restoration and maintenance of cultural monuments, restoration of traditions and customs.

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# SENIOR ON THE TOURISM MARKET

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Abstract

Positive influence of tourism activity on health and well-being of elderly people is undeniable, but tourism offer aimed at specific needs and abilities of this market section is relatively limited, although seniors constitute a growing and — as a result — more and more important group of customers with buying potential. Polish seniors, unlike their Western counterparts indicate a low level of tourism consumption.

The main reason for this situation is both a limited buying potential of Polish seniors, and the system of values in which tourism and other active ways of spending free time are relatively low in the rank.

The purpose of the review paper is to present the main aspects pointing at the need to treat seniors as important buyers of tourist and recreational services.

## Introduction

Demographic changes are already triggering off many implications in different spheres of life and they are affecting the model of production, consumption, the structure of budget expenses, the job market, the system of insurance and social security benefits, investments, savings, social relations, family relations and people's lifestyle. Unfortunately, in the majority of analyses and commentaries dealing with this phenomena, the negative aspects of ageing and the related costs are mainly stressed.

The number of tourist farms which direct their offer at the seniors is increasing. They offer special diets, local amenities, facilities and special attractions that add variety to their leisure. Polish seniors follow their German neighbours' example and try to spend their retirement time visiting unknown regions. Oftener and oftener they decide on relaxation in the country thanks to which they gain peace and quiet.

Taking into consideration the spending potential of seniors and the leisure at their disposal, one should state that the growing number of the elderly can be an enormous source of a boom in the economy of the widely understood farm tourism. The tourist offer, which is attractive and tailored to the senior consumer's possibilities and needs, serves for maintaining their intellectual and physical fitness, which translates into benefits for the whole society as well as for the whole economy.

## Literature review

The precise defining of the term 'senior' is not an easy task. The term itself originates from the Latin language and means 'older' (from 'senex' – 'old'). While establishing the border between a grown up man and an older man, one may be guided by economic aspects (finishing work and going into retirement), cultural aspects (customs and traditions), social aspects (becoming a grandfather or grandmother), health aspects (deteriorating health and the loss of fitness).

In literature, it is a widely accepted fact that seniors are people who are 60 years old and over. This market requires a different treatment since seniors have their specific needs and expectations, their system of values and their own way of behaviour on the market. Besides, it is not a homogenous group; one can single out many diverse segments that may require quite a different marketing approach in terms of the difference in age which results in belonging to a given generation, a different course of the process of ageing, a diverse health condition, a different phase of the cycle of life, a financial and family situation, a different level of education and last but not least, the whole life style up to date (Śniadek, 2007).

In accordance with the definition passed by the First World Assembly on the Ageing of UN Societies in 1982, an older or elderly person (or an alternatively used term 'senior' ) is a person who is over 60 years old.

In Anglosaxon literature the old age is divided into three phases:

– the young old-people from between 60 and 65 to 74 years of age,
– the old old-people between 75 and 84 years of age,
– the oldest old-people who are 85 years old and over.

The young old are the people who are still fit both psychologically and physically. The people ranked within the old category are people who require assistance in doing some everyday activities. The oldest old need constant assistance in carrying out most of activities and people within this category are potential customers of institutionalized forms of assistance. In view of the fact that in Poland the average lifespan is shorter than that in West-European countries and a health condition of the old is worse, the age when a person requires a care assistant or assistance offered by specialized institutions is assumed to be between 75 and 80 years of age.

Simone de Beauvoir did not perceive the old age as one period and singled out two stages of the last phase of life assuming, as one of the criteria, the functional age, regarding the psycho-psychical capabilities of an old person:

– during the first stage the old are functionally independent but economically dependent (so called the third age),
– during the second stage the old are both functionally and economically dependent (so called the fourth age) (Report of the Institute of Labor and Social Affairs, 2012).

## Method

The analyses used the official data from the Main Statistical Office, the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Policy and a questionnaire survey of 57 respondents aged from 20 to 65 years.

## Results

The survey has revealed that the majority of those surveyed think that a senior is a person who is over 67 years old. Slightly less, 30% of respondents think that a senior is a person who is over 70 years old. 28% of those suyrveyed think that a senior is a person who is over 60 years old and barely 9% of survey participants think that a senior is a person who is over 50 years old.

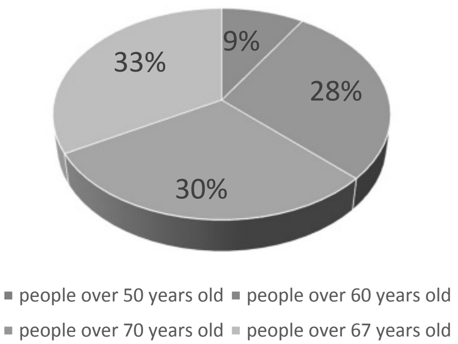


**Figure 1.** Respondents' opinion on the subject of the term "senior"

Source: Drawn up by the author on the basis of the surveyed data.

The process of ageing is a universal one. It accompanies the development of the world population albeit with some shifts in time. The dynamics of this process is very high, even higher than it used to be earlier in the old countries of the European Continent. The process of ageing was brought to attention as a result of the decrease both in birth rate and in death rate, which leads to the lengthening of the average lifespan. The world enters the third phase of demographic transition in which only the number of the old population grows.

Progressive socio-economical changes, the faster and faster progress in technology and information-technology, the increase in the standard of living and the development of medicine and its achievements alongside contribute to the lengthening of the average human lifespan. The consequence of all the above mentioned is a faster growth of the number of people of the advanced age than the growth of newly born babies. Demographic problems are the main challenges that nowadays most European countries face.

According to projections for the population of Poland for the years 2014–2050, made by the Main Statistical Office, the population of Poland will be systematically decreasing until it reaches 36.5 million in the year 2035 and nearly 34 million in the year 2050.

That means that the population will be smaller by 11.8% in comparison to the year 2014 (that is by 4.5 million people) by the end of the estimated period. A negative birth rate will hold till the end of the range of the projections.

It is predicted that the number of births will be systematically decreasing untill it reaches in the year 2050 a number almost 30% lower than it was at the beginning of the forecast. During the discussed period the average lifespan will be still lengthening – men will live to be 82.1 years old whereas women will live to be 87.5 years old on average and moreover the difference between men lifespan and women lifespan will decrease in a substantial manner, which means a lower men excessive mortality rate (Report of the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Policy, 2016).

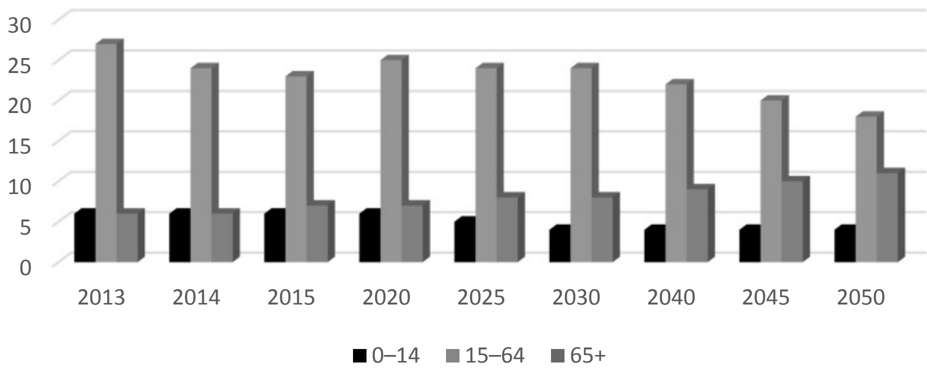


**Figure 2.** Forecast Polish population divided into biological age groups (in millions)

Source: drawn up by the author on the basis of the Main Statistical Office data.

The above data shows that the relationship between the number of births and the number of people at the age of 65+ will start to decrease from the year 2020 onwards.

The primary causes of demographic ageing of societies are as follows:

- the decrease in birthrate,
- the decrease in mortality rate (especially in younger age groups),
- the lengthening of human lifespan, which results in the increase in the absolute number of the older population,
- migration processes leading, in some areas, to a considerable decrease in the percentage of young people in the community inhabiting those areas.

The analysis of the demographical situation shows that the process of ageing is progressing year by year. In addition to the previously mentioned causes, one may also add the emigration of younger years of people in search of work, a big social and spatial diversification and a deterioration in a living standard of many families. All those phenomena threaten a demographic development, which calls for a reaction from subjects responsible for politics. However, one must observe that a pro-family policy actually does not exist in Poland. A whole and strategic plan for pro-life activities is lacking. Solutions put forward by successive governments, among other things a baby birth benefit, a tax relief for children, one-year maternity leave and currently introduced the 500+ programme all seem to be temporary activities and do not improve the whole situation in a meaningful and noticeable manner.

Polish seniors constitute a group which is often mariginalised in the light of the question of tourism issues. On one hand, one should not wonder at such a practice since in Poland the old and the elderly do not belong to a group which is the least active from a tourist's point of view. On the other hand, this tendency seems to be slowly changing. More and more seniors decide on some form or other of tourist activity. Admittedly, their number is still lower than that of seniors from western Europe, but it is not that low in comparison with other EU countries.

Emotional regulation considerably affects people's lifestyle and their coduct in the late adult age. The elderly suffer losses in many aspects:

– the loss of health, physical condition and physical attractiveness,
– the loss of loved ones,
– the loss of social and economical status,
– the loss of belongingness and prestige,
– the looming prospect of death.

All these situations may be a source of stress. Emotions of sadness and anxiety felt subjectively are much stronger at the old age than at the young age since they concern present experiences. The reaction of the autonomic nervous system is stronger as well. However, there are elderly people who, being conscious of a short life ahead of them, can focus on experiences which are emotionally positive. They often have an ability to fend off bad thoughts or not to think of uneasy situations which they cannot alter anyway. Physical fitness, a career success, friendship relations and friendly relations may be a source of positive emotions and give a sense of well-being (Dudek, Krukowski. Panas, 2014).

The Dutch are the society where people at the age of 65 and older are the most active in terms of long-term domestic trips as well as long-term trips abroad; over 61% of this population decide on such trips outdistancing German seniors (nearly 41%) in this respect. However, German seniors are the most active in Europe in terms of trips abroad. People over 65 years of age in Germany make up about 15% of all people travelling abroad on holiday whereas in Belgium, France and Great Britain the number amounts to a little less than 10%. Such a big share of West European seniors in holiday trips is due to a high standard of living on retirement; especially the German pension system is generally regarded as one of the best worldwide (Śniadek, 2007).

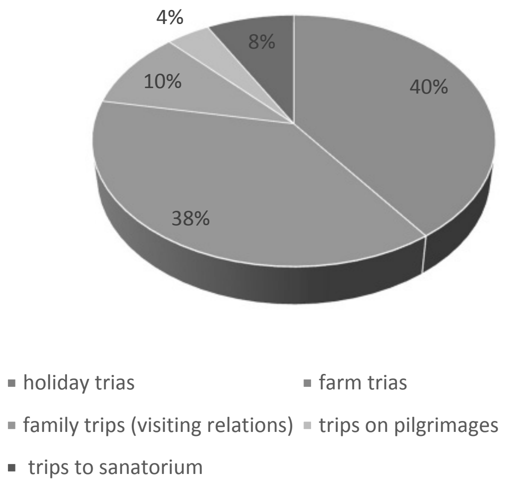


**Figure 3.** The elderly's preferences for tourist trias

Source: drawn up by the author based on a survey data.

In Poland, the straight majority of the elderly go on domestic trips. It is understandable mainly for financial reasons but also for health reasons and for their outlook on life. A very small minority of travelling seniors use the services offered by travel agents, which is also quite understandable in view of a poor offer aimed specially at the elderly. In other EU countries, especially the rich ones, there are offers directed specially towards the elderly, which work both ways. On one hand, it is tour agents' answer to the elderly's interest, who have a sufficient capital and on the other hand, this kind of offers encourages elderly people to decide on package holiday. According to the surveyed, the minority of seniors decide on pilgrimages and family trips. More and more tourist farms aim their offer at seniors. They offer special diets, local amenities and facilities as well as special attractions which add variety to seniors' leisure. All this is supposed to encourage the elderly to rest and relax just at the tourist farms and nowhere else. Apart from that, a lot of groups go to sanatoriums or visit health-resorts located in different regions of the country. During their trips seniors prefer a peaceful rest filled up with short walks. Because of this, places visited by them are not usually popular among other tourists. Very often the elderly decide on a holiday trip or a health trip off-season due to lower prices and a smaller number of other tourists in holiday-resorts.

In the past, holidays for pensioners and seniors (the elderly) were not as common as they are today. Polish seniors used to travel very seldom and rather unwillingly. It is difficult to state unequivocally whether the situation was due to their slightly different mentality or to their lower wealth status. Nowadays, however, summer holiday trips (although not only summer trips as Polish seniors travel and rest outside home in all the seasons) are more and more popular among Polish seniors. It is a positive tendency because man should enjoy life at all ages.

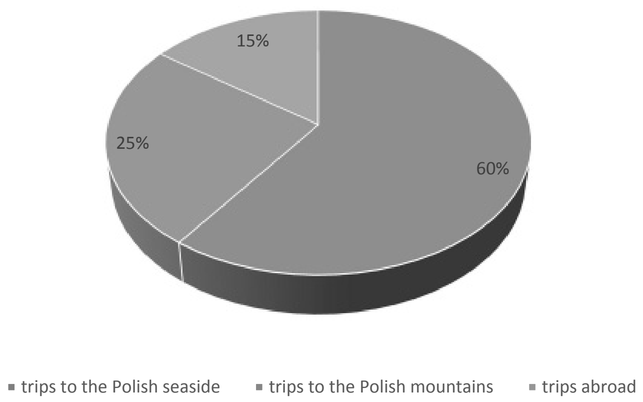


**Figure 4.** The senior's preferences for tourist trips

Source: Drawn up by the author on the basis of a survey data.

The main destinations among Polish seniors are spots and places with a high level of tourist popularity, in which case the senior's preferences do not diverge much from those of the general public. The most popular destinations are trips to the Baltic sea and to the south of Poland. Fewer seniors go on holiday abroad. One may assume that it is conditioned by their financial situation, the state of their health and by security reasons as well.

## Conclusions

To sum up, one can find that apart from the actions and ecouragement aimed directly at the elderly there also appears a need for a universal social campaign for the restoration of the senior's positive image which was lost, to a high degree, due to the wrong pension policy and to the really huge budget charge with the costs of pensions.

Therefore, there arises a need for developing (building and modernizing) the tourist and recreational infrustructure adjusted to the elderly's needs. That is why, the country's institutions and organisations responsible for the elderly's issues as well as r the social and economic policy ought to take advantage of the looming 'demographical crises' as an opportunity for rebuilding the society and the economy in which both present and future senior consumers will find their important place as they constitute a long-term segment of the tourist and recreational market.

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# The Role of Airports in the Tourist Market Development on the Example of Spain

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Abstract

The role of air transport in the development of tourism has been crucial for the last decades. Among others, it opens the tourist market for new destinations, and induces the development of tourist infrastructure and tourist services. The main purpose of the article was to investigate the influence of air transport on tourism in one of the world's most important tourist destinations – Spain. A brief historical background was provided. The authors then analyzed the functioning of the most important part of the infrastructure, i.e. airports in Spain, in the context of passenger transport, tourist motivations or preferred tourist destinations. The study indicates that Spain, located peripherally on the European continent and receiving more than 60 million international tourists per year, owes its success to the air connections. New destinations appeared on the tourist map of Spain that had earlier been less accessible for international and national tourists. Tourism in Spain is based in 80% on air transport, which is the reason for its dynamic development.

## Introduction

The role of air transport in the development of tourism has been crucial during the last decades. Among the most important changes mentioned in the literature, there is opening of the tourist market for new destinations. Taking into account the fact that the major share of the emissive tourist market belongs to Europe and the United Stated, the long-haul intercontinental destinations would not have developed if not for air transport, which considerably shortens the time of the journey (Kaczmarska, 2014; Kozak, 2009; Pender, Sharpley, 2008; Wyrzykowski, Marak, 2010). An important issue is also the political decision to deregulate the aviation market, which reduced the transport costs and opened it for new clients. Since charter and low cost carriers (LCC) appeared, air transport has adopted the dominant role in the transport services in tourism (Aguiló, Rey, Roselló, Torres, 2007; Kowalczyk, 2001; Rey, Myro, Galera, 2010). It is worth mentioning as well that air transport seems one of the cheapest, thus increasing the accessibility of tourist regions. Airport cost is considerably lower than that of the net of roads and rail trails connecting a region with the world. This disproportion increases even more with the distance between the regions that emit and receive tourist traffic.

The report “The economic & social benefits of air transport” published by ATAG (2005) points at the most important economic advantages brought about by air transport. First of all – aviation helps create a global net of transport, which initiates business development and mass tourism in the world. It is stressed that air transport dominates in tourism, influencing the sustainable development of developing countries. The local society profits from tourism as it increases their economic status by creating new work places, increasing income and (more indirectly) forming the attitude of care for the local natural and cultural environment.

The significance of air transport in the development of tourism is emphasized by Kowalczyk (2013), who points at the following major influence zones:

- appearance of tourist values,
- development of tourist infrastructure,
- development of tourist services,
- enhancement of communicational accessibility (p. 62).

Considering all the above mentioned facts, the authors investigated the influence of air transport on tourism in one of the world’s most important tourist destinations – Spain. This constitutes the main purpose of the article. The process should start with a brief history of the development of this kind of transport in tourism, as well as the development of tourist traffic in Spain. A more detailed analysis will be dedicated to the functioning of the most important part of the infrastructure, i.e. airports in Spain, in the context of passenger transport. Special attention is paid to the seven most important tourist airports in Spain.

## History of air transport in tourism

Air transport in tourism has emerged relatively recently. Its beginning dates back to the years after World War II; 1950 is accepted as the symbolic date of mass tourism beginning, as then the number of international arrivals reached 25 million (Wyrzykowski, Marak, 2010). Many factors contributed to the phenomenon, although the most important seems the possibility to use military airplanes from the war period in the civil transport.

The 1950s and 1960s were a period of dynamic development in the aviation industry. Airstrips were indurated and later illuminated. Terminals for passengers and luggage handling were built. Airports started to offer additional services for tourists, like restaurants or duty-free shops. The most important technological change was the introduction of jet engines and supporting infrastructure like the fuel distribution system (Pietrzakowski, 2012).

In 1970, a wide-bodied aircraft Boeing 747-100 was introduced, thus increasing the capacity of passenger airplanes. In 1967, Boeing 737 could accommodate only 130 persons, while the capacity of the next versions increased to almost 300 seats (Boeing 767) (Kowalczyk, 2001). The constructional changes in airplanes decreased the exploitation costs. Therefore, the reduction of the final cost made air transport much more attractive for tourism. Among the most important consequences, there is the development of intercontinental tourism, which would not be possible without air transport (Kowalczyk, 2001).

Apart from the technological factors influencing the development of this means of transportation, also political, economic or logistic changes exert their impact on the growth of tourism. An important moment in the development of mass tourist air transport was the introduction of charter flights, based on an agreement of leasing a plane by a tour-operator. A political issue considerably changing the market of passenger air transport in tourism was the famous Airline Deregulation Act from 1978, issued in the USA. A similar idea appeared in the European law in 1997 (Koźlak, 2008; Pijet-Migoń, 2012). The consequence of the deregulation was a global opening of air transport for free market economy. The effects could be noticed almost immediately. Generally, up till now, the 21st century has been the period of air transport – also in tourism, all around the world.

## Tourist traffic in the air transport context

The recent 12 years have been an excellent period in the development of air transport in tourism. Although air transport revolutionized tourism in the mid-1960s, enabling its mass character, it started to play the leading role only in the current century (Lareu, 1994). For statistical purposes, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) investigates the 4 main kinds of transport (air, road, rail and sea) and their usage in tourism. For the last several decades, the main share has belonged to road and air transport. For more than 20 years, these have constituted around 90–93% of the total tourist traffic, although their share varies. In 2004, air transport occupied the 1st place for the first time, with 45% of the total number of tourists using a plane as a means of transportation, outpacing road transport, which attained 43% (UNWTO, 2006). Four years later, air transport was chosen by more than 50% of the total number of tourists for the first time. This influenced the global development of tourism. Therefore, many new tourist regions have appeared and others observed dynamic development. Since 2002, a constant increase of tourist traffic in the Asia-Pacific region has been noted. According to the UNWTO statistic data, in 2015, almost 25% of tourists migrated toward this destination. In total, there were 279.2 million of arrivals. At the very beginning of the recent decade, the number of visits was around 56 million (around 13% in the world tourist traffic). When one considers the fact that the major share of tourists are Europeans and Americans traveling by plane, the conclusion seems obvious: air transport has played and still plays a crucial role in the development of tourism in the Asia-Pacific region (the one with the highest dynamics of increase in the last decade).

In the case of Spain, the most important tourist markets are: Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Scandinavian countries and Benelux (Figure 1).

Tourists from these countries usually use air transport when visiting the Iberian Peninsula. Spain as a tourist country (in 2015, it was visited by 68,215,000 tourists) owes its success to air transport. In 2014, 79.8% of tourists arrived here by plane, 18.4% by road transport, 1.3% entered Spain via sea, and 0.5% used rail connection (http://estadisticas.tourspain.es).

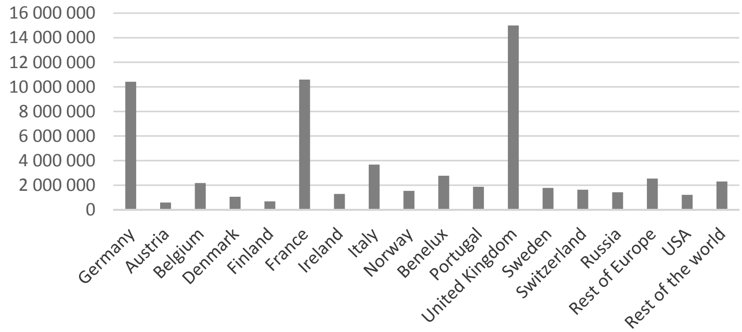


**Figure 1.** Tourist traffic in Spain according to countries, 2014

Source: http://estadisticas.tourspain.es.

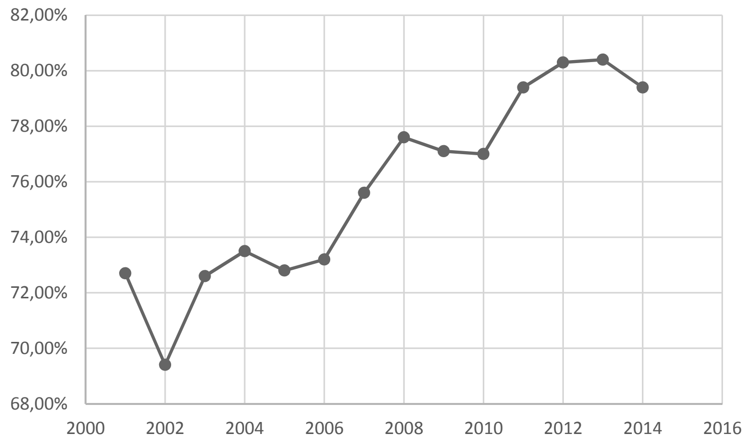


**Figure 2.** Share of tourists using air transport in Spain in the 21st century

Source: http://estadisticas.tourspain.es.

In the 21st century, air transport remains the main means of transportation in Spain, especially for international tourists. The temporal decreases in its popularity were observed in 2002 (an effect of WTC terrorist attack) and in the period of 2008–2010 (as a result of the world financial crisis) (Figure 2).

## Communicational infrastructure – Spanish airports

It is worth to analyze tourism functioning in Spain in the context of air transport. Its efficiency depends on the proper organization of its infrastructure. There are 48 passenger airports in Spain, 2 of which serve only helicopters (http://www.aena.es). The enterprise managing the Spanish airports – Aena Aeropuertos (Aena Airports) – classifies the airports into three main groups in order to investigate the competitive environment. These are:

– regional airports,

– tourist airports,
– hubs (CNMC, 2014, p. 102).

In the first group, there are airports competitive owing to their geographical localization. They are usually characterized by a limited international passenger traffic. Their main task is to communicate the region with the outside world. The number of passengers there is higher than 700,000 per year. Among such airports are Bilbao, Seville, Santiago de Compostela, Tenerife Nord, Santander, La Palma, Asturias or La Coruna. Some small regional airports with passenger traffic smaller than 700,000 are Granada, Vigo, Albacete, Badajoz, Salamanca, Pamplona, San Sebastian, Hierro or Gomera.

The airports of the second group directly compete with the regional ones. The number of passengers here also overcomes 700,000 per year and, more importantly, the share of international traffic is high, usually exceeding 50%. These airports compete on the international market. Some are very popular among tourists, e.g. Tenerife South, Alicante-Elche, Malaga-Costa del Sol, Palma de Mallorca, Gran Canaria, Menorca, Murcia or Jerez.

Taking into account the size and complexity of passenger traffic, the most important group of airports are hubs. Their characteristic feature is considerably higher passenger traffic than it could be expected when considering their geographical location. There is also significant international passenger traffic, and airports in this group serve both as final destination airports and as transfer ones. The share of connecting passengers here is substantial.

According to the Aena resources, only 2 airports (Madrid and Barcelona) receive a number of passengers considerable enough to be called hubs: Madrid-Barajas (ca. 25% of connection passengers) and El Prat in Barcelona (5% of connection passengers). Madrid is a typical hub. Another important feature in the hub group is the number of international long distance connections. In the case of Madrid-Barajas, such connections outside the European Union (EU) reach ca. 25%, and for Barcelona they make 8%. As for national connections, the percentage of the passenger share is almost similar in both – 30% for Madrid and 29% for Barcelona. The share for the EU and the Schengen zone is 45% for Madrid and 63% for Barcelona (CNMC, 2014).

The competitiveness of tourist airports is an important issue. First of all, it depends on the location. This element can gain or lose significance depending on tourists' motivation to use a particular airport. This factor is vital for business and visiting friends or relatives (VFR) travels and remains less weighty for those going on holidays or for leisure – in this case, a wide range of transport services counts. It is worth stressing that airports offering charter flights and receiving LCC companies are considered more attractive.

## Main airports in Spain in the tourism service

Among the 48 airports operated by Aena, 7 are of international importance. Each of them gathers passenger traffic of ca. 10 million persons or more. These are: Madrid-Barajas, Barcelona-El Prat, Palma de Mallorca, Malaga-Costa del Sol, Gran Canaria, Alicante-Elche and Tenerife South (http://www.aena.es).

In 2011, the highest number of passengers (nearly 50 million) were served by the biggest Spanish airport – Madrid-Barajas. It is also the only airport from the presented group which noted a clear decrease of the traffic (around 20%) in 2013 (the time of crisis in the Spanish economy). The other airports avoided such a loss (Figure 3). The drop in the number of passengers experienced by the Gran Canaria airport equaled 100,000 persons (ca. 1%) and thus should rather be called a stagnation. It is worth stressing that all the airports that registered a constant growth of traffic are located in areas called tourist regions (*zonas turisticas*) by the Instituto Nacional de Estadistica (INE). It seems that just owing to their location and to the fact that they operate on the tourist market they avoided the decrease in the tourist traffic, as can be observed in the passenger flow at Barcelona-El Prat, Palma de Mallorca or Malaga-Costa del Sol. The only mismatched airport is Madrid-Barajas.

In the analysis of the tourist traffic statistics, it is interesting to look at the passengers' origin. In all of the described airports, the international character of the passenger flow dominates (Figure 4); in 2015, Spain was visited by more than 60 million international tourists.

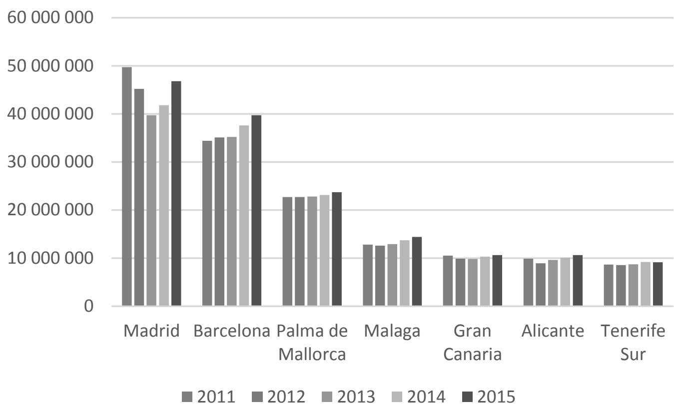


**Figure 3.** Number of passengers at the biggest Spanish airports, 2011–2015

Source: http://www.aena.es.

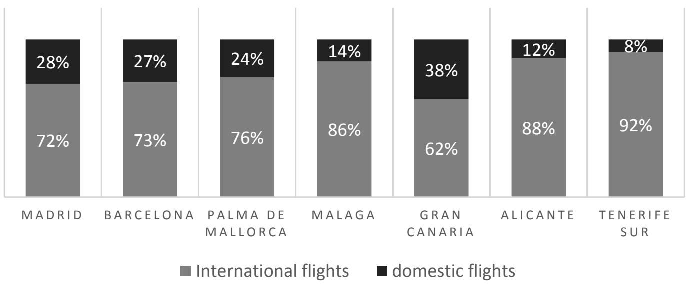


**Figure 4.** Tourist traffic in 2015

Source: http://www.aena.es.

Another issue to be investigated is the connectivity of the analyzed airports.

The mere numbers show the great importance of Spain as a destination visited by air; this kind of transport was the choice of almost 80% of tourists visiting the country in 2015. The most significant airports as for the number of destinations were Barcelona-El Prat (almost 200) and Madrid-Barajas (similarly). Not far from these two hubs was Palma de Mallorca, connected with 167 different airports in the world. The other 4 airports also reached the number of over 100 different connections (Figure 5). The situation is different if one considers the number of countries

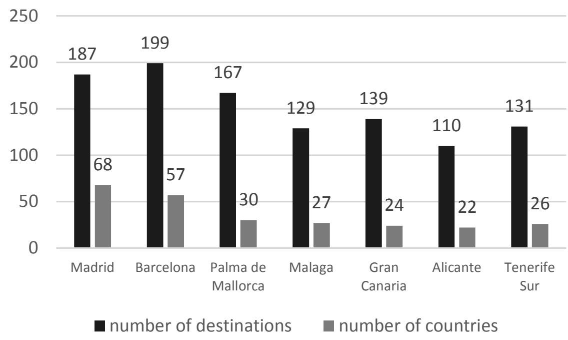


**Figure 5.** Number of destinations and countries connected with the main Spanish airports, 2015

Source: http://www.anea.es.

connected. Here again the most important airports were Madrid and Barcelona, with the average of 62 countries connected. For Palma de Mallorca, Malaga or Tenerife South, the number of connections was twice smaller.

The international tourist traffic to Spain is grouped into the following categories: 23 leading countries sending tourists (among them there is Poland), the rest of the EU, the rest of Europe, the rest of Americas, the African countries and the rest of the world. Taking into account this division, one can observe that two Spanish hubs connect Spain with every country present on the Spanish tourist market and that Palma de Mallorca or Malaga are connected with every country important for the Spanish tourist market. This is possible thanks to the air companies operating on the Spanish market. There are 83 airlines operating at the Barcelona-El Prat airport, 75 at Madrid-Barajas and 69 at the Palma de Mallorca airport. The average number of air companies that operate at the 7 major airports of Spain is 60, with the lowest number referring to Alicante-Elche (“only” 29 operating airlines).

## Conclusions

It is difficult to overestimate the role that air transport plays in the Spanish tourism. The country, visited by more than 60 million international tourists in 2015, owes its success to the air connections. This is bound with numerous factors. One of them is the peripheral location on the European continent. A country distant from the center of Europe, and especially its islands, would not have a chance for success without a comfortable and fast means of transport. The technological improvements were accompanied by changes in the creation of the tourist product. The most important element of the tourist package was the charter connection that made Spain an accessible destination for tourists from Western Europe in the 1960s. Another impulse was the development of LCCs, which revolutionized the Spanish tourist transport market and gained an important share. New destinations appeared on the tourist map of Spain that had earlier been less accessible for international and national tourists.

For now, it is difficult to imagine an abrupt change in the transport market. Tourism in Spain is based in 80% on air transport, which is the reason for its dynamic development.

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