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**AKADEMIA WYCHOWANIA FIZYCZNEGO  
IM. BRONISŁAWA CZECHA W KRAKOWIE**

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**KRAKÓW 2024**

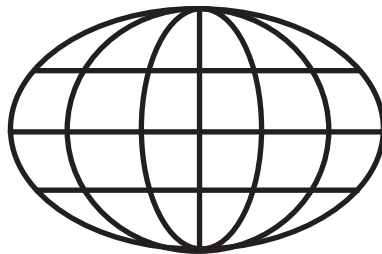
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# FOLIA TURISTICA

Vol. 63 – 2024



KRAKÓW 2024

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## CONTENTS

<b>Bartosz Szczechowicz:</b> <i>From the Editor</i> .....	7
<b>Marcjanna Augustyn, Katarzyna Jakubik-Bińczak, Oskar Placek, Ramona Jachym, Rajmund Tomik:</b> <i>Assessment and Comparison of the Attractiveness of the City of Katowice and Ustroń Health Resort in the Opinion of Tourists</i> .....	11
<b>Joanna Golec, Monika Nowak, Joanna Balicka-Bom, Piotr Golec:</b> <i>Effect of Physical Activity on the Level of Kinesiophobia in Young Adults after Ankle Sprain Injury – A Retrospective Study and Implications for Tourist and Recreational Activities</i> .....	31
<b>Krzysztof Sas-Nowosielski, Sylwia Szopa-Wiśnios:</b> <i>Comparison of Perceptions of the Value of Sports Among Physical Education Students in Poland and China</i> .....	51
<b>Grzegorz Kromka, Klaudia Chwaja, Kamila Camona:</b> <i>Digital Exploration Patterns: Instagram Travel Engagement and Positing Behaviours of Students from the University of Physical Education in Krakow (Poland)</i> .....	61
<b>Ramona Jachym, Katarzyna Zielińska, Rajmund Tomik:</b> <i>Expectations of Travel Agency Customers in Poland Regarding the Services Offered to Them During the COVID-19 Pandemic</i> .....	85
<b>Karolina Serwańska:</b> <i>Recruitment Processes as Part of the Policy Pursued in Tourism Enterprises in a Post-COVID Environment</i> ..	101
<b>Marek Rutkowski:</b> <i>Development Prospects of the Białystok PTTK Branch in the First Half of the 1960s</i> .....	129
<b>Liliana Kowalczyk:</b> <i>Father Maximilian Maria Kolbe – Saint and Traveller</i> .....	155

### DISCUSSION, ESSAYS, SCIENTIFIC REPORTS AS WELL AS POLEMICAL AND INFORMATIONAL ARTICLES

<b>Tomasz Wałek:</b> <i>Attitudes and Behaviour Patterns Among Participating of the 21st Edition of the Cracovia Marathon (Poland – Krakow, 14 April 2024). Research Notice</i> .....	171
---	-----

<b>Aleksandra Błotnicka, Ziemowit Górski, Dominik Jurasieński:</b> <i>Report from the International Conference and Competition Titled “Sustainable Innovation in Tourism &amp; Hospitality: 2023 Global Student Challenge” (Taiwan 24 Nov. 2023) . . . . .</i>	181
REVIEWS, COMMENTS, SCIENTIFIC CONTROVERSY, MEMORIES	
<b>Wiesław Alejziak:</b> <i>A Book Review: “Methodology of Tourism Re- search. Ontological and Epistemological Foundations and Histori- cal-Institutional Development” By Leszek Butowski . . . . .</i>	185
* * *	
<b>Reviewers in the Year 2024 . . . . .</b>	193
<b>Information and Instructions for Authors . . . . .</b>	195

## FROM THE EDITOR

This issue of “Folia Turistica” contains a collection of texts characterised by significant specificity and diversity. It comprises eight scientific articles and: a research report, a report from a scientific conference and a book review. On my own behalf, but also on behalf of the entire editorial team, I hope that this configuration will prove interesting and inspiring for our Readers.

The block of scientific texts begins with two articles, the authors of which address certain issues related to the health aspects of tourist and recreational activity. In the first of them, an international team consisting of **Marcjanna Augustyn, Katarzyna Jakubik-Bińczak, Oskar Placek, Ramona Jachym and Rajmund Tomik** presents the results of empirical research, which was aimed at assessing – from the perspective of tourists – the attractiveness of two different types of tourist resorts: the city of Katowice and the spa area of Ustroń. The authors were interested in whether the type of tourist destination (considered in terms of: urban versus spa) can determine the perception of their attractiveness by tourists, especially in terms of destination quality, as well as the experience, satisfaction and behavioural intentions of tourists. The research, conducted using the diagnostic survey method on a sample of 400 individuals, proved that for practically all the considered indicators, higher ratings were observed for the spa, and in most cases the differences observed in this connection turned out to be statistically significant. The detailed results and conclusions stemming from this research are of not only cognitive but also practical significance: they support optimisation regarding the development strategy of various types of tourist destinations, also in terms of building the sources of their potential competitive advantages.

While the above article presents a rather general research problem, **Joanna Golec, Monika Nowak, Joanna Balicka-Bom and Piotr Golec** consider a very specific relationship concerning – in this case – a group of young adults: the relationship between subjectively declared physical activity prior to experiencing an ankle sprain injury and the level of kinesiphobia after this injury. The content of the article is, of course, embedded in the literature on the subject, but what is of particular interest is the description and results of the authors’ empirical research, conducted on a sample of 115 participants with ASI, who were divided into two groups: active (65 patients) and inactive (50 patients). Without citing in this short



preview the results relating to the indicators included in the analysis (i.e.: FAAM, FABQ and TSK-17), let us only note that the work presented here attempts to fill the research gap relating to the issue of post-traumatic anxiety and avoidance of physical activity, also in the context of taking up the challenges related to participation in tourism and recreation.

The next two works are connected to one another via the nature of the studied group (students). **Krzysztof Sas-Nowosielski and Sylwia Szopa-Wiśnios** attempt to identify differences in the perception of values related to sports among Polish and Chinese Physical Education students. Empirical research aimed at achieving this objective was conducted on a sample of 198 individuals in total, including 124 from the Academy of Physical Education in Katowice and 74 from Langfang Normal University in Hebei. A 20-item questionnaire, assessed on a 5-point Likert scale, was used to measure sports values. The differences for the majority of the values considered between Polish and Chinese students turned out not to be of statistical significance. There were two exceptions: Chinese students prioritize the role of sports in promoting nationalist values, while Polish students place greater emphasis on personal development. This led the authors to conclude that although many sports values are common in different cultures, there are certain differences that are potentially influenced by cultural, educational and social factors.

Using a diagnostic survey method, **Grzegorz Kromka, Klaudia Chwaja and Kamila Camona** studied the behaviour of students of the University of Physical Education in Kraków (Poland) related to the use of one of the leading social media platforms among young people today, which is Instagram, for – generally speaking – travel purposes. Although the research results cannot be generalised, the identification of the indicated type of behaviour on a sample of 630 students of the aforementioned university, representing various fields of study, allows for the formulation of well-documented conclusions regarding the studied group. For example, it turned out that students of fields related to tourism (compared to students of other fields of study) not only travel more often, but also – on Instagram – see more travel entries, are more willing to publish posts related to tourism, and their profiles contain a greater number of travel-related photos. The motives for publishing travel photos primarily include: archiving travel photos, the desire to show off to others and improving one's own well-being.

The next two articles refer to the specific circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic. **Ramona Jachym, Katarzyna Zielińska and Rajmund Tomik** attempted to empirically identify customer expectations concerning the offer of travel agencies in Poland and – what is particularly interesting – changes in these expectations after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The resulting emergence of new challenges for companies in the tourism industry were also evaluated. The research was conducted

using a diagnostic survey method in the CAWI formula, collecting opinions from 300 adult Facebook users. Their results confirmed the authors' initial intuitions that the threats revealed during the pandemic are still alive in the minds of tourists and affect their current expectations regarding the way travel is organised, especially by companies specialising in such an area. In connection with these results, to a certain extent, a "new" profile of the travel agency customer is revealed, as more sensitive to – broadly speaking – hygiene and health issues.

**Karolina Serwańska** presents another aspect regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism industry. In her article, she considers how the aforementioned pandemic – and the crisis it caused – changed the policy of tourism enterprises related to the process of recruiting new employees. The author based her attempt to resolve this issue on qualitative research conducted in the form of individual in-depth surveys, carried out in a group of 10 Polish tourism company managers representing the main sectors of the tourism industry, including travel agencies and hotels. The respondents, regardless of their free statements, answered 13 specific questions about recruitment problems they faced during the pandemic. The results of the research confirmed the fact that such problems occurred and also allowed them to determine their nature and sources.

The authors of the two articles closing the scientific block took up historical topics. **Marek Rutkowski** focuses on presenting the development prospects of the Białystok Branch of the Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society (PTTK) in the first half of the 1960s. Thanks to research conducted in the form of content analysis of concerning archival source materials (although, as the author himself notes, the selectivity of available materials makes it difficult to assess the broader context of the information obtained), he determines that these prospects were not significant, due to various external and internal limitations – and also, despite the availability of high-class natural assets in the region covered by the activities of the indicated organisation. It is worth mentioning that the indicated article corresponds to one of the author's earlier works, published in the FT 58-2022 issue – which was devoted to the functioning of the Białystok Branch of PTTK in the period 1946-1952/53.

In the next article, **Liliana Kowalczyk**, presents the figure of the Polish Franciscan, missionary and martyr, St. Father Maximilian Maria Kolbe (1894-1941). In her text, she presents him not so much as a saint of the Catholic Church, but as a traveller. The author, using the biographical method, supported with textual analysis – especially paying attention to the Franciscan's letters and diaries – comes to the conclusion that one of the main motives for Father Kolbe's journeys was his journalistic interests, as well as the desire to expand his publishing and missionary activities. Although the priest's private files may naturally contain descriptions

of events and experiences presented in a subjective or incomplete way, they reveal a lesser-known dimension of the Saint's life: travel. The research on the Saint to date has been focused, as the author herself points out, primarily on the life of the Franciscan as a whole, and especially on his imprisonment and death in KL Auschwitz I.

An important addition to the scientific part of the issue are three popularisation texts. In the first one, **Tomasz Wałek** presents a report on empirical research aimed at identifying the attitudes and behavioural patterns of runners. They were carried out among individuals taking part in the 21<sup>st</sup> edition of the Cracovia Marathon (held on April 14, 2024), as one of the largest running events cyclically organised in Poland. It is worth emphasizing that although physical activity in the form of running has gained popularity in recent years, there is still relatively little data on the behaviour of runners – especially in the context of their visiting destinations of high tourist attractiveness. In the second text, **Aleksandra Błotnicka, Ziemowit Górski and Dominik Jurasiński** report on the international scientific conference entitled “Sustainable Innovation in Tourism & Hospitality: 2023 Global Student Challenge”, which took place on November 24, 2023 in Taiwan. The originality of this event was expressed, among others, in the following: the presence of an element in its programme in the form of the staged preparation and presentation by teams of students from higher education film institutions presenting important and interesting problems related to the main theme of the conference. In the third text, **Wiesław Alejziak** demonstrates the content of the monograph by Leszek Butowski entitled *Methodology of Tourism Research. Ontological and Epistemological Foundations and Historical-Institutional Development*. This book, although published only in Polish at the moment, is worth recommending – especially since it concerns the difficult and extremely complex issue of tourism research methodology, which is still comparatively rarely the subject of considerations included in compact, monographic publications.

I remain hopeful that the indicated collection of articles will be interesting for Readers – especially due to its thematic and methodological diversity. Moreover, if at least some of the texts that make up this issue area to be in any way inspiring, its publication will thus fulfil its task two-fold.

*Bartosz Szczechowicz*

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## ASSESSMENT AND COMPARISON OF THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE CITY OF KATOWICE AND USTROŃ HEALTH RESORT IN THE OPINION OF TOURISTS

*Marcjanna Augustyn\**, *Katarzyna Jakubik-Bińczak\*\**,  
*Oskar Placek\*\*\**, *Ramona Jachym\*\*\*\**,  
*Rajmund Tomik\*\*\*\*\**


### Abstract


**Purpose.** The objective of the study is to assess and compare tourists' perceptions of destination quality attractiveness and their quality of experience, satisfaction and behavioural intentions at two diverse tourism destinations (Katowice, an urban destination and Ustroń, a health resort).


**Method.** The diagnostic survey method as well as a questionnaire were used to collect the data. A total of 400 tourists were surveyed, 200 in Katowice and 200 in Ustroń. The Mann-Whitney U test was used for statistical analysis.


**Findings.** Higher ratings were observed in Ustroń (a health resort) than in Katowice (an urban destination) for all but one of the studied indicators. The only indicator in which Katowice scored higher than Ustroń was the destination's variety of attractions and facilities. Statistically significant differences between the two destinations were found for all indicators studied except for two: tourist satisfaction and behavioural intentions.


**Research and conclusion limitations.** The study was cross-sectional and only two diverse destinations were examined. Future longitudinal replication studies are needed for other types of tourism destinations.

\*  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8270-3839>, Prof., Bournemouth University Business School, Department for Marketing Strategy and Innovation, e-mail: [maugustyn@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:maugustyn@bournemouth.ac.uk).

\*\*  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3811-4540>, Ph.D., Jerzy Kukuczka Academy of Physical Education in Katowice, Department of Tourism and Recreation, e-mail: [k.jakubik@awf.katowice.pl](mailto:k.jakubik@awf.katowice.pl).

\*\*\*  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9374-2860>, MSc, Jerzy Kukuczka Academy of Physical Education in Katowice, Department of Tourism and Recreation, e-mail: [o.placek@awf.katowice.pl](mailto:o.placek@awf.katowice.pl).

\*\*\*\*  <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-7064-1959>; MSc., Jerzy Kukuczka Academy of Physical Education in Katowice, Department of Tourism and Recreation, e-mail: [r.jachym@awf.katowice.pl](mailto:r.jachym@awf.katowice.pl).

\*\*\*\*\*  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9603-8828>; Ph.D., Assoc. Prof., Jerzy Kukuczka Academy of Physical Education in Katowice, Department of Tourism and Recreation, e-mail: [r.tomik@awf.katowice.pl](mailto:r.tomik@awf.katowice.pl).

**Practical implications.** The research results may be useful in developing strategies for improving destination attractiveness and competitiveness.

**Originality.** This is the first study in which two tourism destinations with different characteristics are compared in order to establish whether the type of destination may determine tourists' perceptions of destination attractiveness, in terms of destination quality, as well as tourists' perceptions regarding the quality of their experience, satisfaction and behavioural intentions. As such, the study contributes to extending knowledge on perceived destination attractiveness.

**Type of paper.** An article presenting the results of empirical research.

**Keywords:** destination attractiveness, Ustroń, Katowice, tourist experience, satisfaction, quality

## Introduction

One of the most important issues of tourism geography and destination competitiveness is destination attractiveness, which refers to the features of an area, region, city or a single object that arouses tourists' interest and is mainly determined by destination characteristics, tourism development and transport accessibility [Kaczmarek, Stasiak and Włodarczyk 2005]. S. Page [1995] approached the issue of destination attractiveness differently and argued that the concept could be understood within three contexts, i.e. attractiveness defined by various classifications and categorisations (ideographic attractiveness), attractiveness resulting from the adoption of a specific evaluation technique and attractiveness resulting from subjective perception.

In prior studies, attempts were made to assess perceived destination attractiveness in order to determine any differences in relation to tourists' characteristics, motivations and attitudes, and such differences were established [e.g. Kim and Perdue 2011; Pompurová, Šimo ková and Rialti 2023]. Little is known, however, whether there are any differences in tourists' perceptions of destination attractiveness depending on the type of tourism destination, based on resources, purposes and heritage, and whether any differences in such perceptions would require aligning tourism development strategies to enhance destination attractiveness and their competitiveness in relation to the specific type of a tourism destination. Furthermore, in prior research, it has been indicated that tourism destination quality is crucial for enhancing destination attractiveness and competitiveness [e.g. Blazeska, Milenkovski and Gramatnikovski 2015; Islam and Chaudhary 2020]. Nonetheless, there is not much information on tourists' perceptions of destination quality, in general and, particularly, in the context of destination attractiveness, and especially, regarding destinations of diverse types, based on their resources, purposes and heritage. Finally, although in prior studies links have been established between perceived destination attractiveness and tourists' perceptions of the quality of their experience, satisfaction and behavioural intentions [e.g. Chaudhary and Islam 2020; Vigolo 2015], little is known about these concepts within the context of destination quality as an aspect of diverse destination attractiveness.

The research presented in this paper addresses the research gaps identified above and aims to assess and compare tourists' perceptions of destination quality attractiveness as well as quality of experience, satisfaction and behavioural intentions at two diverse tourism destinations (Katowice, an urban destination and Ustroń, a health resort). To achieve this objective, the following research questions are examined in this study:

1. How do tourists perceive destination quality attractiveness at an urban destination and a health resort?
2. Are there any significant differences in tourists' perceptions of destination quality attractiveness at the two diverse tourism destinations?
3. How do tourists evaluate the quality of their experience, satisfaction and behavioural intentions at an urban destination and a health resort?
4. Are there any significant differences in tourists' evaluations regarding the quality of their experience, satisfaction and behavioural intentions at the two diverse tourism destinations?

## Literature review

### *Tourism destination attractiveness*

Destination attractiveness has been studied for several decades. It has been variously defined but the general consensus is that a destination is attractive if it is capable of satisfying tourists' needs [Dey, Mathew and Chee-Hua 2020; Hu and Ritchie 1993]. Since tourists needs vary, in prior studies, significant differences were examined and established in perceived destination attractiveness based on tourists' characteristics, motivations and attitudes. For example, D. Kim and R.R. Perdue [2011] found that cognitive and affective images impact perceptions of destination attractiveness. Meanwhile, D. Das, S.K. Sharma, P.K. Mohapatra and A. Sarkar [2007] noted that tourists' age, social class and region of origin determine their perceptions of destination attractiveness. In another study, K. Pompurová et al. [2023] found that there are significant differences in perceptions of destination attractiveness among tourists representing different generations – GenY and GenZ.

While the studies on the impact of tourists' characteristics, motivations and attitudes are important for enhancing our understanding of perceived destination attractiveness and designing effective marketing strategies, little is known about whether tourists' perceptions of destination attractiveness may differ depending on the type of a tourism destination visited, based on destination resources, purposes and heritage. Studying these phenomena and establishing whether such differences exist is crucial to designing effective tourism development strategies aimed at enhancing destination attractiveness and competitiveness. Indeed, in earlier research, it

has been indicated that destinations can differentiate and compete with regard to their unique resources that make destinations attractive [e.g. Ariya, Wishitemi and Sitati, 2017; Islam, Hossain and Noor, 2017; Lee, Chen and Huang, 2014; Oliani, Rossi and Gervasoni, 2011; Raimkulov, Juraturgunov and Ahn, 2021]. However, in these studies, different attributes of destination attractiveness were used, owing to the uniqueness of their resources, making comparisons of destination attractiveness difficult.

One aspect of destination attractiveness that could be compared is destination quality. It is considered central to enhancing destination attractiveness and competitiveness [e.g. Blazeska, Milenkovski and Gramatnikovski, 2015; Islam and Chaudhary, 2020]. Nonetheless, there is not information on tourists' perceptions of destination quality, in general and in the context of destination attractiveness in particular, and especially in destinations of diverse types, based on their resources, purposes and heritage. This is mainly because, until recently, there has been a limited understanding of the concept of destination quality and how it should be measured. Nevertheless, in a recent empirical mixed methods study in which it was examined what tourists associate with destination quality [Seakhoa-King, Augustyn and Mason, 2020], solid foundations have been provided for conducting comparative research on destination quality as an aspect of destination attractiveness. A. Seakhoa-King et al. [2020, p. 207] defined tourism destination quality as the extent to which destinations meet tourists' requirements concerning "conditions suitable for pursuing tourist activities and interests", and identify 12 dimensions and 75 attributes of destination quality. A. Seakhoa-King et al. [2020] argued that fewer dimensions and indicators of destination quality may be needed, depending on the type and strategic goals of a tourism destination. For example, to improve destination quality attractiveness, dimensions such as "authentic", "informative", "relaxing", "safe", "varied" and "well-kept" place may suffice in assessing destination quality attractiveness.

In previous studies on destination attractiveness, links were established between perceived destination attractiveness and tourists' perception of the quality of their experience, satisfaction and behavioural intentions [e.g. Chaudhary and Islam, 2020; Vigolo, 2015]. Little is known, however, about tourists' perceptions of the quality of their experience, satisfaction and behavioural intentions within the context of destination quality attractiveness, and especially in the context of diverse destinations, based on their resources, purposes and heritage.

### ***Tourist attractiveness of urban destinations***

Urban agglomerations are characterised by apparent differences in the perception of their attractiveness by permanent residents [Krężolek et al., 2017] and tourists. D. Krężolek et al. [2017] argued that the perception of

a city's attractiveness is an individual issue mainly dependent on the subjective preferences of the evaluator. Nevertheless, several factors can be identified that influence this perception. The most important tourist attractions of urban areas include, among others, architectural monuments, historical sites, cultural and sports events, fairs, congresses, conferences, and shopping centres with a variety of cultural and entertainment offers [Kaczmarzka, 2013]. To increase the number of tourists visiting urban areas, historic industrial facilities are being adapted and revitalised to assume new functions, often related to tourism and recreation. Technological monuments help create an extremely attractive tourist offer or diversify the already existing one, especially in urban centres, an excellent example of which are the cities of Poland's Upper Silesian Industrial District, including Katowice. As A. Kaczmarzka [2013, p. 82] stated, "industrial tourism currently means a form of recreation, education and active leisure organised in areas of current or past economic activity based on construction materials and technological lines related to the production and manufacturing of material goods or broadly understood services".

### ***Tourist attractiveness of health resorts***

Health resorts are currently multifunctional tourist places that are also attractive spaces for various forms of tourism, including not only health tourism but also active, recreational, sightseeing or business tourism [Kruczek 2012]. Both domestic and foreign tourists visit these places as part of longer holiday trips or shorter weekend getaways. Health resorts have become a peculiar tourist attraction due to specific development elements, including mineral water pump rooms or spa parks, as well as cultural, entertainment and sports events held at them [*ibid*]. Interesting research on the attractiveness of Polish health resorts was conducted by A.R. Szromek [2013] who compared two health resorts in Poland (Polanica and Krynica) and found that the sense of security may have significant impact on the attractiveness of health resorts. This author also found that there are differences in the assessment of health resort attractiveness between tourists who chose to visit the place, and patients who visit health resorts because they are referred there by the Polish National Health Fund and who, therefore, do not have the right to choose the place to which they will go. In the research by the mentioned author, it was shown that in the case of Polanica, both the cleanliness of the health resort and assessment of hotel infrastructure quality were statistically significantly different in this respect depending on the tourist's affiliation to the group of decision-makers or non-decision-makers. Some studies are focused only on selected elements of health resorts, such as spa parks. Spa parks are an important element of every health resort. In research conducted in 2017 it was indicated that there are 84 spa parks in



Poland, most of them located within the “A” zone of health resorts [Bernat 2017]. As there can be more than one spa park at one health resort, their total number exceeds the number of health resorts. In his article, Bernat [2017] noted that there is no relationship between the size of a health resort and the number of spa parks. The health resort with the largest number of spa parks is Ustka with nine of them.

### ***Katowice as an urban tourism destination***

Katowice, the capital of the Silesian Voivodeship in Poland, covers an area of approximately 165 km<sup>2</sup>, a significant part of which is forested. Katowice is located in Upper Silesia, the region most associated with several hundred years of industrial heritage, based mainly on mining. It should be noted, though, that despite the high concentration of industrial facilities, the city of Katowice offers both its residents and tourists many opportunities for recreation and active leisure. Among such attractions are the Three Ponds Valley in Katowice, Tadeusz Kościuszko City Park and the Murckowski Forest Reserve. Other numerous attractions of Katowice include museums, cinemas, theatres and sports centres. A symbol of Katowice is the “Spodek” sports and entertainment hall and the nearby modern space known as the Culture Zone, which includes the International Congress Centre, the building of the National Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra, and the Silesian Museum on the site of the former Katowice coal mine [Miszta 2015]. Other anthropogenic attractions of the city include the Stanisław Wyspiański Theatre, the Archcathedral of Christ the King or St. Mary’s Church and Mariacka Street, where all kinds of gastronomic facilities such as cafes, pubs and restaurants are clustered. Also worth mentioning is the Katowice Route of Modernism<sup>1</sup>, with its recognised modern architecture constructed between World War 1 and 2. The objects found on the route are the city showcase, introducing visitors to 17 examples of modernist architecture from the interwar period. Accordingly, there are good conditions for the development of urban tourism in Katowice due to several favourable factors, such as convenient access to transportation, a rich cultural and entertainment offer and modern infrastructure. It can therefore be concluded that the city of Katowice has significant tourist potential, also in terms of international tourism.

### ***Ustroń as a health resort***

The municipality of Ustroń is located in the southern part of the Silesian Voivodeship in Poland, at the foothills of the Silesian Beskids and occupying an area of approximately 59 km<sup>2</sup>. The natural therapeutic resource-

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.katowice.eu/Foldery%20o%20miecie/Katowice\\_moderna/folder%20moderna\\_pl.pdf](https://www.katowice.eu/Foldery%20o%20miecie/Katowice_moderna/folder%20moderna_pl.pdf) [accessed: 10 Apr. 2023].

es that earned Ustroń the status of a health resort are primarily thermal chloride-sodium-lime, bromine and iodine waters, as well as medicinal peat [Jankowski et al., 2007]. The plethora of spa assets allows for a variety of therapeutic profiles, among which are orthopaedics and trauma, rheumatology, nervous system and upper respiratory tract treatment, cardiology, peripheral vascular and obesity treatment or climatotherapy. The undeniable therapeutic qualities are further enhanced by the extensive mountain scenery, numerous forest and protected areas such as the Silesian Beskids Landscape Park or the “Czantoria” nature reserve [Jankowski et al., 2007]. Ustroń has changed from an old, traditional industrial settlement into a modern health resort, holiday centre and popular winter sports destination. Alike other spa destinations, Ustroń is of typical spa and treatment infrastructure, an attraction not found at other tourist spots. Examples include mineral water pump rooms, natural treatment facilities, thermal pools, brine graduation towers and walking paths within representative spa parks. The numerous health and recreational advantages of Ustroń, combined with the city’s intensive development, make it popular among tourists.

### ***Prior studies assessing destination attractiveness in Poland***

Katowice and Ustroń are located in the Silesian Voivodeship. As research based on data from 2013 proves, the Silesian Voivodeship was second in terms of its attractiveness (0.3547); second only to the Pomeranian Voivodeship (0.4313) [Bąk and Szczecińska 2015, pp. 5-16]. This makes Katowice and Ustroń extremely important tourist centres across the country. If we focus on cities alone, research conducted on 2,863 people in 2016 in the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship allowed to show that respondents consider Kraków (71%), Warsaw (34%), Wrocław (34%), Gdańsk (28%) and Zakopane (12%) to be the most attractive cities in Poland. Katowice and Ustroń were not featured in the results of that study [Zieliński and Dziarmaga, 2017]. In another study, the attractiveness of Przemyśl was considered [Cichocka and Krupa, 2017], and it was established that tourists visiting Przemyśl in Poland considered the city attractive (53% responded “definitely yes” to the question “In your opinion, is Przemyśl a city attractive for tourists?”). Positive responses from tourists also concerned nature and green areas in the city (90.6%), city atmosphere (83.2%), city cleanliness and aesthetics (79.7%), as well as safety (76.6%) [Cichocka and Krupa 2017, pp. 115-132]. In A.R. Szromek’s [2013] research, cleanliness (4.41 for Krynica and 4.01 for Polanica) and safety (4.43 for Krynica and 4.17 for Polanica) were clearly important to tourists. therein this research, a correlation was also noted between knowledge of regular events and the perception of city attractiveness among tourists (0.13) [Szubert, Warcholik and Zemła 2022]. In their research, a high correlation was observed between attractions known to tourists and the perception of the city as attractive to tourists (0.89).

## Research methods

The diagnostic survey method was used in the study. The research tool was a survey questionnaire. The anonymous survey questionnaire consisted of three sections. Section A comprised a series of three questions about the respondent's stay at the destination under evaluation. Section B comprised two sets of statements evaluated by respondents using a 7-point Likert scale to specify their levels of agreement with given statements, from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7). Implementation of the scale was aimed at examining a respondent's perceptions of the following: (a) destination quality attractiveness (the tourism destination quality scale, containing 25 items derived from A. Seakhwa-King et al. [2020], and representing the following destination quality dimensions: authentic, informative, relaxing, safe, varied, well-kept); (b) the respondent's perceptions of destination quality (the perceived quality scale, containing three items based on A. Seakhwa-King et al. [2020]); (c) quality of the respondents' own experience (the quality of tourist experience scale, containing three items taken from J.E. Otto and J.R.B. Ritchie [1996]); (d) satisfaction (the tourist satisfaction scale, containing five items proposed by Zabkar et al. [2010]), and (e) behavioural intentions (the tourist behavioural intentions scale, containing four items on the basis of V. Zabkar et al. [2010] and D.A. Baker and J.L. Crompton [2000]). The specific indicators (scale items) are included in Table 2. Section C included questions concerning the respondents socio-demographic characteristics. Preliminary data analysis in this study indicated internal consistency of the scales used, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Internal consistency of the study scales

Scale	No. of items	Cronbach alpha		
		Katowice, N=200	Ustroń, N=200	Katowice + Ustroń, N =400
Tourism Destination Quality – TDQ	25	0.823	0.901	0.854
Perceived quality – PQ	3	0.736	0.497	0.609
<b>TDQ + PQ</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>0.849</b>	<b>0.905</b>	<b>0.868</b>
Quality of Tourist Experience – QTE	3	0.848	0.769	0.801
Tourist Satisfaction – TS	5	0.873	0.726	0.798
Tourist Behavioural Intentions – TBI	4	0.891	0.708	0.794
<b>QTE+TS+TBI</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0.942</b>	<b>0.834</b>	<b>0.897</b>
<b>WHOLE SCALE</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>0.910</b>	<b>0.948</b>	<b>0.924</b>

Source: Own elaboration.

The survey was conducted between July and October 2022 by the authors and students of Tourism and Recreation at the Academy of Physical Education in Katowice. The survey was carried out at two diverse destinations of the Silesian Voivodeship, i.e. Katowice (an urban destination) and Ustroń (a health resort). The two destinations with different characteristics (an urban destination and a health resort) were deliberately selected to address the research gap identified in the 'Introduction' section of the present work, i.e. to determine whether there are any differences in tourists' perceptions of destination attractiveness depending on the type of tourism destination, based on their resources, purposes and heritage. Accessibility of the destinations for data collection was also a criterion for selecting the study destinations. For each destination, 200 correctly and fully completed questionnaires were obtained. It was decided to collect a similar number of responses due to the high tourist potential of both surveyed cities. The total sample size was 400 respondents, comprising 200 randomly selected tourists at each destination. Thanks to the collection of 400 respondents' responses, the study is characterised by high reliability. The sample size is adequate for this analysis, based on a ratio of 5-10 indicators per scale item, as recommended by Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson [2019], and this study's scale containing 40 items (Table 2). The researchers chose to conduct the research between July and October to enhance comparability of data, in view of the fact that the health resort of Ustroń is also a ski resort and collecting data during the winter season could impact comparability of the results across destinations. The research was carried out in areas with high tourist traffic concentrations (market square and Spa Park in Ustroń, and in the area of the market square and Spodek in Katowice).

Preliminary data analysis revealed that the data is not normally distributed, as both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and the Shapiro-Wilk tests are significant for all items measured in this study (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Normality testing

SCALE, DIMENSIONS, Items	Kolmogorov-Smirno'a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
<b>TOURISM DESTINATION QUALITY</b>						
INFORMATIVE						
X has easily available tourist information	.162	343	<.001	.900	343	<.001
X has tour guides who know the area well	.207	188	<.001	.835	188	<.001
X has local area maps that are easy to understand	.227	341	<.001	.813	341	<.001
X has accurate tourist information	.163	322	<.001	.908	322	<.001

<b>VARIED</b>						
X has the required variety of accommodation facilities	.209	356	<.001	.856	356	<.001
X has the required variety of public transport	.215	289	<.001	.882	289	<.001
X has the required variety of restaurants	.201	374	<.001	.851	374	<.001
X has the required variety of tourist attractions	.168	344	<.001	.911	344	<.001
<b>WELL-KEPT</b>						
X appears tidy	.217	390	<.001	.870	390	<.001
X has clean streets	.184	383	<.001	.892	383	<.001
X has clean public toilets	.173	209	<.001	.910	209	<.001
X has clean tourist attractions	.210	368	<.001	.869	368	<.001
<b>SAFE</b>						
There is no danger of physical harm in X	.157	323	<.001	.926	323	<.001
There is no risk of getting mugged in X	.144	249	<.001	.906	249	<.001
There is adequate security for my personal belongings in X	.226	346	<.001	.845	346	<.001
There is no danger of verbal abuse in X	.227	273	<.001	.854	273	<.001
<b>AUTHENTIC</b>						
X has plenty of undisturbed natural beauty	.306	376	<.001	.770	376	<.001
X is not too commercialised	.123	333	<.001	.937	333	<.001
X is not overcrowded	.120	389	<.001	.925	389	<.001
There is no visual pollution in X	.141	362	<.001	.914	362	<.001
There are opportunities to see the true character of X	.247	340	<.001	.839	340	<.001
<b>RELAXING</b>						
X has a relaxing atmosphere	.242	392	<.001	.829	392	<.001
X has an enjoyable atmosphere	.230	390	<.001	.813	390	<.001
X has a restful atmosphere	.232	379	<.001	.829	379	<.001
X has a stress free atmosphere	.211	388	<.001	.842	388	<.001
<b>PERCEIVED QUALITY</b>						
X is of high overall standard	.151	376	<.001	.920	376	<.001
X fully meets my tourist requirements	.160	348	<.001	.915	348	<.001
X is an excellent tourism destination	.200	380	<.001	.872	380	<.001
<b>QUALITY OF TOURIST EXPERIENCE</b>						
I am having an excellent tourist experience in X	.261	388	<.001	.779	388	<.001
I feel happy in X	.235	391	<.001	.792	391	<.001
I feel safe in X	.276	394	<.001	.797	394	<.001

<b>TOURIST SATISFACTION</b>						
I am delighted about my visit to X	.326	395	<.001	.722	395	<.001
My visit to X has exceeded my expectations	.125	390	<.001	.925	390	<.001
I did the right thing by visiting X	.318	391	<.001	.704	391	<.001
Overall, I am impressed with X	.183	394	<.001	.881	394	<.001
Overall, I am satisfied with my tourist experience in X	.265	397	<.001	.759	397	<.001
<b>TOURIST BEHAVIOURAL INTENTIONS</b>						
I would choose to visit X again	.250	391	<.001	.787	391	<.001
I will encourage my friends and relatives to visit X	.185	379	<.001	.866	379	<.001
I would pay more for my stay in X	.128	378	<.001	.913	378	<.001
I will speak highly of X to friends and relatives	.183	392	<.001	.882	392	<.001

X = name of studied destination

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

**Source:** Own elaboration.

Mean values were used to analyse and compare the respondent's perceptions. Given that the data is not normally distributed, the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was applied to determine any significant differences between the two study populations: Katowice and Ustroń.

## Research results

There were 71 male and 129 female respondents in Ustroń, relative to 110 male and 90 female respondents in Katowice. Respondent groups differed regarding their age. In Ustroń, older people aged 65+ (35.5%) and 55-64 years (29.5%) predominated, while in Katowice, the majority of respondents

**Table 3.** Socio-demographic profile of the respondents

	<b>Ustroń (N=200)</b>		<b>Katowice (N=200)</b>	
	<b>Male</b>		<b>Male</b>	
<b>Sex</b>				
	<b>Female</b>		<b>Female</b>	
<b>Age</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
16-24	10	5%	44	22%
25-34	17	8.5%	74	37%
35-44	20	10%	58	29%

45-54	22	11%	8	4%
55-64	59	29.5%	10	5%
65+	71	35.5%	6	3%
<b>Education</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Primary	3	1.5%	3	1.5%
Secondary	75	37.5%	42	21%
Vocational diploma	46	23%	2	1%
Incomplete higher education	12	6%	16	8%
Higher education	64	32%	137	68.5%

**Source:** Own elaboration.

were aged 25-34 (37%) and 35-44 years (29%). One person from the group surveyed in Ustroń refused to disclose their age. Respondents from Ustroń mainly had secondary (37.5%) or higher education (32%). In Katowice, the highest proportion declared having a university degree (68.5%). The characteristics of the study population are presented in Table 3.

The combined results for both samples in this study indicate that the respondents (N=400) considered the destinations attractive, based on their quality. Indeed, all dimensions of destination quality as well as the perceived quality scored above the scale's theoretical mean value of 4.0. The highest scoring dimension of destination quality was "Relaxing" (5.75), followed by "Informative" (5.50), "Well-kept" (5.37), "Varied" (5.32), "Authentic" (4.80) and "Safe" (4.75). Likewise, the overall perceived quality also scored high (5.31), as shown in Table 4.

Ustroń scored higher in almost all analysed dimensions of tourism destination quality. "Varied" was the only dimension for which the mean value was higher among respondents surveyed in Katowice. For Ustroń, the highest scores for destination quality were given to the place for being "Relaxing" (6.24), "Informative" (5.71), and "Well-kept" (5.70), while the lowest scores were given to the following dimensions: "Authentic" (5.05), "Safe" (5.10) and "Varied" (5.20). The overall perception of quality for Ustroń was higher than the average for the sample (5.58 relative to 5.31, respectively) (Table 4).

In the case of Katowice, the highest score was given to the "Varied" (5.43) dimension. The respondents perceived the destination equally as "Relaxing" (5.29) and "Informative" (5.29). The lowest scores were given to the following dimensions of Katowice's quality: "Safe" (4.40), "Authentic" (4.55) and "Well-kept" (5.04). The overall perception of Katowice's quality was lower than the average for the sample (5.04 for Katowice relative to 5.31 for the study sample), albeit, it was above the theoretical mean value of 4.0 (Table 4).

The results of the Mann-Whitney U test indicate statistically significant differences between Ustroń and Katowice in all dimensions (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Destination quality attractiveness for Katowice and Ustroń (N=400)

	Total N=400		Katowice N=200		Ustroń N=200		Mann-Whitney U Test
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	p-value
Relaxing	<b>5.77</b>	1.07	5.29	0.96	<b>6.24</b>	0.96	p<0.05*
Informative	5.50	0.85	5.29	0.75	5.71	0.90	p<0.05*
Well-kept	5.37	0.97	5.04	0.94	5.70	0.88	p<0.05*
Varied	5.32	0.81	<b>5.43</b>	0.83	5.20	0.77	p<0.05*
Authentic	4.80	0.89	4.55	0.75	5.05	0.96	p<0.05*
Safe	4.75	1.04	4.40	0.85	5.10	1.09	p<0.05*
Perceived Quality	5.31	0.94	5.04	0.89	5.58	0.91	p<0.05*

**Source:** Own study.

The data presented in Table 5 allow to state that respondents in Ustroń evaluated the quality of their experience higher than the respondents in Katowice, and the difference was statistically significant. However, the differences in tourist satisfaction and tourist behavioural intentions did not demonstrate statistical significance for Katowice or Ustroń ( $p=0.3816$  and  $p=0.1209$ , respectively).

**Table 5.** Tourist experience quality, satisfaction and behavioural intentions for Katowice and Ustroń (N=400)

	Total N=400		Katowice N=200		Ustroń N=200		Mann-Whitney U Test
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	p-value
Quality of Tourist Experience	5.97	1.04	5.76	1.04	6.18	0.99	p<0.05*
Tourist Satisfaction	5.70	1.01	5.68	0.99	5.72	1.04	p=0.3816
Tourist Behavioural Intentions	4.99	1.30	4.91	1.29	5.06	1.30	p=0.1209

**Source:** Own study.



## Discussion

Although the results of this study allow to indicate that there are significant differences in tourists' perceptions of the various dimensions of destination quality attractiveness in Katowice (an urban destination) and Ustroń (a health resort), overall, tourists perceive these destinations to be highly attractive as all dimensions exceed the scale's theoretical mean value of 4.0. Katowice is an urban destination, primarily fulfilling administrative functions but, at the same time, historically burdened as a mining and industrial city. Higher ratings for Ustroń may therefore result from the broader potential of this health resort, offering a diversified tourist offer, including spa tourism, cultural tourism and active forms of tourism such as cycling, mountain tourism, skiing, snowboarding. Ustroń is principally a tourism destination that uses its advantages very effectively – its location among the mountains and climate that is very beneficial to health. It is probably these advantages that made Ustroń be rated highest by respondents for the “Relaxing” dimension. In the case of Katowice, the highest score was achieved by the “Varied” dimension, which was related to the large variety of available types of accommodation facilities, means of transport, restaurants and attractions, which is understandable in the case of a large city.

When compared to the results of prior studies on destination attractiveness in Poland, there is a noticeable similarity between the results of the present study results and those obtained by I. Cichocka and J. Krupa [2017], who also found that, overall, Przemyśl (a cultural city) was an attractive destination. However, the highest scoring aspects of destination attractiveness differed for Przemyśl compared to those for Katowice and Ustroń, as the score for Przemyśl was the highest for some aspects of the “Authentic” dimension, in contrast to Katowice and Ustroń, which obtained the highest scores for “Relaxing” and “Varied”, respectively. In the study conducted by I. Cichocka and J. Krupa [2017] in Przemyśl, as well as that by A.R. Szromek [2013] in Krynica and Polanica (health resorts), it was found that cleanliness and safety were evaluated highly for those destinations, which corresponds with the results of the present study, as the dimensions of “Well-kept” and “Safe” obtained high scores both in Katowice and Ustroń. It should be noted, however, that the studies conducted by I. Cichocka and J. Krupa [2017] and A.R. Szromek [2013] had fewer indicators of destination attractiveness and methods of data collection relative to the present study, so any comparisons of study results are indicative of potential trends only. Future replication studies are therefore needed for other urban destinations and health resorts, as well as at other types of tourism destinations, to establish patterns in tourists' perceptions of destination quality attractiveness.

In terms of tourists' evaluations of the quality of their experience, satisfaction and behavioural intentions, the scores were also high, exceed-

ing the scale's theoretical mean value of 4.0, which is consistent with prior studies on the links between destination attractiveness and tourist satisfaction as well as behavioural intentions [e.g. Chaudhary and Islam, 2020; Vigolo, 2015]. However, significant differences between Katowice and Ustroń have been found only in the case of tourists' evaluation of the quality of their experience. Since there were no significant differences concerning tourist satisfaction and behavioural intentions in Katowice and Ustroń, the study results may imply that the significant differences in tourists' perceptions of destination quality attractiveness found in this study may explain the significant differences in tourists' perceptions of the quality of their experience at the different destinations. Since these phenomena have not been examined in any prior trials, future replication studies are thus needed for other urban destinations and health resorts, as well as at other types of tourism destinations, to establish patterns in tourists' perceptions of the quality of their experience, satisfaction and behavioural intentions, in relation to their perceptions of destination quality attractiveness.

## Conclusions

Tourists' perceptions of destination quality attractiveness, their quality of experience, satisfaction and behavioural intentions at two diverse tourism destinations (Katowice, an urban destination and Ustroń, a health resort) were assessed and compared in the present study. In relation to the posed research questions, it has been established that:

- (1) Tourists perceived both destinations to be highly attractive as all dimensions exceed the scale's theoretical mean value of 4.0;
- (2) There are significant differences in tourists' perceptions regarding the various dimensions of destination quality attractiveness in Katowice (an urban destination) and Ustroń (a health resort);
- (3) Tourists rated the quality of their experience, satisfaction and behavioural intentions highly at both destinations as the scores exceeded the scale's theoretical mean value of 4.0;
- (4) Significant differences between Katowice and Ustroń have been found only in the case of tourists' evaluation of the quality of their experience. There were no significant differences concerning tourist satisfaction or behavioural intentions for Katowice and Ustroń.

The results of this study provide original insights concerning destination attractiveness and extend knowledge in this area by:

- (1) focusing on destination quality as an aspect of destination attractiveness;

- (2) providing empirical evidence that there are differences in tourists' perceptions of destination attractiveness depending on the type of tourism destination, based on resources, purposes and heritage;
- (3) providing empirical evidence that the differences in tourists' perceptions of destination quality attractiveness may explain the differences in the tourists' perception of the quality of their experience at the two different destinations, while no significant differences could be observed in relation to tourist satisfaction and behavioural intentions.

However, the results of the present study need to be considered with regard to its limitations. Firstly, only two diverse destinations were examined. Secondly, the study was cross-sectional, using data collected at a single point in time. Future longitudinal replication studies are therefore needed at various types of tourism destinations, based on resources, purposes and heritage, to validate the emergent patterns in tourists' perceptions of destination quality attractiveness, the quality of their experience, as well as satisfaction and behavioural intentions. In such replication studies, the same scales should be used as the ones applied in the present study to reduce any variations in study results that may occur due to the use of different scales, and thus, making the results comparable.

The results of the present study have several practical implications for destination managers. Firstly, since tourists' perceptions of destination attractiveness depend on the type of tourism destination, destination managers need to systematically evaluate such perceptions to identify the competitive aspects of destination attractiveness and invest in areas requiring improvement. Secondly, destination managers need to systematically examine the impact of destination quality attractiveness on tourist satisfaction, behavioural intention and quality of tourist experience. This will help establish a destination's priorities for improving destination attractiveness and competitiveness. Thirdly, given the specific focus of the present study on two tourism destinations (Katowice and Ustroń in the Silesian Voivodeship, Poland), the research results presented in this study can be used when developing the voivodeship's tourism attractiveness and competitiveness strategy. The knowledge obtained from the research allows to indicate that both Katowice and Ustroń should focus more on building tourists' sense of safety and authenticity of their experiences. At the same time, despite the fact that Ustroń was rated higher than Katowice in almost every aspect, Ustroń has also room for improvement and development in the area of diversifying its offer. It should also focus on the rich culture of the Silesian Beskids in addition to its current tourism offer related to health and physical activity.

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### Netography

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## EFFECT OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ON THE LEVEL OF KINESIOPHOBIA IN YOUNG ADULTS AFTER ANKLE SPRAIN INJURY – A RETROSPECTIVE STUDY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR TOURIST AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

*Joanna Golec\**, *Monika Nowak\*\**, *Joanna Balicka-Bom\*\*\**,  
*Piotr Golec\*\*\*\**,

### Abstract


**Purpose.** The aim of the study was to examine the relationship between subjectively declared physical activity before the ankle sprain injury and the level of kinesiophobia after this injury among young adults actively participating in tourism and recreation.


**Method.** The study included 115 participants with an ASI, who were divided into two groups: active (65 patients) and inactive (50 patients). FAAM, FABQ and TSK-17 were used to assess the level of fear and avoidance of physical activity.


**Findings.** The results did not show a statistically significant relationship between TSK-17 and the level of physical activity before ATC injury in both groups ( $p=0.271$ ). There was a statistically significant correlation between TSK-17 and FAAM, as well as FABQ with FAAM-ADL and mean FAAM in both groups ( $p<0.05$ ), stronger in the inactive group. Kinesiophobia after an ASI may affect both active and inactive people. A higher level of foot functionality significantly reduces the feeling of kinesiophobia, fear and avoidance of physical activity, especially in inactive patients who undertake less physical and tourist challenges.

**Research and conclusions limitations.** Empirical research was conducted on a group of people one month to two years after ASI injury. The full medical history, imaging diagnostics and treatment are not described in this study.

**Practical implications.** In the study, kinesiophobia after ankle sprains was assessed in active individuals, predicting their return to leisure activities and offering insights to aid those with ACI in resuming tourist and recreational pursuits.

\*  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8687-2536>; Prof.; University of Physical Education in Kraków, Motor Rehabilitation Department, Clinical Rehabilitation Division; e-mail: joanna.golec@wp.pl.

\*\*  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7292-3248>; Ph.D.; Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Krakow University, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Department of Kinesiotherapy and Manual Therapy; e-mail: monika.przybytek2@gmail.com.

\*\*\*  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8660-8054>; MSc; Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Krakow University, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Department of Clinical Physiotherapy, Faculty of Orthopaedics, Traumatology and Rehabilitation; e-mail: joanna\_balicka@wp.pl.

\*\*\*\* Ph.D.; Individual Medical Practice; e-mail: piotrgolec88@gmail.com.



**Originality.** The use of standardised research questionnaires to assess the level of fear and avoidance of physical activity among people with different levels of recreation activity is rarely the subject of research in available scientific studies, which may be an inspiration for other researchers.

**Type of paper.** This is an article presenting the results of empirical research.

**Keywords:** kinesiophobia, TSK-17, ASI, tourism activity, recreation activity

## Introduction

An ankle sprain is one of the most common injuries of the musculoskeletal system documented in physically active populations [Gribble et al. 2019] and quite often can cause various problems such as chronic pain, instability and kinesiophobia [Miklovic et al. 2018; Gribble 2019; Cotchett et al. 2022]. These factors may contribute to long-term limitations in recreational and occupational activities, which consequently impact health-related quality of life (HRQOL) [Hiller et al. 2012].

Physical activity after injury may be limited by kinesiophobia, defined as an excessive, irrational and debilitating fear of physical movement and activity resulting from a feeling of vulnerability due to painful injury or re-injury [Kori et al. 1990]. Kinesiophobia levels appear elevated and are negatively associated with health-related quality of life at initial physical therapy evaluation regardless of injury location [Goldberg et al. 2018; Kubińska and Pańczuk 2021].

Additionally, people suffering from kinesiophobia may encounter difficulties in enjoying tourist and recreational attractions that require physical activity. Going to the mountains or actively spending time outdoors in the form of hiking or walking around new places may be a challenge for them. This may lead to limitations in experiencing the cultural, natural and social diversity that tourism and recreation offer [Winter et al. 2020].

Recognising and understanding factors influencing the occurrence of kinesiophobia can be crucial for effective management and treatment of this phenomenon. Professional assessment and therapeutic support can help reduce anxiety and facilitate a return to physical activity, including recreational and tourist activities. Therefore, the aim of the study was to examine the relationship between subjectively declared physical activity before the ankle sprain injury (ASI) and the level of kinesiophobia after this injury among young adults actively participating in tourism and recreation.

Based on the established objective, the following research questions were formulated:

1. Is there a correlation between the level of physical activity before injury and the occurrence of kinesiophobia in individuals after ankle sprain?
2. Is there a relationship between functional efficiency of the ankle joint after a sprain injury and the level of kinesiophobia in the studied individuals?

3. Is there a connection between functional efficiency of the ankle joint after a sprain injury and the sense of fear as well as avoidance of recreational and tourist activities in the studied individuals?

### **Literature review**

When discussing the issue of anxiety and avoidance of physical activity following an ankle injury, it is important to analyse the consequences of neglecting this aspect of life. Kinesiophobia can result in a sedentary lifestyle and the avoidance of exercise, which may lead to obesity and cardiovascular problems. Health issues and musculoskeletal injuries can become significant barriers to patients' participation in physical activity [Samek et al. 2021]. Tourism and recreation are an integral element of the rehabilitation process, allowing to maintain the effects of therapy, as well as a way to encourage patients to return to physical activity and exercise [Poczta and Malchrowicz-Moško 2016]. Health tourism, the main goal of which is to protect and improve health, allows participants/patients to meet their entertainment needs through actively spending time via recreational activities in a friendly environment for convalescence [Kılıçarslan and Yozukmaz 2022, Smith and ve Puczkó 2015].

Disability resulting from injury may also be an important aspect in analysing the phenomenon of kinesiophobia. H. Zhao et al. [2021] saw the need to use tourism as leisure activities such as holiday trips, which are usually regarded as a life highlight and integral part of social engagement. Disability resulting from injury can be a key factor in the analysis of kinesiophobia. A.F.A. Moura et al. [2017] highlighted that health and wellness tourism can play a significant role in improving the physical and mental health of individuals with disabilities, including those who have experienced injuries. Participation in recreational activities within a supportive environment contributes to enhanced physical fitness and a reduction in movement-related anxiety, which is crucial in the rehabilitation process.

However, before the patient can participate in tourism and recreation, it is necessary to be properly prepared based on appropriate diagnostics and physiotherapy. Methods of diagnostics and treatment of kinesiophobia are still the topic of heated discussion [Vuurberg et al. 2018; Delahunt et al. 2018; Chen, Borg-Stein and McInnis 2019]. That why a variety of self-reported instruments have been designed to measure global, regional and psychological health components. Examining global function using a scale designed for physically active individuals or psychological measures, such as kinesiophobia and fear-avoidance beliefs, could reveal more about the condition [Houston, Van Lunen and Hoch 2014]. In reports by R.O. Corbett et al. [2019] and K. Watanabe et al. [2023], the use has been shown of

the TSK-17 scale to assess injury-related fear and its impact on readiness of athletes in the context of returning to physical activity after ankle injury. A. Suttmiller and R. McCann [2021] also emphasized the importance regarding fear of injury in people who develop chronic pain following an ASI. The Fear-Avoidance Beliefs Questionnaire and Tampa Scale of Kinesiophobia are useful in the identification of injury-related fear among individuals after sustaining an ankle sprain. It should be used for obtaining information about rehabilitation strategies and to monitor efficacy in fear reduction [Houston, Van Lunen and Hoch 2014].

The Foot and Ankle Ability Measure (FAAM), Activities of Daily Living (ADL), and Sports scales, may be useful for examining regional dysfunction in patients with various ankle injuries. The reliability and validity of scores from the FAAM, ADL and Sports scales were assessed at Level III of Evidence, which proves their usefulness in ankle joint disorders [Matheny and Clanton 2019]. The International Ankle Consortium recommends the FAAM to be used for evaluating the efficacy of treatments following acute ankle sprain [Delahunt et al. 2018].

## Materials and methods

The studied group consisted of 115 Polish students and young adults from outside the academic environment. They were aged 18-34 (mean  $23.33 \pm 3.50$  years), and comprised 58 (50.43%) women and 57 (49.57%) men. The questionnaire study (paper and on-line version) was anonymous and voluntary. The research was disseminated among the student community via social media. All surveys and questionnaires were collected online. The condition to qualify for the study was being above the age of 18, the absence of other injuries or diseases causing significant functional limitations, time since injury at least one month (varied from one month to two years), and having a history of at least one ankle injury (fracture was an exclusion criteria) and a post-injury examination of the ankle joint, including X-rays if necessary.

The exclusion criteria included: fractures and dislocations of the ankle joint, the presence of other injuries or conditions causing significant functional limitations (neurological disorders, chronic musculoskeletal diseases, metabolic and endocrine diseases such as diabetes or Paget's), chronic injuries of other joints or the spine, cardiovascular disorders that may limit the ability to engage in physical activity, and severe mental disorders (schizophrenia, major depression) that could affect full participation in the study and the accurate interpretation of questionnaire items. All of the respondents reported an ankle examination after the injury, including X-rays if necessary. No additional diagnostics were performed during the

research. The whole trial was conducted according to the principles of the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki regarding ethical principles for medical research involving humans.

All of the patients were given a custom questionnaire to fill in, and three were translated to their native language – Foot and Ankle Ability Measure (FAAM), Tampa Scale of Kinesiophobia 17 (TSK-17), Fear-Avoidance Beliefs Questionnaire (FABQ) and a simple metric (sex, age, height, body mass, level of reported physical activity).

The custom questionnaire included questions about age, gender, height, body mass, number of injuries, time since the last injury, degree of ankle sprain and subjective assessment of physical activity (< 3 h per week, > 3 h per week).

The Foot and Ankle Ability Measure (FAAM) is a self-assessment questionnaire used to assess the functional abilities of the ankle joint in patients with lower limb injuries. It consists of two subscales: Activities of Daily Living (ADL) and Sports, which allows to assess functioning during the performance of daily activities and those related to sports. The FAAM score is expressed as a percentage, with higher scores indicating better joint function. The FAAM is widely used in research on the rehabilitation of ankle injuries and is characterised by high validity as well as reliability [Matheny and Clanton 2019].

The Tampa Scale of Kinesiophobia (TSK-17) is a questionnaire implemented to assess the level of kinesiophobia, or fear of movement due to fear of pain or injury. It consists of 17 statements that patients rate on a 4-point Likert scale (from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”). Scores range from 17 to 68, with higher scores indicating higher levels of kinesiophobia. The TSK-17 is commonly used in research on fear of movement, especially among patients with chronic pain problems or after injuries such as ankle sprains [Miller, Kori and Todd 1991; Vlaeyen et al. 2002].

The Fear-Avoidance Beliefs Questionnaire (FABQ) is used to evaluate patients’ beliefs about avoiding physical activity and work due to fear of pain or injury. The questionnaire comprises 16 statements, rated on a 7-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating a greater level of fear of activity. The FABQ consists of two subscales: FABQ-PA (Physical Activity), measuring avoidance of physical activity, and FABQ-W (Work), estimating avoidance of work due to pain. The FABQ is widely used in rehabilitation, especially among patients with pain problems [Waddell et al. 1993]

### ***Data analysis***

The analysis of quantitative variables (i.e. expressed in number) was performed by calculating means, standard deviations, medians, quartiles, minimums and maximums. The distribution of the studied variables was assessed

using the Shapiro-Wilk test. The results showed that the studied variables did not follow normal distribution, which justified the use of non-parametric statistical tests, such as the Mann-Whitney U test and Spearman's signed rank correlation coefficient. Correlations were compared using the Fischer Z-transformation. The significance level of 0.05 was adopted in the analysis, and all  $p$  values below 0.05 were interpreted as indicating significant relationships. The analysis was performed in R, version 4.0 [<https://www.R-project.org/>].

## Results

Descriptive statistics for the studied variables (TSK-17, FAAM-ADL, FAAM-Sport, mean FAAM, FABQ, and anthropometric parameters) are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics of studied variables

Parameter	N		Mean		SD		Median		Min		Max		Q1		Q3	
	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N
TSK-17 [pts]	65	50	35.66	37.62	9.21	9.38	36	38.5	17	21	60	59	30	29.25	40	41
FAAM-ADL [%]	65	50	90.55	79.76	5.5	20.11	92.86	91.67	77.38	30.95	95.24	95.24	85.71	71.43	95.24	94.94
FAAM-SPORT [%]	65	50	64.81	54.31	13.16	23.42	68.75	65.62	25	0	75	75	62.5	42.19	75	75
Mean FAAM [%]	65	50	77.68	67.04	8.66	21.19	80.21	78.83	51.79	15.48	85.12	85.12	75.67	56.81	83.93	84.52
FABQ [pts]	65	50	21.42	26.58	12.03	22.41	19	20.5	0	0	54	91	11	11.25	30	32
Age [years]	65	50	23.74	22.8	3.65	3.26	23	23	18	18	34	35	22	20.25	25	24
Weight [kg]	65	50	79.23	72.46	17.97	17.28	78	68	50	49	138	112	68	60	88	77.75
Height [cm]	65	50	175.58	169.28	8.76	8.32	175	166	157	157	192	193	170	163.25	183	174.75
BMI [kg/m <sup>2</sup> ]	65	50	25.5	25.13	4.37	4.96	25.11	23.07	18.17	19.05	41.21	39.68	22.86	21.37	27.16	27.78

A – Active group, N – Non-active group

**Source:** Own elaboration.

The prevalence of kinesiophobia (TSK-17) among individuals after ankle sprain, depending on their physical activity level, is presented in Table 2. The results indicate that 35.38% of physically active individuals exhibit kinesiophobia, compared to 54.00% in the physically non-active group, suggesting a higher prevalence of kinesiophobia among the non-active participants.

**Table 2.** Prevalence of kinesiophobia (TSK-17) among studied groups

TSK-17	Level of physical activity		
	Active (N=65)	Non-active (N=50)	Total (N=115)
Up to 37 [pts]	42 (64.62%)	23 (46.00%)	65 (56.52%)
> 37 [pts]	23 (35.38%)	27 (54.00%)	50 (43.48%)

pts – points

**Source:** Own elaboration.

Based on the reported level of physical activity, patients were assigned to two groups. The first group (G I – active) comprised 65 (43.59%) people, including 42 (36.52%) men and 23 (20%) women, at the mean age of  $23.74 \pm 3.65$  years, with the mean body height of  $175.58 \pm 8.76$  cm, and mean body mass of  $79.23 \pm 17.67$  kg. The group included respondents declaring more than three hours of physical activity per week, including recreational physical activities and recreational tourism.

The second group (G II – Inactive) consisted of 50 (43.48%) people, including 15 (13.04%) men and 35 (30.43%) women. Their mean age was  $22.8 \pm 3.26$  years, the mean body height was  $169.28 \pm 8.32$  cm and with the mean body mass of  $72.46 \pm 17.28$  kg. Among them, there were respondents who declared less than three hours or lack of physical activity per week (including recreational physical activities and recreational tourism).

Statistical analysis of the research results showed the following relationships between the selected variables: the differences in kinesiophobia level after ankle injury depending on the level of physical activity before injury, taking the division into active group and non-active groups into account, was not statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ). The results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Comparison of kinesiophobia level (TSK-17) after ankle injury depending on level of physical activity before injury in active and non-active groups

TSK-17 [points]	Level of physical activity		<i>p</i>
	Active (N=65)	Non-active (N=50)	
Mean $\pm$ SD	$35.66 \pm 9.21$	$37.62 \pm 9.38$	0.271
Median	36	38.5	
Quartiles	30 – 40	29.25 – 41	

*p* – Mann-Whitney U test

**Source:** Own elaboration.

Significant correlations ( $p < 0.05$ ) and negative ones ( $r < 0$ ) were observed between the TSK-17 score, the FAAM-ADL, FAAM-SPORT and the mean FAAM score in the active and non-active groups. The higher the FAAM

scores (better foot function), the lower were the TSK-17 scores (less kinesiophobia). Correlations between TSK-17 and FAAM-ADL as well as mean FAAM were significantly stronger in the non-actives compared to those active, as indicated by more negative correlation coefficients. The relationships are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Correlation between TSK-17 results and FAAM-SPORT, FAAM-ADL as well as mean FAAM in active and non-active groups

Correlation of TSK-17 and FAAM	Active	Non-active	<i>p</i>
FAAM-ADL [%]	$r=-0.251, p=0.043 *$	$r=-0.597, p<0.001 *$	0.001 *
FAAM-SPORT [%]	$r=-0.417, p=0.001 *$	$r=-0.54, p<0.001 *$	0.231
Mean FAAM [%]	$r=-0.364, p=0.003 *$	$r=-0.608, p<0.001 *$	0.015 *

\* statistically significant ( $p<0.05$ )

**Source:** Own elaboration.

The FABQ score correlates significantly ( $p<0.05$ ) and negatively ( $r<0$ ) with the FAAM-SPORT and mean FAAM scores, so the higher the FAAM-SPORT and mean FAAM scores (better foot function), the lower the FABQ scores (lower feeling of fear and avoidance of physical activity) among both the active and non-active groups. No statistically significant correlations were observed in the active group between FABQ and FAAM-ADL results. Correlations between FABQ, FAAM-ADL and mean FAAM are significantly stronger in non-active than in active participants. These relationships are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Correlations between FABQ results and FAAM-SPORT, FAAM-ADL as well as mean FAAM in the active and non-active groups

Correlation of FABQ and FAAM	Active	Non-active	<i>p</i>
FAAM-ADL [%]	$r=-0.199, p=0.112$	$r=-0.58, p<0.001 *$	0.001 *
FAAM-SPORT [%]	$r=-0.342, p=0.005 *$	$r=-0.507, p<0.001 *$	0.13
Mean FAAM [%]	$r=-0.278, p=0.025 *$	$r=-0.581, p<0.001 *$	0.005 *

\* statistically significant ( $p<0.05$ )

**Source:** Own elaboration.

## Discussion

A high level of sports and recreational activity before the injury seems to be an important factor in the recovery process, contributing to its acceleration, which is confirmed by the reports of various authors [Corbett, Keith

and Hertel 2019; Hawson 2011]. Among the many factors that could have positive impact on outcomes, it is worth emphasizing well-trained feet and ankle joints, good proprioception and a young age, which could prevent serious injuries and predispose to faster regeneration in the event of an injury [Hudson 2009; Schiftan, Ross and Hahne 2015]. On the other hand, more active patients may be at risk of more serious injuries while participating in sports, recreational and tourist activity [Handoll et al. 2001]. Furthermore, according to J. Kvist and K.G. Silbernagel [2022], physical activity not only shapes physical fitness but also influences psychological aspects. Individuals who gain satisfaction, a sense of control or coping skills through physical activity may experience a stronger sense of loss after injury and have greater concerns about re-injury, which can lead to increased kinesiophobia.

In the study, the TSK-17 was used due to its wide recognition in the scientific literature and its common application in studies related to kinesiophobia, particularly in the context of assessing fear of movement among patients with musculoskeletal conditions. This scale is characterised by high reliability and validity, as confirmed by numerous international studies [Altuğ et al. 2016; Miller, Kori, Todd 1991; Roelofs et al. 2007]. On the other hand, the Kinesiophobia Causes Scale (KCS) by A. Knapik et al. [2012] is a newer tool, less widespread in international research and has a slightly different focus. The KCS is more centred on the causes of kinesiophobia, whereas the objective of the present study was to assess the overall level of kinesiophobia in the studied population. The TSK-17 decidedly better aligned with this objective. Moreover, using the TSK-17 allows for comparison of the current results with those obtained in previous research, which strengthens the credibility of the findings and facilitates their interpretation.

In this study, involving individuals after ankle injury, a similar level of kinesiophobia was observed in both physically active and non-active people. The mean TSK scores indicate a moderately high level of kinesiophobia in both groups of patients. In this case, the level of physical activity before injury did not influence fear of movement and subsequent injury. Perhaps, inactive people demonstrate increased sensitivity to any musculoskeletal injuries because they less frequently engage in activities leading to injury. When an injury occurs, it is a new, stressful situation for them and, as a result, regardless of the time elapsed since the injury, it may be associated with increased kinesiophobia. On the other hand, physically active people may develop a higher level of fear of movement because physical activity is an important part of their lives, and re-injury may temporarily or permanently exclude them from this activity, as mentioned by J. Kvist and K.G. Silbernagel [2022]. It is possible that the moderately high level of fear in both of the groups under study may also be associated with the rehabilitation process after the injury. Physically inactive people who



do not engage in appropriate physiotherapeutic actions may have low expectations regarding ankle joint function. Active people put more effort into returning to sports, tourism or recreational activities – sometimes undergoing additional rehabilitation, which allows them to achieve satisfactory foot performance [Smith et al. 2021]. However, despite undergoing appropriate rehabilitation and being deemed ready to return to previous activity levels by doctors and physiotherapists, fear of re-injury increases kinesiophobia levels in such individuals and prevents them from returning to physical activity, which was also confirmed in the research by J. Marusic, P. Dolenc and N. Sarabon [2020] and Chrisatkou et al. [2022]. According to V. Mittly et al. [2016], motivation is also of significance, although it was not assessed in these studies.

T.A. Lentz et al. [2010] conducted research among individuals with foot and ankle injuries to examine whether kinesiophobia could affect mobility in this area. Factors such as limited range of motion, age and chronic symptoms in the ankle joint were associated with fear of movement. In the study by P.P. Walankar, V.P. Panhale and K.M. Vyas [2021], which included the FAAM-SPORT and TSK among other measures, the authors also indicated significant correlations between the level of functional foot performance and kinesiophobia in individuals with functional ankle instability. In the present research, it was shown that a higher level of functional performance in the ankle joints significantly correlated with lower levels of kinesiophobia, both in the group of active and non-active individuals. However, these correlations were significantly stronger (in the case of the ADL subscale and the overall FAAM score) in the group of physically non-active individuals. Experiencing ankle injury may influence psychological attitudes toward physical activity, especially among people for whom it constitutes a significant part of their lives. Fear of re-injury can lead to avoiding specific movements or activities. J. Kvist and K.G. Silbernagel [2022] emphasized the impact of negative experiences related to previous injuries on the perception of risk associated with physical activity, which also increases the risk of higher kinesiophobia levels.

The authors of the current trial also attempted to evaluate potential relationships between the post-injury level of functional fitness and sense of fear as well as avoidance of physical activity among the study participants. The FAAM scale was used to assess the level of functional fitness of the foot and ankle, which is characterised by high sensitivity, reliability and responsiveness to changes in a patient's health status [Hung et al. 2019; Goulart et al. 2022]. It was found that the higher the FAAM score, indicating better functional fitness of the foot, the lower the sense of fear and avoidance of physical activity (FABQ). Weaker correlations in the physically active group may result from awareness of the unpredictable nature of the sport in which the subjects engage. Regardless of the functional fitness of

the ankle joint, re-injury can occur, which may still evoke fear and lead to limitation of sports activity. Observations by M.N. Houston, J.M Hoch and M.C. Hoch [2018] support this statement, as these authors found higher FABQ scores in both athletes post-ankle sprains and in uninjured athletes compared to their previous study [Houston, Van Lunen and Hoch 2014] conducted among non-athletes with chronic ankle instability (CAI). Experiencing an injury that limits physical activity may have greater impact on an athlete, for whom returning to activity is crucial to his/her lifestyle and personal identity [Podlog, Heil, Schulte 2014]. According to J. Marusic, P. Dolenc and N. Sarabon [2020], for athletes, a feeling of injury-related apprehension includes not only fear of re-injury, but also includes concerns about the inability to return to the highest level of athletic performance as well as fear of permanent pain and symptoms throughout life. A. Suttmilller and R. McCann [2021] highlighted the usefulness of TSK and FABQ in identifying fear related to injuries in individuals post-ankle sprain, which should be used to monitor the effectiveness of adopted physiotherapeutic strategies. In addition to focusing on the patient's functional impairment aspects to overcome fear of injury, clinicians should offer a comprehensive rehabilitation programme considering psychological aspects as well. J. Kvist and K.G. Silbernagel [2022] reported on the effectiveness of psychological interventions such as visualisation, relaxation and cognitive awareness in reducing fear of movement and re-injury, but emphasizes the need for further research in this area.

Additionally, it is worth thinking about the impact of kinesiophobia on physical activity undertaken through tourism and recreation. Individuals with high levels of kinesiophobia may avoid outdoor physical activities such as hiking, cycling or swimming due to fear of injury [Aykut Selçuk and Karakoyun 2020; Li et al. 2024]. The inability to enjoy such activities can significantly affect quality of life and life satisfaction [Comachio et al. 2018; Lackey et al. 2019; Altug et al. 2016; Belanger et al. 2019; Coventry et al. 2021]. In research, it has been suggested that individuals with greater fear of movement may be more inclined to lead sedentary lifestyles, thereby increasing the risk of physical inactivity-related diseases such as obesity or those cardiovascular [Doury-Panchout, Metivier and Fouquet 2015; Lachman et al. 2018]. Moreover, withdrawing from social activities such as group trips, tourist events or recreational activities can lead to social isolation and worsen an individual's mental state [Street, James and Cutt 2007; Pels and Kleinert 2016]. Therefore, it is crucial to recognise and effectively manage kinesiophobia, not only in the context of sports and rehabilitation, but also in daily life and recreational as well as tourist activities.

However, there are ways to help individuals suffering from kinesiophobia experience tourism and recreation. Firstly, it is important to provide them with support and understanding. Individuals with kinesiophobia may

need additional time and encouragement to overcome their fears and try new activities [Taylor 2000]. Group tourist outings can be particularly helpful as they may create a sense of community and enable individuals with kinesiophobia to experience new things in a safe environment. Secondly, it is essential to tailor activities to individual preferences and capabilities [Jadkahan, Sobeih and Falla 2023]. Additionally, there are many therapies and coping techniques for anxiety that can be effective in treating kinesiophobia. Cognitive-behavioural therapies can help individuals with kinesiophobia change their thinking and behaviour in a way that allows them to overcome their fears and enjoy physical activity [Vlaeyen et al. 2002; Górska 2016; Cai et al. 2017]. Furthermore, education about the health benefits of physical activity and organising events as well as programmes that encourage activity can help reduce fears associated with movement and action [Jadkahan, Sobeih and Falla 2023; Brand et al. 2013]. It is important to continue researching kinesiophobia in the context of outdoor physical activity and take action to increase the accessibility and safety of these forms of recreation for everyone.

The study has some limitations which include several important factors that should be considered when interpreting the results. First of all, only assessed past physical activity levels were assessed in this study, without accounting for current activity, which may also influence kinesiophobia. In future research, both past and present physical activity levels should be included for a more comprehensive analysis. Secondly, the broad time range between the injury and data collection (one month to two years) may have affected the results, as longer recovery periods could reduce fear of re-injury. Thirdly, the wide age range of participants (18-34 years) may have introduced variability in responses, as psychological reactions to injury can differ significantly by age. Additionally, there was not differentiation between male and female participants in this study, which is a limitation, as gender differences in response to injury and recovery are well-documented.

Retrospective self-reporting of injuries up to two years prior may also introduce recall bias, limiting the accuracy of the data. Moreover, key variables such as post-traumatic swelling and perceived ankle instability were not assessed, which could have provided deeper insights into the factors influencing kinesiophobia. The last of the study's limitations is the use of the Polish version of the TSKA scale, which lacks official validation.

Despite these limitations, a significant correlation between physical activity and the level of kinesiophobia is indicated in this study, which may justify further research. It is important to focus on developing a rehabilitation plan that effectively reduces injury-related fear.

## Conclusions

1. The level of physical activity had no influence on incidence of fear connected with activity after the ASI.
2. The higher level of foot function was significantly correlated with a lower level of kinesiophobia, and these relationships were significantly stronger among the non-active group.
3. The higher level of foot function was significantly correlated with a lower sense of fear and avoidance of physical activity. Weaker correlations among the active group may have resulted from the participants' awareness regarding the requirements of specific sports and recreational activities.
4. Kinesiophobia may pose a challenge for individuals seeking to enjoy physical activity associated with tourism and recreation. Concerns about injury may deter people from engaging in outdoor physical activity, thereby limiting their opportunities to explore new places and derive joy as well as relaxation from physical activity. Through support, tailoring activities to individual needs, appropriate forms of psychotherapy and promotion of a healthy lifestyle, individuals with kinesiophobia can learn to experience all the benefits provided by an active lifestyle brings.

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## COMPARISON OF PERCEPTIONS OF THE VALUE OF SPORTS AMONG PHYSICAL EDUCATION STUDENTS IN POLAND AND CHINA

*Krzysztof Sas-Nowosielski\**, *Sylvia Szopa-Wiśnios\*\**

### Abstract

**Purpose.** This study aimed to investigate the differences in sports values attributed by Physical Education students from China and Poland.

**Method.** A cross-sectional survey design was employed, with 198 participants (139 males, 59 females) aged 18-23 years ( $M=19.7\pm 0.9$ ). The Chinese sample included 74 students (37.7%), including 17 females (8.6%), while the Polish sample included 124 students (62.3%), including 42 females (21.2%). The difference in gender proportions between the studied populations was not significant:  $\chi^2=2.63$ ,  $p=0.105$ . The ages of the subjects in the Chinese and Polish samples were  $19.8\pm 1.0$  and  $19.6\pm 0.7$  years, respectively. Perceptions of sports values were measured using a 20-item questionnaire assessed on a 5-point Likert scale.

**Findings.** The results showed high interest in sports among students from both countries, with no significant differences between nationalities or genders. However, Chinese students reported a stronger interest in following their country's performance in international competitions compared to Polish students. Significant differences were found in two value dimensions: Chinese students scored higher on "strengthening national identity" ( $p=0.023$ ,  $d=0.34$ ), while Polish students scored higher on "fostering performance character" ( $p=0.001$ ,  $d=0.50$ ). These findings suggest that, while many sports values are shared across cultures, some differences do exist, potentially influenced by cultural, educational and societal factors.


**Limitations of research and conclusions.** In the study, non-significant differences were found in most values between Polish and Chinese Physical Education students, with the exception of two areas: Chinese students prioritise the role of sports in promoting nationalist values, whereas Polish students place greater emphasis on self-improvement.


**Practical implications.** This research contributes to our understanding of cross-cultural perspectives on sports values among Physical Education students.

**Originality.** This study is the first in which the values attributed to sports by Polish and Chinese Physical Education students are compared.

**Type of paper.** Research article.

**Keywords:** sport, values, cross-cultural comparison, Poland, China, students, Physical Education

\*  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9569-5954>; PhD with habilitation; Jerzy Kukuczka Academy of Physical Education in Katowice; e-mail: [k.sas-nowosielski@awf.katowice.pl](mailto:k.sas-nowosielski@awf.katowice.pl).

\*\*  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1263-6685>; PhD; Jerzy Kukuczka Academy of Physical Education in Katowice; e-mail: [s.szopa@awf.katowice.pl](mailto:s.szopa@awf.katowice.pl).

## Introduction

This study aims to compare how Physical Education students in Poland and China perceive the value of sports, defined for the purpose of the study as the worth or importance that participants assign to sports based on their evaluation of its benefits, features and overall experience [Boksberger and Melsen 2011; Silva, Monteiro and Sobreiro 2020; Tian et al. 2021]. Although perceived values are inherently subjective and vary between individuals based on their unique experiences and expectations, the cultural context – which shapes certain values shared by members of a given group – also plays a role. One example of cultural differences influencing people's attitudes and behaviours is the individualism-collectivism dimension [Sorokowski 2009].

Individualist cultures, such as those in the United States and Western Europe, emphasize values such as personal freedom, independence, self-reliance and personal achievement, while collectivist cultures – especially in Asia and some parts of Latin America – primarily emphasize group membership and the common good, viewing the individual as part of a larger whole whose actions should align with the interests of the group [Sorokowski 2009, Xiao et al. 2021]. The values and beliefs of societies influence how sports are valued, perceived, funded and engaged in by individuals. These values also affect the popularity of certain sports in different countries, which can highlight cultural differences. For example, soccer in the U.S. reflects the values of competitiveness and the importance of achievement and fame, while karate in Japan, practiced as a martial art, promotes spiritual development, self-discipline and respect between master and student, with the teacher as a guide on the path of personal knowledge and growth [Kuśnierz 2011].

On the other hand, globalisation has increased the reach and accessibility of various sports, along with the transfer of cultural values [Lee and Kim 2016]. For instance, Eastern martial arts have impacted the identity of individuals in Western societies, influencing their self-perception, social interactions and values such as respect for opponents, self-discipline and the pursuit of harmony [Kuśnierz 2011; Kuśnierz, Cynarski and Gorner 2017; Bielec et al. 2021]. In other words, the broader cultural context plays a significant role in the perception of sports, affecting how different communities understand, value and engage in sports activities.

This underscores the need for research on the similarities and differences in how sport is valued by representatives of different cultures. Such studies could better prepare athletes travelling to international competitions for local cultural contexts, improve communication between athletes, coaches and sports organisations from different regions, and thus, reduce the risk of misunderstandings between representatives of different countries.

## Literature review

In contemporary society, sport has become more than a simple form of participation in physical culture, offering a link to a number of other values, such as communal (sport as a factor that creates and strengthens social bonds), educational (sport as an important tool in the process of upbringing and character formation, including moral character), cultural heritage (traditional forms of activity for a given community), and identity (sport, especially competitive sport, as a tool for promoting national identity and national pride), to mention just a few of the most significant. As mentioned beforehand, emphasis on these values may vary depending on the cultural context. This variability is supported by the research conducted to date, although the number of such studies is relatively small. In addition, these studies have been devoted to very different aspects of cross-cultural diversity and with diverse communities. For example, P. Sorokowski [2009] explored how cultural factors influence the performance of sprint relay teams from these four nations: Japan, Brazil, the USA and Great Britain, finding that a collectivist culture (Japan, Brazil) is more conducive to the development of valuable sports teams than individualistic. Research on cross-cultural variations in perceptions of the value of sport has been conducted by I. Turczyk et al. [2021], but comparisons have been made between communities, American and Ukrainian. Although the latter is hardly a typical example of a collectivist culture, some differences were observed, for example, the role of social institutions in shaping youth attitudes towards sports. In the study by D. Lee et al. [2017], the authors explored the values and goals of sport consumers in China and in the United States. The results showed that Chinese sport consumers prioritise values such as success, recognition, and health as well as sports are often seen as a means to achieve social status and personal development. In contrast, American consumers are more focused on individualism and personal enjoyment derived from sports participation.

To the authors' knowledge, the only comparative study of Chinese and Polish cultures in the context of sports was conducted by M. Lenartowicz [2023], who examined how both cultures affect coach-athlete relationships and training approaches in table tennis. It was found that Chinese table tennis training is characterised by rigorous discipline, a structured environment and strong emphasis on achieving excellence. Coaches often adopt an authoritative style, expecting high levels of commitment from athletes. Conversely, Polish coaches tend to employ a more supportive and democratic approach, fostering open communication and encouraging athlete input in training decisions. The author concludes that the collectivist approach in China may drive higher levels of achievement in competitive settings, while the supportive environment in Poland may promote long-term athlete development and well-being.

Although not very numerous, in previous research, the importance has been highlighted of the cultural context in shaping attitudes towards sport and physical activity, yet there remains a paucity of studies in which the value perceptions of Physical Education students across these two diverse settings would be specifically examined. By investigating the similarities and differences in sport-related value perceptions among Polish and Chinese Physical Education students, the aim of this study was to establish differences between sports values attributed by Physical Education students from China and Poland. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for educators and policymakers, facilitating the development of culturally-sensitive strategies that enhance student engagement in physical education and promote life-long physical activity.

## Materials and method

### *Participants*

A cross-sectional survey design was employed in the study. The sample consisted of Physical Education students from two universities: the Academy of Physical Education in Katowice, Poland, and Langfang Normal University in Hebei, China. All participants were in their first year of Physical Education studies. Participants included 198 students (139 males, 59 females), aged 18 to 23 years ( $M=19.7\pm 0.9$ ). The Chinese sample equalled 74 students (37.7%), including 17 females (8.6%), while the Polish sample comprised 124 students (62.3%), totalling 42 females (21.2%). The difference in gender proportions between the studied populations was not significant:  $\chi^2=2.63$ ,  $p=0.105$ . The ages of the subjects in the Chinese and Polish samples were  $19.8\pm 1.0$  and  $19.6\pm 0.7$  years, respectively.

### *Procedure*

A cover letter providing a brief introduction to the purpose of the study, a consent form and a questionnaire were distributed to students at the beginning of classes. The self-authored survey questionnaire was translated into Chinese by the group coordinator. In accordance with ethical guidelines for scientific research applied in the social sciences, participants were ensured anonymity and the voluntary nature of their participation. This information was conveyed to the participants both by the person conducting the survey and through instructions provided at the beginning of the questionnaire. Participants had the right to decline completion of the questionnaire in writing, without the need to provide a reason and without any consequences. Each participant was then thoroughly informed about who was conducting the research and what its purpose was. Respondents were expected to complete the questionnaire according to the actual state of affairs,

without unnecessary embellishment, honestly, independently and carefully. If during the completion of the questionnaire any terms were unclear or raised doubts, participants could ask for additional explanations. Submission of the completed questionnaire was considered as consent to participate in the study.

### ***Measures***

Participants were asked questions about their personal characteristics (age, gender), as well as their sports activity and interests. Perceptions of sport values were measured using a 20-item questionnaire, with each item assessed on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 ('totally disagree') to 5 ('totally agree').

Based on a review of the literature and research objectives, an initial list of 30 items corresponding to the studied constructs (values: 'Fostering health and fitness', 'Shaping moral character', 'Fostering social cohesion', 'Developing national identity' and 'Self-improvement') was formulated. Three competent judges were invited to evaluate the items, assessing each one for its relevance to the construct being measured and its clarity of wording. Items that all three judges rated as "essential for the measured construct" were included in the final version of the questionnaire.

The reliability of the tool was estimated using the internal consistency method with Cronbach's alpha formula. All subscales achieved satisfactory values, ranging from  $\alpha = 0.64$  for 'Improving health and fitness' to 0.83 for "Fostering social integration'.

### ***Statistical analysis***

Statistical analysis was conducted using STATISTICA version 13.3 (TIBCO Software Inc., Palo Alto, CA). The results were presented as means  $\pm$  standard deviations. The Student's *t*-test for independent samples was used to compare the mean values of variables between the two groups. A *p*-value of  $<0.05$  was considered statistically significant. The effect size for significant differences was assessed using Cohen's *d* coefficient, with the following interpretation: small effect ( $d=0.2-0.5$ ), medium effect ( $d=0.5-0.8$ ), and large effect ( $d>0.8$ ).

## **Results**

Students in both countries declared a high level of interest in sports, with means  $\pm$  SD of  $4.43 \pm 0.92$  for Chinese students and  $4.17 \pm 1.09$  for Polish students. The difference between the groups was not statistically significant ( $p>0.05$ ), although it approached significance ( $t=1.74$ ,  $p=0.083$ ,  $d=0.25$ ). This variable did not differentiate between men and women in either country: Poland ( $p=0.205$ ) vs. China ( $p=0.478$ ).



However, Chinese students showed a stronger interest in following the performance of their country's representatives in international competitions compared to Polish students, with means of  $4.30 \pm 0.87$  versus  $3.83 \pm 1.27$ , respectively ( $t=2.80$ ,  $p=0.006$ ,  $d=0.44$ ). Additionally, Chinese students reported more frequent participation in sports and exercise compared to Polish students, with means of  $4.34 \pm 0.85$  versus  $3.95 \pm 1.33$ , respectively ( $t=2.24$ ,  $p=0.026$ ,  $d=0.33$ ).

The results of the independent samples *t*-test, which examined whether there are significant differences in attitudes towards the values associated with sports between Polish and Chinese students, are presented in Table 1. As shown, two values differentiate students from the two nations. Specifically, while most variables did not show statistically significant differences between the groups, the variables 'Strengthening national identity' and 'Fostering performance character' did so. Chinese students scored higher on the former ( $p=0.023$ ,  $d=0.34$ ), whereas Polish students achieved higher values for the latter ( $p=0.001$ ,  $d=0.50$ ). These findings indicate that, although there are many similarities in the sports values associated by students from both countries, there are also notable differences in these two areas. These differences may be influenced by cultural, educational or societal factors, such as the emphasis on collective identity and patriotism in China, particularly highlighted by President Xi Jinping's concept of the "Chinese great renaissance" [Góralczyk 2023], and stronger focus on individual development as well as personal success typical of Western societies.

**Table 1.** Comparison of sport-related values of between Chinese and Polish Physical Education students

Variable	Chinese	Polish	Difference <i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Effect size <i>d</i>
<b>Making friends</b>	4.29±0.76	4.47±0.66	-1.76	0.079	0.26
<b>Fostering health and fitness</b>	4.44±0.60	4.54±0.49	-1.35	0.180	-
<b>Shaping moral character</b>	4.39±0.65	4.33±0.61	0.73	0.464	-
<b>Fostering social cohesion</b>	4.29±0.73	4.21±0.65	0.82	0.412	-
<b>Developing national identity</b>	4.12±0.78	3.79±1.06	2.29	0.023	0.34
<b>Self-improvement</b>	4.34±0.65	4.62±0.51	-3.38	0.001	0.50

A comparison between genders among Chinese students revealed no significant differences in any of the sport values. In contrast, a statistically significant difference was observed among Polish students regarding one

value – sport as a means of improving fitness. This value was significantly more highly rated by the male compared to female students, with means of  $4.63 \pm 0.44$  versus  $4.38 \pm 0.54$ , respectively ( $t=2.79$ ,  $p=0.006$ , Cohen's  $d=0.57$ ).

## Discussion

Conducting research on how different cultures value sport helps us understand their perceptions and valuations of sports. This understanding contributes to improved communication between sports and educational institutions, as well as among athletes, teachers and coaches [Dai 2020, Lu ChunLei 2011]. Therefore, in this study, the authors aimed to identify differences in sports values attributed by Physical Education students from China and Poland. The results showed that both Chinese and Polish students exhibit high interest in sports, which is not surprising given that the survey sample consisted of Physical Education students. The lack of significant gender-related differences in sports interest among both populations supports the notion that sports are universally appealing, regardless of whether the students are from Poland or China. Chinese students demonstrated a significantly stronger interest in following their country's representatives at international competitions compared to Polish students. This observation corresponds with a significantly stronger appreciation of sport as a tool for fostering national pride and identity among Chinese students. This difference can be attributed to the cultural emphasis on national pride and collective identity in China, as highlighted in the concept of the 'great renaissance' or 'great rejuvenation' of Chinese culture promoted by President Xi Jinping [Góralczyk 2022]. Sport is suggested to play a significant role in this rejuvenation, serving as a powerful tool for national development and cultural promotion [Tan 2015]. In contrast, Polish students placed a higher value on 'Self-improvement' and 'Fostering performance character', which aligns with the individualistic values typical of Western societies that prioritise personal development and success.

Despite the importance of the issue, there are relatively few comparative studies on how sport is perceived by representatives of communities that are so different from each other on philosophical, historical or psychological levels, yet increasingly connected through globalisation. D. Lee et al. [2017] compared the perspectives of Chinese and Americans concerning the cultural impact of values and goals on sport involvement, finding that Chinese respondents generally showed less favourable attitudes towards intrinsic values and personal goals associated with sports, focusing more on collective benefits and national pride. In contrast, the American sample's approach to sport was more centred around individual achievement and personal development.

To the best of the authors' knowledge, in only one study have Polish and Chinese sport-related populations been compared [Lenartowicz 2023]. In his study, M. Lenartowicz [2023] examined how cultural differences among table tennis coaches impact training methods and the dynamics of coach-athlete relationships in both countries. It was found that Chinese sports culture emphasizes rigorous, high-intensity training with focus on technical perfection and repetitive practice. The training environment is highly structured and disciplined. In contrast, table tennis training in Poland is less intense and more flexible, with greater emphasis on individual development and creativity. Polish training methods are less rigid, allowing for more personal expression. Additionally, the relationships between coaches and athletes differed between the two countries. In China, the relationship was more hierarchical, with coaches holding significant authority and athletes expected to follow instructions without question. In contrast, the relationships between Polish coaches and athletes were more egalitarian, encouraging open dialogue and mutual respect. Coaches acted more as mentors, fostering a supportive environment that valued the athlete's input and personal growth. While these studies provide valuable information for comparative analyses, their focus on a single sport and differing research emphases make direct comparison with our study challenging.

In conclusion, this study provides insights into the cultural diversity regarding perceptions of sport-related values among Chinese and Polish students. While both groups show high interest in sports, their underlying motivations and associated values differ, reflecting broader cultural orientations. These findings underscore the significance of considering cultural factors in sports research, policy and practice, and highlight the potential of sports as a platform for cultural expression and integration. However, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations of the study. Firstly, the sample was selected based on availability, which may not fully represent the entire population of Physical Education students. Secondly, the research relied on self-assessment by respondents, which carries the risk of socially desirable answering. Another possible source of error is the difference in the languages of the questionnaires completed by the respondents. Although such differences are challenging to avoid in cross-cultural studies, they should be considered as a factor that may potentially affect the obtained results.

Despite the highlighted limitations, the authors of the present study believe that our study offers valuable insights into the cultural diversity of sports attitudes among Chinese and Polish students. Such research has implications for sports organisations and policymakers, as understanding cultural differences in sports values, attitudes and expectations can help tailor sports promotion and development strategies to specific cultural contexts, thereby enhancing their effectiveness.

## Conclusion

In the study, it was revealed that most values do not show statistically significant differences between Polish and Chinese Physical Education students. However, differences are observed in relation to two specific values: Chinese students place a higher value on the role of sport in promoting nationalist values, whereas Polish students score higher with regard to self-improvement. The effect sizes for these differences range from small to medium.

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# DIGITAL EXPLORATION PATTERNS: INSTAGRAM TRAVEL ENGAGEMENT AND POSTING BEHAVIOURS OF STUDENTS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN KRAKOW (POLAND)

*Grzegorz Kromka\**, *Klaudia Chwaja\*\**, *Kamila Camona\*\*\**

## Abstract


**Purpose.** The study objective is to examine the activity and motivation of students from the University of Physical Education in Krakow (Poland) on Instagram regarding their posting behaviour related to travel topics.


**Method.** The main research method used in the study was an online diagnostic targeted population survey using the questionnaire technique. The research was conducted between 27 December 2022 and 31 January 2023 on a sample of 630 students from the University of Physical Education in Krakow (Poland).


**Findings.** Instagram is a social media platform popular among young people. They use it often and regularly (most of them do so on a daily basis) and in a diversified manner. Users prefer using smartphones for browsing and sharing content. Seven out of ten surveyed students share content in the form of posts, although they do so relatively rarely. Students from tourism-related majors travel more often and notice more travel-related posts on Instagram compared to students from other fields. They show a greater tendency towards publishing posts related to tourism, and their profiles contain a larger number of travel-themed photos in relation to the total number of photos. Furthermore, a positive relationship can be noted between the frequency of traveling and the amount of noticed travel-related posts, as well as between the frequency of traveling and the activity of posting such content on Instagram. The main motives for publishing travel photos on Instagram are: archiving travel photos, the desire to show off to others, and improving one's own well-being.

**Research and conclusion limitations.** The research was conducted among students from one specific university, which limits its universality. Additionally, due to the nature of the questionnaire study, a comprehensive analysis of the content of the published material was not possible.

**Practical implications.** The results of the study can be useful for tourism organisations and travel agencies planning tours of specific tourist attractions, so as to enable their clients to take the most

\*  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1931-9540>; Ph.D.; University of Physical Education in Krakow, Faculty of Tourism and Recreation, Institute of Entrepreneurship and Management; e-mail: [grzegorz.kromka@awf.krakow.pl](mailto:grzegorz.kromka@awf.krakow.pl).

\*\*  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7716-1695>; B.Sc.; University of Physical Education in Krakow, Faculty of Tourism and Recreation, Institute of Business and Management; Student Scientific Society "Azymut"; e-mail: [klaudia.chwaja.99@wp.pl](mailto:klaudia.chwaja.99@wp.pl).

\*\*\*  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7317-5117>; B.Sc.; University of Physical Education in Krakow, Faculty of Tourism and Recreation, Institute of Business and Management; Student Scientific Society "Azymut"; e-mail: [kamilacamona@vp.pl](mailto:kamilacamona@vp.pl).

attractive photos. Additionally, analysing preferences for publishing travel-related content can help in creating educational programmes tailored to the needs of students and identifying potential travel influencers. The study can also provide information on students' preferences regarding taking photos during tourist trips.

**Originality.** This study introduces a new perspective on the relationship between Instagram and tourism, taking the specificity of the studied group into consideration.

**Type of paper.** An article presenting the results of empirical study.

**Keywords:** Instagram, social media, travel content, travel photography, tourism, students, University of Physical Education in Krakow

## Introduction

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many groundbreaking discoveries and achievements were made that revolutionised many areas of human life. In turn, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw economic and social changes manifesting in those activities previously reserved only for the elite (e.g. due to significant costs), making them accessible to the mass population. Examples of such aspects are photography and mass tourism, which appeared and developed roughly at the same time [Urry 2002, p. 148], each stemming from and reinforcing the other [Urry 2002, p. 128-129]. They are now considered part of the everyday life of ordinary people [Garlick 2002, p. 290]. Currently, both tourism and photography play important roles in shaping people's life experiences worldwide [Urry 2002, p. 140-149; Garlick 2002, p. 297]. They are also closely related. Photos document and shape a travel experience [Urry 2002, p. 128-129; Haldrup and Larsen 2003, p. 40-41; Larsen 2008, p. 157-158], and also give tourists the opportunity to share their experiences with others [Groves, Timothy 2001, p. 312].

A particularly crucial element at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century seems to be the dissemination of current information. With advancing globalisation, direct social relations are giving way to media channels [Rybacka 2018, p. 139], which are characterised by simplicity and lack of restrictions [Maj 2008, p. 197]. Society wants to have quick and current access to information, thus they use the Internet for this purpose, especially social media [Zajadacz 2017, p. 139]. A vital component comprise social media platforms, which include, for example, YouTube, Facebook or Instagram.

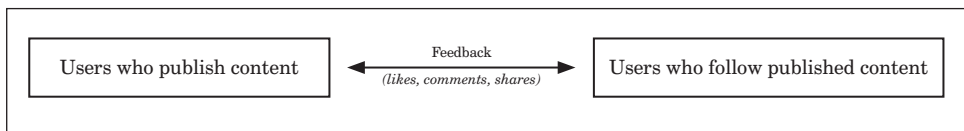
The last of the mentioned services, Instagram, appears to be particularly interesting. It is a social networking site launched in 2010, which by 2022, has gathered nearly one and a half billion users worldwide [Kemp 2022, p. 99]. In Poland, Instagram is used by about 11.9 million people above the age of 18. The platform is very popular among young adults - users between the ages of 18 and 24 constitute 30.1% of the service's community. Nearly half of the users open the application at least once a day and 42% of users log into Instagram several times a day. The average length of a single session on

Instagram is about three minutes. Meanwhile, the average Instagram user spends 53 minutes per day using the application [Ponad..., 2022].

Instagram is a multimodal platform that allows users to share photos, videos, hashtags, emoticons and written text [Łozowska 2018, p. 66]. However, the main format of the published content is photos, which can be edited using filters and various tools before addition to the service. In turn, the use of hashtags to tag photos enables the organisation of information and facilitates finding similar materials [Żyliński 2018, p. 35-36]. Instagram users can follow various content creators, and the platform can be used for various purposes, including staying in touch with friends and family, entertainment, business and research.

Individual users can publish content related to their daily lives, which can be studied within the context of their personality and lifestyle [Babecki 2018, p. 9]. However, it is important to remember that there are two identities - those online and offline, which are not always congruent [Rybacka 2018, p. 157]. Instagram is one of the most frequently used services for sharing one's daily life online, but since this is mediated communication, there is moderation of the published content (e.g. due to privacy concerns or image management) [Rybacka 2018, p. 140-142, 145-146]. In a number of studies, it has been suggested that especially young people use social media to present, manipulate and/or manage a desired image of themselves [Pfeil, et al. 2009, p. 653; Trammel and Keshelashvili 2005, p. 978; Strano 2008].

Additionally, Instagram can be utilised by traditional media holders for institutional communication, as well as by associations and foundations as a civic medium [Babecki 2018, p. 10]. All these stakeholder groups influence the functioning of Instagram as a platform enabling multidirectional and reciprocal communication, which is simplified and presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Simplified model of interactions between Instagram users.

**Source:** Own elaboration based on [Babecki 2018, p. 165-166].

The impact on the reception of the message is influenced by the form of content publishing (posts, stories, reels), their appearance, the presence of a description, the placement of specific phrases and the timing of publications [Łozowska 2018, p. 68-69].

Instagram has become a popular platform because it adapts to contemporary culture, which is based on intense visual impressions [Babecki 2018, p. 7]. It achieves this through the use of images, which are easier to



assimilate than verbal communication [Łozowska 2018, p. 45], as they allow bypassing language and geographical barriers [Le 2018, p. 8]. Visual content has greater impact by enhancing social presence [Johnson and Knobloch-Westerwick 2016, p. 5] and visual contents are also easier to remember than text-based information [Noldy, et al. 1990, p. 417]. The visual message and hashtags that organise content and facilitate its search make Instagram an excellent service for posting and searching for tourism-related content [Kossakowski 2018, p. 108]. Additionally, sharing travel photos can play a significant role in shaping or transforming an image as well as preferences regarding specific media, and may be related to how individuals wish to do this [Lo et al. 2011, p. 730].

As W. Aleziak notes, tourist activity is a social phenomenon that can be analysed as a four-stage process related to an individual's participation in tourism. Direct participation is preceded by the identification of needs and motives, and culminates in behaviours that follow upon return [Aleziak 2011, p. 7]. At every stage of tourist activity, individuals seek valuable information related to traveling outside their place of residence. Research conducted up to the middle of the past decade has already significantly shown that the importance of Instagram and other social media platforms is particularly relevant at the planning stage of a trip [Sema 2013, p. 8], where they can familiarise themselves with information shared by other travellers. Benefiting from the experience of others and two-way communication based on dialogue is, for many social media users, more valuable and more credible than information unilaterally conveyed to them by travel agencies [Magiera 2019, p. 402] or as advertisements in mass media [Le 2018, p. 9].

As noted by K. Buchta and M. Skiert, the issue of student youth activity is an important research segment of the sciences dealing with tourism [Buchta and Skiert 2012, p. 23-24]. In a period of dynamic social changes, which have key impact on the attitude of young people, systematic research on tourist behaviours and factors determining students' participation in tourism seems justified. This work is limited to exploring the activity of students from the University of Physical Education in Krakow and examining their motivations for posting tourist content on Instagram. The choice of the study group from this university was dictated by the diversity of offered educational directions, as well as the presence of study programmes closely related to the travel environment (Tourism and Recreation and Adventure Tourism). This made it possible to investigate potential differences occurring between young people varying in their degree of connection with tourism and travel.

## Theoretical background

Several studies conducted in the previous two decades allow to indicate that the creation of the image of tourist destinations and the understanding of tourism is not solely the responsibility of institutions. It is emphasized that tourism is also shaped by tourists who consider themselves active participants, who, by sharing their digital works, such as photos or reviews, co-create the image of a destination [Mackay and Couldwell 2004, p. 395; Lo et al. 2011, p. 730; Stylianou-Lambert 2012, p. 1817; Munar and Jacobsen 2014, p. 46].

Instagram has been used for some time as a place for discovering interesting travel destinations. In the research conducted by Expedia, it has been shown that as early as in 2013, people were consciously choosing travel destinations with the intention of later posting photographs. This is best evidenced by the fact that at that time, as much as 21% of adult Americans shared photos online after returning from a trip [Le 2018, p. 9]. In 2015, 48% of Instagram users looked for new places to visit on the service and 35% used it mainly to discover such places [Baker 2015]. Thanks to photos published by various people, one can get an idea of what the destination looks like and gain tips on things worth doing or attractions worth seeing. One can even see what the weather is like at a given moment, as photos are often published immediately after being taken. As a result, browsing photos shared by people who are or have been on vacation allows users to get a more accurate representation of what the destination is really like, as opposed to edited photos in magazines or on travel agency websites [Terttunen 2017, p. 17-18].

P. Parsi believed that Instagram influences changes in the tourism industry because it is characterised by a high user engagement rate. Increased reach of content benefited tourism entrepreneurs, travellers and regions around the world alike. P. Parsi further emphasized that diverse travel materials published on Instagram have become substitutes for printed guides and travel journals [Parsi 2021]. Currently, the public seems to be more inclined to respond to posts from influencers than from the tourism industry. The average engagement rate, meaning the number of reactions such as likes or comments on a post, averages 3.6 for travel influencers [Influence 2022, p. 120], compared to 1.13 for business accounts [Cucu 2022, p. 120].

In 2017, based on their research, S. Quach and P. Thaichon stated that social media significantly changed the tourism industry by transforming the role of customers from passive to active users [Quach and Thaichon 2017, p. 163-172]. Customers demonstrate their engagement, among others, by publishing posts about tourism and sharing them with a wider audience. Thus, it was already possible to speak of the positive impact of social media on tourism at that time [Harrigan et al. 2017, p. 597-609].

It is worth emphasizing that among various fields utilising Instagram for marketing purposes, the tourism industry stands out as the one where users are most open to sponsored posts. This is based on a study conducted in 2019, in which 39% of respondents identified travel as their favourite advertising theme on Instagram [Statista 2020].

According to data presented for the year 2019 on the Statista website, 36.5% of people used social media to search for travel inspirations and ideas, and 60% shared photos on social media during their trips [Statista 2021]. The findings from 2019 by R. Matikiti-Manyeverve and M. Kruger indicate that Instagram is among the most frequently used social media platforms by tourists choosing travel destinations [Matikiti-Manvevery and Kruger 2019, p. 7]. The fact that people looked for destinations on Instagram is also confirmed by the research results obtained by L. Grandberg from the same year, according to which as much as 80.3% of respondents stated that they found new travel destinations through this social media service and for 68.5% of them, Instagram was the main source of travel inspiration. Over 61% of all respondents (71.3% among active Instagram users) admitted that they planned a trip based on information found on Instagram [Granberg 2019, p. 28].

The above considerations are worth enriching with the results of a study by A. Tešin, T. Pivac, S. Besermenji, and S. Obradović, in which it was demonstrated that Instagram is an important source of information and inspiration in the process of choosing a travel destination – especially among young people. Furthermore, it was found that travel-related content is among the most frequently observed on Instagram and significantly increases users' interest in visiting specific places [Tešin et al. 2022, p. 66]. Similar conclusions were reached by A. Werenowska and M. Rzepka, who also added that visual materials are particularly attractive to Millennials [Werenowska and Rzepka 2020, p. 11]. According to the results of a Passport Photo Online study from 2023, 40% of Millennials choose travel destinations based on the “Instagrammability” of the photos [Woolf 2023]. According to A. Werenowska and M. Rzepka, one of the main goals of this age group's travels is to share tourist content on social media [Werenowska and Rzepka 2020, p. 1]. This is confirmed in the above-mentioned 2023 study, in which over half of the vacationers (60%) posted photos on social media during their trip and in the case of Millennials, this number reached 97%, underscoring their desire to share and document their travels online [Woolf 2023].

In 2023, Instagram was widely used by travellers to share their travel experiences [Sheldon and Bryant 2016, p. 89]. It is enough to note that there were 670 million posts on the service tagged #travel and 204 million posts tagged #travelphotography [Instagram App 2023]. Each week on Instagram, over one million travel-related hashtags were searched, which attests to the immense popularity of this platform among travel enthusiasts [Woolf 2023, Palmer 2021].

There is no doubt that Instagram influences tourists' perception and decisions regarding planning their vacations and choosing tourist attractions. M. Palazzo, A. Voller, P. Vitale and A. Siano believe that Instagram users have influence on regulating tourist traffic to a given place [Palazzo et al. 2021, p. 1, 8-9]. However, it is important to remember that tourist content on Instagram is dominated by popular tourist attractions, which can ultimately lead to market saturation and a lack of diversity in the offer. However, in recent years, there has been an increasing interest in promoting issues related to sustainable tourism and the portal is progressively used to promote sustainable tourism development topics [*ibid*, p. 1, 4, 8-9].

## Methods

Based on the informational gaps found in previous studies, as well as the specificity of the studied group, the following research hypotheses were formulated:

1. Students majoring in tourism-related fields post travel-related content on Instagram more frequently than students of other majors.
2. Students majoring in tourism-related fields have a higher percentage of travel-related posts on their profiles (relative to all posts) compared to students of other majors.
3. There is a relationship between the frequency of travel and of adding travel-related posts by students.
4. There is a relationship between the frequency of travel and quantity of posts related to tourism and travel observed on Instagram by students.
5. The primary motivation for students to publish travel-related posts on Instagram is the desire to showcase their travels to others and build their image as actively involved tourists.

These hypotheses were validated through an online diagnostic targeted population survey, a research method that allows for the rapid collection of a large amount of data that can be compared with each other. Information was obtained through a research tool, which was a customised survey questionnaire.

It consisted of an informational part, main questions, and a metric section. The informational part included data such as: the purpose of the study, identification of the study recipients, the indication of the study authors and the approximate time to complete the questionnaire. The section with the main questions included the most important issues (in the form of 15 questions) relevant to the researchers. Questions in this section were divided into sections – to which respondents were automatically transferred depending on the given answers. To precisely characterise different study groups regarding the metric, eight questions were asked.

The research was conducted between 27 December 2022 and 31 January 2023. Invitations to participate in the study, along with a survey link, were sent through the USOS system<sup>1</sup> to all students of the University of Physical Education in Krakow. A total of 630 students participated, of which 77.8% were female and 22.2% were male. In Table 1, the data concerning the examined majors are presented.

**Table 1.** Characteristics of the respondent sample according to field of study

Field of study	Number of responses	Response percentage
Cosmetology	171	27.1%
Tourism and Recreation	154	24.4%
Physical Therapy	88	14.0%
Physical Education	88	14.0%
Recreation and Entertainment Management	51	8.1%
Tourism Adventure	28	4.4%
Occupational Therapy	23	3.7%
Physical Education in Uniformed Services	22	3.5%
Physical Culture of Elderly	5	0.8%
Sport	0	0.0%

**Source:** Own elaboration based on collected empirical data.

The largest group of respondents consisted of Cosmetology students. On the other hand, no students from the Sports major completed the provided questionnaire. It is worth noting that students studying tourism-related majors (Tourism and Recreation, Tourism Adventure) accounted for a total of 28.8% of the respondents. The average age of participants was just below 20 years. The largest group of participants were individuals aged 21 (177 individuals – 28.1%). The majority of respondents rated their health status as ‘good’ or ‘very good’ (580 individuals – 91.8%). In terms of their financial situation, respondents generally categorised it as ‘good’ (349-55.3%), ‘average’ (186-29.5%) or ‘very good’ (77-12.1%). Nearly half of the respondents (302-47.8%) resided in cities with over 500,000 inhabitants (e.g., Krakow), while every fourth respondent (153-24.2%) lived in towns with no more than 10,000 inhabitants.

<sup>1</sup> USOS – Uniwersytecki System Obsługi Studiów (Eng. University Student Management System).

## Results

Instagram is a very popular social media platform among students of the University of Physical Education (AWF<sup>2</sup>). Nearly 95% of the respondents (598 respondents) used it, with 91.5% (547 respondents) doing so daily and 6.7% (40 respondents) several times a week. The average daily usage time of the service on smartphones was 61 minutes. Three out of four (435-72.7%) respondents have had an account for more than four years. Among the students of tourism-related fields, 94% of respondents (171 respondents) used Instagram, with 91.2% (156 respondents) doing so daily and 7.0% (12 respondents) several times a week. The average daily usage time of the service on smartphones was 68 minutes. A longer account possession than 4 years was reported by 76.6% of students from tourism-related fields.

In contrast, 95.3% of students (427 respondents) from fields not related to tourism have an Instagram account. Daily usage was reported by 91.5% (391 respondents) and several times a week by 6.6% of respondents (28 respondents) from this subgroup. The average daily usage time of the portal on smartphones was 58 minutes. Owning an account for more than four years was admitted by 73.3% of students (313 respondents) from other fields.

Nearly 90% of AWF students (534 respondents) use the service exclusively on a smartphone. A similar result applied to those not related to tourism. This percentage was slightly lower for students of tourism-related fields, at 86.5% (148 respondents). Every tenth AWF student (62-10.4%) used the portal both on a smartphone and on a computer. For the remaining students, this percentage was 9.4 (40 respondents). Students of tourism-related fields more frequently used these two devices to access the service, as declared by 14.9% of them (22 respondents). Only two respondents (0.3%) used a laptop or computer exclusively for Instagram usage. One of them was studying a tourism-related field.

Publishing content on Instagram in the form of posts was declared by 71.4% (427 respondents) of AWF students. For students of tourism-related fields, this percentage was 70.8% (121 respondents) and for other students, it was 71.7% (306 respondents). This was done relatively rarely, as indicated by the low average score assigned in response to the question "How often do you post on Instagram?". It was:

- 3.3 points<sup>3</sup> for all respondents;
- 3.5 points for students of Adventure Tourism and Tourism and Recreation;
- 3.2 points for students of other fields.

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<sup>2</sup> AWF – Akademia Wychowania Fizycznego (Eng. University of Physical Education)

<sup>3</sup> 0 indicated 'never', and 10 indicated 'very often'.

AWF students had an average of 34 posts on their Instagram profiles. Students of tourism-related fields published an average of 40 posts, while students of other fields published an average of 31 posts, on average. The median was 15 posts and the mode was 9 posts. Among the respondents, there were individuals who had only one published post, as well as those who posted as many as 540.

In Table 2, responses regarding both traveling and tourism-related content on Instagram among distinguished subgroups of students were compared to all students of the University of Physical Education.

**Table 2.** Comparison of responses regarding travel and tourism-related content on Instagram – differentiation according field of study

Total AWF Students	Tourism majors	Other majors	Statistical significance
Rating (on a scale of 0-10) frequency of traveling to new places			
5.1 pts	5.7 pts	4.9 pts	$p=0.00004^U$
Rating (on a scale of 0-10) noticing tourist-related posts on Instagram			
5.8 pts	5.9 pts	5.2 pts	$p=0.6072^U$
Posting on Instagram about tourism, i.e. travels, visited places, landmarks or landscapes (proportion of students posting on Instagram)			
78.9% of students	83.5% of students	77.1% of students	$p=0.1473^{Chi}$
Rating (on a scale of 0-10) frequency of adding posts on Instagram related to tourism and travel			
4.9 pts	5.4 pts	4.6 pts	$p=0.0502^U$
Percentage of posts (relative to all posts) related to travel and visiting new places published on Instagram by respondents			
50.5% of posts	56.9% of posts	47.8% of posts	$p=0.0042^U$
Average number of tourist-related posts among the latest 10 posts on the profile			
4.97 of posts	5.89 of posts	4.58 of posts	$p=0.0001^U$

**Source:** Own elaboration based on collected empirical data.

Legend: <sup>U</sup> – result of Mann-Whitney U test, <sup>Chi</sup> – result of Pearson's chi-squared test.

Students of tourism-related fields, on average, travelled more frequently and noticed travel-related posts on Instagram more often than students of other fields. A higher percentage of students from tourism-related fields posted content related to tourism and they did so more often than students from other fields. Such students compared to other respondents, also had more travel-related photos relative to the all photos on their profile.

Additionally, statistical tests (Mann-Whitney U or Pearson's chi-squared) were conducted to check for statistical differences between women and men

among the analysed data. These tests showed that statistically, women (81%) posted travel-related posts on Instagram more frequently than men (66%)<sup>4</sup>, more frequently viewed (6.08 points) travel-themed posts on Instagram than males (4.89 points)<sup>5</sup>, and also viewed more of them (5.47 points) compared to men (4.67 points)<sup>6</sup>. Among other analysed aspects, the tests did not show statistically significant differences between women and men.

Respondents also assigned ratings from 1 to 5 regarding the motives guiding them in publishing travel photos on Instagram. The higher the rating assigned to a given motive, the more important it was to them. The collected responses were averaged, categorised and presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Motivations for publishing tourist photos on Instagram – differentiation by field of study (arithmetic means and Mann-Whitney U test results)

Motivation	Average			Statistical significance
	Overall	Tourism majors	Other majors	
Desire to archive photos/videos from travels	3.99 pts	4.15 pts	3.91 pts	$p=0.0941$
Desire to showcase to others (showing where I travelled)	3.19 pts	3.24 pts	3.17 pts	$p=0.8485$
Desire to improve one's well-being	3.19 pts	3.13 pts	3.21 pts	$p=0.7353$
Desire to show followers visited places (to encourage and share knowledge about them)	3.17 pts	3.34 pts	3.10 pts	$p=0.0728$
No specific motivations	3.04 pts	2.83 pts	3.13 pts	$p=0.0539$
Desire to build an image as an active tourist	2.90 pts	3.15 pts	2.80 pts	<b><math>p=0.0156</math></b>
Desire to inspire others to travel	2.79 pts	3.10 pts	2.66 pts	<b><math>p=0.0015</math></b>
Desire to showcase photography skills	2.69 pts	2.76 pts	2.66 pts	$p=0.5733$
Desire to stand out among others	2.57 pts	2.61 pts	2.56 pts	$p=0.7839$
Desire to attract accounts with similar themes	2.43 pts	2.71 pts	2.31 pts	<b><math>p=0.0092</math></b>
Desire for self-attention (gaining approval from others)	2.36 pts	2.26 pts	2.40 pts	$p=0.2584$
Desire to gain more likes, followers	2.33 pts	2.40 pts	2.29 pts	$p=0.5869$
Desire to relate to one's field of study or profession	1.95 pts	2.23 pts	1.83 pts	<b><math>p=0.0081</math></b>
Desire to evoke envy in others	1.60 pts	1.63 pts	1.58 pts	$p=0.4639$
Desire to earn money through publishing such content	1.57 pts	1.67 pts	1.53 pts	$p= 0.6175$

**Source:** Own elaboration based on collected empirical data.

<sup>4</sup> The result of the Pearson's chi-squared test was  $p=0.003329$ .

<sup>5</sup> The result of the Mann-Whitney U test was  $p=0.0001$ .

<sup>6</sup> The result of the Mann-Whitney U test was  $p=0.000133$ .



It is highly likely that students are motivated by multiple factors (both conscious and subconscious) when posting travel photos on Instagram. Consistent with research findings, the most important for students was the desire to archive photos and videos from trips, which was confirmed by a high average rating of 3.99 points. Thus, respondents saw posting photos as a way to preserve memories and experiences, possibly stemming from the need to capture moments and have them as keepsakes.

The desire to show off where they had travelled and the desire to improve mood by posting such a photo was important for the respondents. This result suggests that posting travel photos has a social dimension for the respondents and the desire to share their experiences and adventures with others is significant to them. Many of those who published did so to increase their followers' knowledge about a place. They sought to educate others in their own way and also encourage travel.

It is worth noting that fifth place was occupied by the response "I don't have any specific motives" (average of 3.04 points), which suggests that for some students, posting tourist photos could have been a spontaneous decision rather than one driven by specific motives.

Respondents, when posting tourist photos, generally did not aim at provoking jealousy in others. The least important motive for the participants was the desire to earn money through such content publication (1.57 points). This result suggests that for the participants, posting tourist photos was not a means of generating income.

It is also of significance to highlight that tourism students assigned a higher number of points to a greater number of motives (12 out of 15) compared to other students. However, statistically significant differences were observed only for the following four motives:

- the desire to build their image as an active tourist;
- the desire to inspire others to travel;
- the desire to attract accounts with similar themes;
- the desire to relate to their field of study or professional work.

The four mentioned motives are interconnected and complement each other. Building an image as an active tourist can contribute to inspiring others to travel which, in turn, can attract accounts with similar themes and help in career development.

It is also worth noting that among the 15 analysed motives for publishing travel-related content, only one motive showed statistically significant differences between women and men. For women, the motive of improving well-being through publishing such photos was more important (3.26 points) than for men (2.72 points).

Based on the obtained results, the first hypothesis that students of tourism-related fields post about tourism on their Instagram profiles more frequently (5.4 points) than students of other fields (4.6 points) should be

rejected, as the Mann-Whitney U test showed that the differences in responses are not statistically significant ( $p=0.0502$ ). However, it is worth noting that the test result is at the border of statistical significance ( $p=0.05$ ) and it was found that a larger percentage of students from tourism-related fields published posts related to tourism. Students of tourism-related fields demonstrated a tendency towards travelling more frequently and had greater awareness of tourism-related posts on Instagram compared to students from other fields.

The results, however, confirm the hypothesis that students of tourism-related fields have a higher percentage of tourism-related posts compared to the overall number of photos on their profile (nearly 57%) compared to students of other fields (just under 48%). This difference was statistically significant, as confirmed by the Mann-Whitney U test ( $p=0.0042$ ).

The *t*-test employed for checking the significance of Spearman's rank correlation coefficient showed that there is a statistically significant monotonic relationship between the frequency of traveling and the frequency of adding tourism-related posts by students of the University of Physical Education in Krakow ( $p<0.0001$ ). The strength of this monotonic relationship is moderate and amounts to 0.46. Therefore, the hypothesis can be confirmed, and it can be stated that respondents who travel more frequently show greater activity in publishing tourism-related posts on Instagram.

Regarding the fourth partial hypothesis, the *t*-test for checking the significance of Spearman's rank correlation coefficient revealed that there is a statistically significant monotonic relationship between the frequency of traveling and the number of tourism and travel-related posts noticed by students on Instagram ( $p<0.000001$ ). This finding indicates that the number of tourism and travel-related posts that respondents notice on Instagram can somehow influence the frequency of their travels. It may also mean that individuals who travel more often see more tourism-related content on Instagram, as this is related to their interests. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the strength of this relationship is weak and total 0.39.

The results of the study clearly debunk the fifth hypothesis, which assumed that the main motive for publishing tourism-related posts on Instagram by students of the University of Physical Education in Krakow is the desire to show off their travels to others and build their image as an actively traveling individual. It turns out that the primary motive for publication is the desire to archive photos/videos from trips, which was the most important reason for the majority of students. The desire to show off their travel came in second place (3.19 points), but the desire to build their image as an actively traveling person was significantly less frequently declared (2.90 points – 6<sup>th</sup> place among motives).

## Discussion

The empirical research conducted among students of the University of Physical Education in Krakow have provided new insights into the relationships between tourism and Instagram. They have allowed for drawing conclusions and integrating them into the context of existing research on the analysed issue. In this chapter, the results of the study are corresponded with the findings of other authors.

Based on the research results, it can be stated that Instagram serves as a platform for the majority (71.4%) of AWF students to publish photos in the form of posts. It should be added that 78.9% of them published posts related to tourism<sup>7</sup>. For these individuals, on average, half of the posts placed on their profiles were related to tourism. The findings of this study are similar to the data obtained in the research conducted by A. Werenowska and M. Rzepka, in which the vast majority of respondents (88.4%), aged 24-39 years, added travel materials to social media. These materials were primarily in the form of photos (96.7%) and videos (25.3%) [Werenowska and Rzepka 2020, p. 8-9]. The results do not match perfectly with the findings of this trial due to differences between the studies, which include:

- recruitment differences in the characteristics of the studied population (students from AWF in Krakow vs. social media users);
- age differences in the characteristics of the studied population (18-26 years vs. 24-39 years);
- differences in the platform for content publication (Instagram vs. all social media);
- differences in the type of content added (Instagram posts vs. any type of content).

The results of the present study show that students from AWF choose to publish travel-related content on Instagram for several reasons. It allows them to archive their journeys, showcase their travel experiences to others and enhance their well-being. Furthermore, it enables their followers to see and learn about the destinations they have visited. As demonstrated in the research by A. Tešin, T. Pivac, S. Besermenji and S. Obradović, such content can encourage others to travel, particularly to destinations showcased on Instagram [Tešin et al. 2022, p. 76]. The research conducted by A. Werenowska and M. Rzepka also revealed the significance of travel-related materials for social media users. The vast majority, precisely 93.2%, confirmed that their travel decisions are often inspired by information shared on social media [Werenowska and Rzepka 2020, p. 8].

Furthermore, in their research, A. Meier, A. Gilbert, S. Börner and D. Possler emphasized that users generally found materials viewed on Insta-

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<sup>7</sup> What constitutes 53.5% of the surveyed students from AWF in Krakow.

gram motivating for taking photos and undertaking travels. The researchers more often observed ‘mild envy’ that were stimulating and inspiring in nature [Meier et al. 2020, p. 737-738]. This aligns with D. Le’s observation that for many people (including Instagram users), the photogenic nature of a destination they intend to visit holds significant importance [Le 2018, p. 8-9].

The detailed analysis of the results from study by A. Tešin et al. is valuable as in it, similar issues to those in the current study are addressed. In their research, the respondents declared almost the same frequency of using Instagram (91% of respondents used it daily; 7% used it several times a week) as in the present research (91.5% daily; 6.7% several times a week). However, there was a significant difference in the daily time spent using the app. Declaring use of the app for more than 30 minutes a day were [Tešin et al. 2022, p. 72]: 61.5% of AWF students and 36.3% of participants the trial by A. Tešin et al.. Such a large discrepancy may result from sociodemographic differences in the surveyed groups. This study involved individuals aged 18-26 years, while the compared study included an age range of 18-54 years. This difference might also be due to the way the question was constructed. In the authors’ study, respondents were asked to enter numerical values in minutes after checking them on the Instagram app, whereas in the study by A. Tešin et al., participants were asked to choose from a set of provided answers.

It is also pertinent to refer to the research findings of B. Lutes, in which Instagram users were divided into three generations – Millennials, Generation X and Baby Boomers. It turned out that for Millennials, Instagram is a more important source of knowledge in the context of choosing a travel destination than for representatives of the other generations. On a scale from 1 to 5 points, Millennials assigned an average of 2.80 points to this motive, while representatives of Generation X and Baby Boomers averaged 2.35 points. It is worth adding that the differences between the groups were statistically significant [Lutes 2019, p. 46].

In the research by A. Tešin et al., the authors showed that the more frequently individuals travelled (several times a year), the more often they discovered new destinations through Instagram. In the current research, a relationship was also observed between the frequency of traveling and the number of tourism-themed posts seen on Instagram, as well as the frequency of posting tourism-related content by students. The more individuals travelled, the more they viewed tourism-themed posts, and the more frequently they themselves posted such content on the Instagram service.

An interesting issue to address seems to be the main motivations for posting travel photos on Instagram. It turns out that the obtained results partially differ from the data presented by Allianz Travel Insurance obtained in the “Vacation Confidence Index” study. The authors indicated that 37% of people aged 18-34 post such photos to evoke envy among friends and

family, and 27% see it to compete with others who are also sharing their vacation materials at the same time [Kuchta-Nykiel 2018]. Meanwhile, in the "Passport Photo Online" study, 46% of Americans declared that they want to evoke envy among their followers by sharing their travel experiences [Woolf 2023]. In the case of this study, only 4.6% of respondents declared a desire to evoke envy in others, which clearly deviates from the cited results. On the other hand, the obtained data noting that 25.8% of students posting such photos want to stand out from others seems to align with the 27% of users competing with others (in the "Vacation Confidence Index" study).

The results of the present trial correspond well with the research carried out by Ana Mari Munar and Jens Kr. Steen Jacobsen, in which 40% of respondents declared that they shared content on social media to help others, provide necessary information, and warn about dangers and mistakes in visited locations [Munar and Jacobsen 2014, p. 50-51]. This motive was similarly important for students of AWF in Krakow, as 43.5% of them indicated that they are guided by showing others the visited place, to convey knowledge about it and encourage visiting this destination.

## Conclusions

The aim of the work was to analyse the habits and diversity of posting travel content among young Instagram users, represented by students of the University of Physical Education in Krakow. Based on the conducted research and its comparison with the results obtained by other authors, it was determined that Instagram is a service that young people – including students of the University of Physical Education in Krakow – used very willingly and very often. In all of the analysed studies, a similar (daily) frequency of using the portal was noticeable. However, the amount of time different users dedicated to it varies. Young individuals mainly prefer smartphones for browsing and publishing content. Seven out of ten surveyed students admitted that they share content in the form of posts, although they do this relatively rarely.

The data analysis showed that there is no significant statistical difference in the frequency of posting tourism-themed posts between students of tourism-related fields and students of other majors, although the results of the Mann-Whitney U test were close to the threshold of statistical significance ( $p=0.0502$ ). On the other hand, it was confirmed that students of tourism-related fields publish a larger percentage of tourism-related posts on their profiles (57% compared to 48% in other fields), as shown by the Mann-Whitney U test ( $p=0.0042$ ). The study also demonstrated a significant correlation between the frequency of travel and the publication of tourism-related content on Instagram, suggesting that more frequent trips mo-

tivate sharing related content. Surprisingly, the main motive for publishing tourism-related posts was not the desire to show off the trip, but the desire to archive memories.

It is worth adding that a higher percentage of women, compared to men, publish travel-related posts on Instagram. Importantly, the motives for such publications are usually similar. Only one out of 15 motives (the desire to improve well-being) turned out to be more significant for women. The research results also indicated that women view more travel-related posts on Instagram than men.

The limitations of study include several factors. Firstly, it was conducted among students from one specific university, which may have affected the limited representativeness of the results and their universality for other social groups. Secondly, due to the nature of the questionnaire study, it was not possible to conduct a full analysis regarding the content of the published travel-related posts. Technical limitations of the online questionnaire may have caused a lack in the possibility for a deeper analysis and understanding the context as well as content of specific posts on Instagram. Furthermore, the study was conducted in winter, which could have influenced the results, as the number of travel-related posts added outside the tourist season is smaller.

The article has several practical implications. The findings of the study showed that students of the University of Physical Education in Krakow actively post travel content on Instagram. This information can be utilised to promote a conscious approach to travel and tourism. Analysing preferences for publishing tourism-related content can aid in creating educational programmes tailored to the needs of students and identifying potential tourism influencers. The study can also provide information on students' preferences regarding taking photos during tourist trips. The obtained data can be used by travel agencies planning tours of specific tourist attractions, to enable their clients to take the most attractive photos.

Given the significant complexity of the addressed issue, the following directions for future research are proposed:

1. Future studies may be focused on a larger sample of students from various universities or even other social groups. Increasing the representativeness of the sample could lead to more general conclusions regarding the habits of posting travel content on Instagram.
2. Research could be expanded through a more detailed analysis of post content published on Instagram. Conducting a semantic analysis or examining the aspects of travel-related content could provide more in-depth information about students' travel preferences.
3. Another interesting research direction could involve examining the impact of travel-related content published on Instagram on the travel decisions of others.

4. Studying the relationships between activity on Instagram and actual tourist experiences: it would also be worthwhile to explore how activity on Instagram, including posting travel-related content, may affect students' actual tourist experiences. Analysing the relationship between social media activity and travel preferences could provide valuable insights for the tourism industry.
5. Investigating changes in content posting habits over time and in different seasons could yield interesting information about seasonality and trends in traveling as posting travel-related content.

All if these research directions could contribute to a better understanding of the role of Instagram and social media in the context of traveling and provide guidance for tourism institutions and organisations involved in tourism education.

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## EXPECTATIONS OF TRAVEL AGENCY CUSTOMERS IN POLAND REGARDING THE SERVICES OFFERED TO THEM DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

*Ramona Jachym\**, *Katarzyna Zielińska\*\**,  
*Rajmund Tomik\*\*\**

### Abstract

**Purpose.** The aim of the study is to present the expectations of travel agency customers in Poland with regard to the offered tourist product, and to conduct an analysis of changes in these expectations after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the objective is to identify the conditions necessary to be met by travel entrepreneurs who want people to use their services, despite the awareness of the risks resulting from the outbreak of the pandemic.

**Method.** The research carried out using the diagnostic survey concerned expectations towards the tourist offer during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research tool was a questionnaire consisting of 15 questions, in the form of an online survey distributed via the Facebook social networking site. The respondents were adults who had a profile on Facebook. The survey was anonymous and voluntary. In total, 300 correctly completed questionnaires were collected.

**Findings.** In the study, it was shown that the importance of the practices commonly used on the tourism market increased under the influence of threats that were revealed during the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been proven that knowing the behaviour and requirements of potential customers makes it easier to create a tourist offer, which allows to reach a wider, more diverse group of recipients.


**Research and conclusion limitations.** The research concerns only potential customers of travel agencies who have an account on the Facebook social networking site.


**Practical implications.** The results may constitute a general pattern of a potential travel agency customer and his/her perception of the offer in relation to the new post-pandemic reality on the tourist market, which may suggest a way for companies to deal with a customer who is aware of the risks associated with the SARS-CoV-2 virus.


**Originality.** A large number of analysed characteristics (18) generalised in a way that can be identified in the case of most travel agencies that were confronted with each other in terms of the result before and after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The results are also a kind of collection of opinions of potential customers, the analysis of which is easy to read by entrepreneurs who can use it in the event of similar events in the future.

**Type of paper.** An article presenting the results of empirical research.

**Keywords:** travel agency, COVID-19 pandemic, client, tourist services, Poland.

\*  <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-7064-1959>; MSc.; Academy of Physical Education in Katowice, Department of Tourism and Recreation; e-mail: r.jachym@awf.katowice.pl.

\*\*  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0859-3336>; Ph.D.; Academy of Physical Education in Katowice, Department of Sports and Tourism Management; e-mail: k.zielinska@awf.katowice.pl.

\*\*\*  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9603-8828>; Ph.D., Assoc. Prof.; Academy of Physical Education in Katowice, Department of Tourism and Recreation; e-mail: r.tomik@awf.katowice.pl.

## Introduction

The need to study the expectations of travel agency customers in Poland regarding the services offered to them during the COVID-19 pandemic was noticed as a result of observing the situation on the tourist market in Poland and the increase in financial problems of tourist enterprises. The study is justified by the desire to reach service providers who have problems adapting to the new post-pandemic reality or want to improve their situation and position on the market through a better adapted offer, which will also reach potential customers who are skeptical. It has been proven that knowledge of the behaviour and requirements of potential customers facilitates the creation of a tourist offer, which allows to reach a wider, more diverse group of recipients. Goods and services should create a uniform tourist product that will combine all its elements using one, overarching product idea [Kaczmarek, Stasiak, Włodarczyk 2002, p. 35]. Specific conditions related to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic forced tour operators to implement a new product idea that would respond to the increasing demands of buyers. The quality of the offered tourist products mainly depends on the organiser, therefore, research and analyses in this area constitute an important source of information for people working in the tourism services industry. The results can be used especially by small, local tour operators and tourist agents, as the features used in the diagnostic survey were selected as a result of pilot studies and generalised in a way that can be identified for most enterprises, including those diversified in terms of the nature and scale of their operations. Tourism growth is expected to remain subdued due to travel restrictions in many developing countries and new waves of infections [Pappas 2023].

## Literature review

The natural environment, economy, the development of technology and society involved in tourism have the greatest impact on the dynamic development of tourism, which has been observed since the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The active changes that tourism undergoes do not escape the attention of tourism enterprises, which are constantly having to adapt to the changing environment in which they run their businesses.

The health and economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic at the beginning of 2020 posed serious challenges for the tourism industry due to restrictions on domestic and international traffic, which significantly affected the evolution of tourism demand [Vărzaru, Bocean and Cazacu 2021, p. 1]. The reality in which tourism enterprises have operated so far has changed because of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. The tourism sec-

tor was one of the hardest hit by COVID-19, affecting both supply and demand for travel. Tourism belongs to the service sector of the economy and is based on a very specific product, which is differentiated due to the need for its adaptation to the needs of clients. It should be borne in mind that a butterfly effect occurs in tourism, which means that news about threats spread quickly around the world [Nicola et al. 2020, p. 188]. Events on such a large scale as the pandemic caused a change in consumer behaviour and trends in tourism [*ibid.*]. The COVID-19 pandemic, which was a huge threat to tourism market enterprises, significantly affected the decrease in the number of tourist trips [Borek et al. 2022, p. 18]. Adapting the offer to restrictions and regulations became constant work that was necessary to achieve a stable position on the market. The COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to restrictions related to, for example, the limits of people in accommodation facilities or means of transport and difficulties in connection with movement, also created problems regarding the transit of people from countries that were subject to mandatory quarantine. These and other obstacles forced tourism organisers to work harder, and their management boards were put to the test, because it is the duty of company managers to ensure a sustainable competitive advantage, which is reflected in three basic areas: profitability, market share and market value of the company [Tyrańska 2009, p. 67]. This goal can be achieved not only through the use of financial resources, but the speed of making the right decisions plays an important role in this case. Due to its specificity, the tourism market can develop quickly, but it is also very susceptible to any negative environmental phenomena. In this case, the amount of negative stimuli, which also reached potential customers of travel agencies, was so disturbing that the decisions made by tourism organisers had to create balance, as well as calm the mood of customers. Travel agencies had to respond very quickly to the requirements set before them not only by customers but, above all, by legal regulations in the country and around the world. Over time, the regulations became more and more lenient and allowed tour operators much more freedom of action. The pandemic strongly influenced the decision-making process in the tourism industry. As a result, a new way of thinking about tourists purchasing behaviours has emerged. Due to the crisis conditions, the level of complexity regarding tourists purchasing intentions has increased exponentially [Formanek, Sokol 2022]. However, the literature is largely silent on examining the tourism complexities generated by COVID-19, and furthermore, due to the fact that COVID-19 has only recently entered our lives, the tourism literature is lacking studies in which the longitudinal impact of the pandemic would be examined [Pappas 2023]. Today, when the pandemic has subsided and the restrictions have been lifted, it is possible to assess to what extent companies coped during this difficult time and how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the needs of customers in the post-pandemic reality.



In this study, presents the expectations are presented of travel agency customers in Poland regarding the offered tourist product and an analysis of changes in these expectations after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The results also make it possible to learn about the tourist destinations chosen by the respondents, as well as to identify the conditions that travel agencies must meet so that people use their services, despite the threats posed by the pandemic.

With regard to achieving the intended objective, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What were the expectations of travel agency customers in Poland regarding the tourist products offered to them after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What conditions did travel agencies have to meet to convince undecided customers to use their services?

## Method

The diagnostic survey method was used in the research. The respondents were adults having a profile on the Facebook social networking site. The survey was anonymous. The survey questionnaire was not addressed to a specific group of respondents and participation was voluntary. The research was conducted in the period between 20<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and 20<sup>th</sup> February 2022. In total, 300 correctly completed questionnaires were collected. Based on the most frequently selected answers, a generalised profile of the respondent was created, that is a woman aged 18 to 26, living in a city with a population of 50,000-250,000 inhabitants, professionally employed, with secondary education. The majority of the respondents (161 people, which is 53.7% of all respondents) used the services of travel agencies once a year in the summer season, and 185 respondents (61.66%) did not use the services of travel agencies shortly after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. People who decided to travel mostly chose foreign outbound tourism and visited countries in Europe and Africa.

The research technique used in the study was a questionnaire. The research tool was a questionnaire consisting of 15 questions. The questionnaire's specification contained five questions, and the main part comprised 10 questions. The questions were closed-ended, except for one half-open one. The questionnaire was an online survey, fully anonymous, created using the Google form, and distributed and shared via the Facebook social networking site.

The pilot studies, which took place before the start of the main study, were conducted in the form of interviews with representatives of the Almatu travel agency in Katowice. These interviews allowed to verify the reality

that tour operators had to deal with during the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on the received information, questions for the survey were selected.

Respondents determined the importance level of each feature on a 5-point Likert scale, for which the gradation of the significance regarding a given indicator increased along with the increase in points. The index of support before and after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic was calculated for the features possessed by travel agencies. The support index was calculated by summing up all responses for individual characteristics before the pandemic and dividing the sum by the number of respondents (300 people). Identical calculations were performed in the case of post-COVID-19 responses for the same characteristics. The STATISTICA program allowed to measure the statistical significance of the most important indicators for the study, which concerned the respondents' support for the presented features. A test of differences between two structure indicators was used.

## Findings

The results obtained for the first two questions of the questionnaire made it possible to establish the indicators of support for selected features before and after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The characteristics were determined on the basis of pilot studies performed before the start of the main study. They have been generalised and recognised as the basic and, at the same time, the most desirable features that every travel agency should have.

Pre- and post-pandemic support rates were revealed using the arithmetic mean of the scores presented separately for each of the listed characteristics included in the questionnaire. The results show whether the feature lost or gained more support under the influence of the pandemic. The highest rated indicators were (Table 1): easy transfer of information between the office and the client, attractive prices, the possibility of purchasing travel insurance, transparency of contract terms and easy telephone contact. Those that lost the support of respondents were: numerous direct sales points, a wide range of foreign trips around Europe, a wide range of exotics, the possibility of going on a residential trip (holidays), as well as the care of a tour guide and resident. The option of going on a sightseeing trip was assessed by potential clients of travel agencies as being as important before the pandemic as after its outbreak. The test concerning the significance of differences between the two structure indicators indicated that the results obtained for all the given features were not statistically significant.

**Table 1.** Support for selected features before and after the COVID-19 pandemic

Characteristic	Support indicator		Difference in support indicator	Significance test
	before the pandemic	after the pandemic		p
Numerous direct sales outlets	3.32	2.82	0.5	0.8402
Possible Internet booking	3.80	4.13	-0.33	0.9061
Easy telephone contact	3.89	4.20	-0.31	0.9108
Possibility to purchase travel insurance	3.87	4.24	-0.37	0.895
Popularity of the travel agency	3.74	4.06	-0.32	0.9073
Attractive prices	4.24	4.32	-0.08	0.9798
Wide range of domestic trips	3.29	3.64	-0.35	0.8957
Wide range of trips abroad in Europe	3.93	3.44	0.49	0.8568
Wide range of exotics	3.34	2.81	0.53	0.831
Organisation of camps for children	2.63	3.01	-0.38	0.8723
Opportunity to go on sightseeing trip	3.31	3.31	0	1
Opportunity to go on holiday	3.92	3.64	0.28	0.9174
Care of tour leader	3.51	3.49	0.02	0.9959
Resident care	3.58	3.45	0.13	0.9597
Transparency of contract terms	4.20	4.21	-0.01	0.9982
Attractive excursion programmes	4.04	4.06	-0.02	0.9935
Office cleanliness	3.57	4.00	-0.43	0.876
Easy transfer of office-client information	4.18	4.33	-0.15	0.9587

**Source:** Own elaboration.

The questionnaire contained filtering questions. Persons who gave a negative answer to the question asked in the questionnaire about whether they travelled during the pandemic had to go to the point: "If you did not use the services of a travel agency during the COVID-19 pandemic, for which of given the reasons did you resign from a trip organised by such an office?". There were 185 people who declared that they had not used the services of travel agencies. The results are illustrated in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Reasons for not using travel agency services during the COVID-19 pandemic

Causes	Number	%
Fear of getting sick	24	12.97
Fear of quarantine	19	10.27
High prices of SARS-COV-2 tests	20	10.81
Uncertainty caused by the constantly changing laws related to travel	54	29.19
Fear of cancelling the trip at the last minute	34	18.38
The need to present a certificate of past infection with the SARS-COV-2 virus	3	1.62
The need to present a certificate of acceptance of the SARS-COV-2 vaccine	18	9.73
The need to wear masks in public places	13	7.03
Total:	185	100%

**Source:** Own elaboration.

Respondents indicated the uncertainty caused by the constantly changing legal provisions in connection with travel as the most important reason for not using the services of travel agencies during the COVID-19 pandemic (29.19%). The second was the fear of cancelling the trip at the last minute (18.38%) and the third was the fear of getting sick (12.97%). The other reasons received a similar number of responses, except for the need to provide a certificate of past infection with the SARS-COV-2 virus, which turned out to be the least important and received only three responses (1.62%). The results allow to indicate the obstacles that travel agencies face when trying to convince people with similar concerns to use their services.

In the study, it was shown that people who, despite the threat caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, decided to travel mostly chose foreign outbound tourism (Table 3). This may be an indication for travel agencies on which tourist destinations they should base their offer. The desire to travel abroad is an impulse to take risks, despite the limitations related to the need to comply with regulations and restrictions that vary depend-

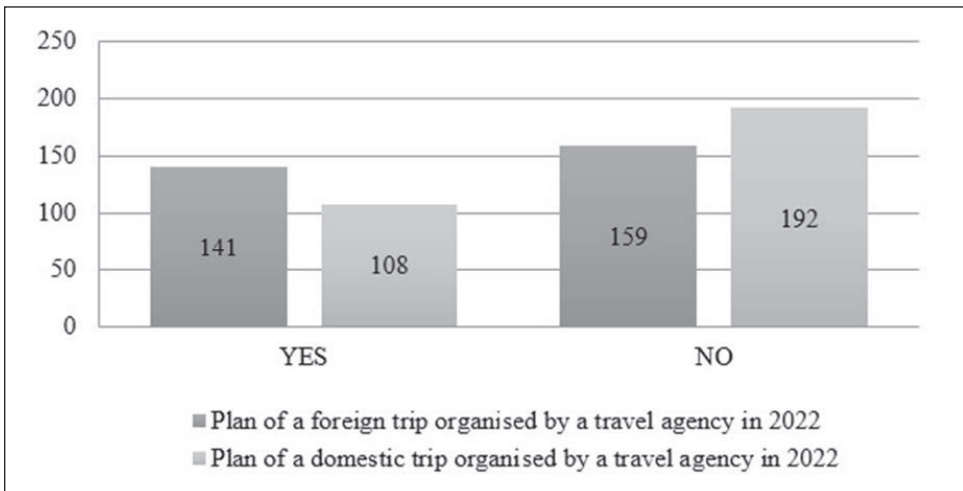
**Table 3.** Choices of respondents' tourist destinations during the COVID-19 pandemic

Destination	Number	%
Poland	31	26.96
Europe	49	42.61
Asia	7	6.09
Africa	17	14.78
South America	8	6.96
Latin America	2	1.74
Australia	1	0.86
Sum:	115	100%

**Source:** Own elaboration.

ing on the visited country. The organisers should not give up the national offer, because it still finds supporters.

Respondents were asked about their travel plans for 2022. During the survey, as much as 64% of the respondents declared no plans for a domestic trip organised by a travel agency in 2022. The results presented in Figure 1 illustrate the difference in responses. Such a large discrepancy is surprising, taking into account the publicised suggestions of medical specialists and all social campaigns aimed at encouraging Polish citizens to refrain from traveling outside the country in order to limit the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. It seems that, initially, the increase in the number of trips will take place in the domestic space, and most of the international trips will take place primarily between countries of the same continent [Waluch, Kucher 2020, p. 2].



**Figure 1.** Declaration of willingness to use travel agency services in 2022.

**Source:** Own elaboration.

When asked about their travel plans regarding foreign and domestic trips organised by a travel agency, respondents answered as follows: 47% (141 people) were planning a foreign trip organised by the agency, while 53% (159 individuals) of people participating in the study did not have a plan to use the services of a travel agency in the case of a trip abroad. With regard to declarations of an organised domestic trip, 36% of respondents (108 people) admitted that they were planning such a trip, as opposed to 64% of respondents (159 people) who did not plan to go on a domestic trip organised by a professional tour operator. This may be the result of the reasons, presented previously, for not using the services of travel agencies. The most frequently chosen reason was uncertainty caused by constantly changing

regulations in relation to travel. There is a possibility that people declaring no travel plans organised by a travel agency during the COVID-19 pandemic decided to organise a trip on their own to avoid any restrictions imposed on tour operators, e.g. use the same means of transport or restrictions on the size of groups visiting all kinds of tourist attractions.

Regardless of the reason for not wanting to go on an organised tourist event, tour operators should not only adapt to the necessary conditions indicated in Table 4 as the most important, but also use all available means of marketing communication to reach people who are especially sceptical about taking trips during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Table 4.** Support for the conditions travel agencies must meet

No.	Condition	Support indicator
1.	Information about current travel conditions on your website	4.21
2.	Facilitating testing for your customers	3.95
3.	Maintaining guidelines regarding the number of people traveling in one means of transport	3.60
4.	Using proven accommodation facilities that follow WHO recommendations	3.70
5.	Enabling customers to complete formalities online	4.17
6.	Quick contact with the client in the event of trip cancellation	4.35
7.	Providing compensation in the event of a trip being cancelled	4.34
8.	Very attractive travel prices	4.28
9.	Last minute booking available	4.03
10.	Attractive offer for domestic trips	3.72

**Source:** Own elaboration.

The respondents' answers indicate that common practices on the tourist market regarding functioning during the COVID-19 pandemic are very important to them. Among the proposed conditions, quick contact with the customer in the event of trip cancellation (4.35) and receiving compensation in the event of trip cancellation (4.34) received the greatest support among the respondents. Considering the fact that the most frequently chosen reason for not using the services of travel agencies during the COVID-19 pandemic was the uncertainty caused by the constantly changing legal regulations in connection with travel, the highest support rate for the two conditions mentioned above seems to be justified. Clients were aware of the risk

associated with traveling during a pandemic, thus, it was a prerequisite for them to feel confident that the office would be willing to cooperate with them in the event of undesirable situations.

## Discussion

The problem of analysing the impact of epidemic and pandemic phenomena on the state of the tourism economy in the case of Poland has not been the subject of research until recently. Analyses of these issues did not take place, because neither an epidemic nor other causes occurred on a similar scale causing an almost complete reduction in tourist traffic and triggering the inability to conduct business by tourism economy entities [Panasiuk 2020, p. 61].

The coronavirus spread much faster and more widely than expected [Goodger, Ferran 2020, p. 2]. The COVID-19 pandemic has had severe impact on the tourism economy and created problems for entrepreneurs that they have never had to deal with before. Tour operators had to adapt not only to the restrictions that were in force in Poland, but also be aware of the restrictions imposed by most countries in the world. Lockdowns, which were generally introduced on all continents throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, fear of getting sick, vaccinations, orders and bans that often changed from day to day, to which everyone had to adapt, affected the attitude of people towards travel. Today, in 2023, the tourist market has revived again and travel restrictions are less and less severe for tourism participants, which means that there are more and more of them.

In research conducted by the Polish Tourist Organisation, it has been demonstrated that among people who did not want to travel in the summer for tourism and recreational purposes, almost 29% did not decide to do so because of a worse economic or professional situation. Nearly 25% cited concerns about their own health and the health of their loved ones as the main reason, and 23% did not want to leave when they cannot act fully freely [Juszczak 2020, p.23]. The results of the above-mentioned studies indicate that 25% of people stated fear of health as the reason for the lack of travel plans, which refers to the results presented in Table 2, where fear of getting sick was the third most frequently chosen reason and received 12.97% of the subjects' responses. It should be crucial for the tourism industry to strengthen domestic tourism because it is less dependent on external factors than international tourism, and in critical times, its development can be more easily stimulated. From the point of view of overcoming the crisis, the low rate of concerns about health safety in the context of domestic trips is encouraging [Widomski 2020, p. 778].

In the research by N. Pappas on the chaotic systems impact of COVID-19 on the purchasing intentions of adult Athenian vacationers, it was proven

that even after the pandemic health crisis ends, the socio-economic crisis will continue to have significant impact on the tourism industry in the coming years [Pappas 2023]. The results overlap to some extent with research on the expectations of travel agency customers in Poland regarding the services offered to them during the COVID-19 pandemic. The conclusion of both studies is consistent and states that the pandemic significantly influenced the purchasing decisions of tourism participants.

In the study by S.K. Deb and S.M. Nafi on the impact of COVID-19 on the global tourism industry, it was concluded that its impact is probably more damaging than any previous event. The effects are likely to be long-lasting and will be felt for the next two or three years. Given the enormity of the COVID-19 epidemic, it is not necessary to return to traditional activities [Deb, Nafi 2020, p. 1491]. This conclusion also allows to confirm the conclusions of the current study. It will be more beneficial to adapt the offer to the new reality and increased customer requirements than to return to old habits. The tourism industry market must evolve to go back to normal conditions. It has to be ready for similar crises in the future. Deb and Nafi [*ibid*] also concluded that this situation provides an opportunity to reflect on the current business structure of the tourism industry, which may require reform to address moments of crisis, protect businesses and jobs. This means that revitalising the tourism industry requires a comprehensive plan.

W. Nambulee, T. Champahom, S. Jomnonkwao, D. Watthanaklang and V. Ratanavaraha conducted research in 2023 related to understanding travel intentions during and after the COVID-19 pandemic based on psychological theory models. The conclusions from their research coincide with the results of a study on the expectations of travel agency customers in Poland regarding the services offered to them during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results of their analysis indicate that the perception of benefits had significant negative impact on travel intentions during the pandemic, therefore, the government should take actions to increase citizens' confidence in using public transport. This can be achieved by providing the public with various protective equipment, such as face masks, antibacterial gels or sprays and SARS-CoV-2 virus test kits. By doing so, people will feel that the government is not imposing significant burdens on them [Nambulee et al. 2023, p. 12]. Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that after the pandemic, all factors have a positive influence on travel intentions. This means that tourists are more confident about the COVID-19 situation, but the most influential factor is the perception of benefits. A benefit can be called fulfilled expectations, which were indicated in the survey on the expectations of travel agency customers.

Tour operators experiencing the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic can adapt their product to the increased expectations of customers accordingly. The research results presented in the article were aimed at ver-



ifying the expectations of travel agency customers in Poland in relation to the offered tourist product and analysing changes in these expectations after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study was also supposed to enable learning about the tourist destinations they chose, as well as the conditions that travel agencies had to meet for people to use their services, despite the threats posed by the pandemic.

The restrictions affected everyone, not only people who create a given industry, but also its recipients [Kryczka 2022, p. 71]. The pandemic and the period of freezing the economy caused negative, often irreversible effects or those that will require a long adjustment period [Panasiuk 2020, p. 57]. It should be expected that returning to the pre-pandemic state may be difficult to achieve, however, analyses of consumer behaviour will help in developing a tourist product that will be flexible enough to meet the requirements of today's customer, and will also be able to facilitate crisis management of tourism enterprises.

## Conclusions

In the study, the conditions were revealed that must be met by travel agencies to satisfy undecided customers. Quick contact with the customer in the event of trip cancellation (4.35) and receiving compensation in the case of trip cancellation (4.34) were among the proposed conditions that received the greatest support among respondents.

The conclusion for the organisers of tourism that comes to mind after analysis of the research results is the need to learn from mistakes and adjust tourist offers to current expectations. Having knowledge on the behaviour and requirements of potential customers makes it easier to create a tourist offer, which allows to reach a wider, more diverse group of recipients.

With regard to the research questions, the following conclusions were formulated:

1. The main expectations of travel agency customers in Poland regarding the tourist products offered to them after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic was quick contact with the client in the event of a tour being cancelled, and receiving compensation in the case of a tour being cancelled. In such a situation, travel agencies should include these conditions in their contracts with customers. A guarantee of a return, or at least partial return, of the money invested in a trip that did not take place for reasons as unpredictable as the pandemic would be a factor not only encouraging customers to take more risks but, at the same time, could provide them with a sense of security and greater confidence in making the right decision by choosing a given tour operator. Safety is an essential value in the life and functioning of a unit [Wiśniewski, Koziół,

Falecki 2017, p. 13]. This is confirmed by the results of research, in which an increase was shown in the value of buying travel insurance after the outbreak of the pandemic. With the above in mind, travel agencies can adjust contracts for the provision of tourist services in such a way that both parties obtain the greatest benefit.

2. Undecided customers can be convinced to take advantage of a tourist offer by including their needs in the terms of the contract. An even more detailed interview with the customer could also be carried out when presenting the offer at travel agencies. Furthermore, the fact that the pandemic has irreversibly affected customer expectations should additionally be taken into account. Necessary conditions presented in Table 4 are clear signals of customer expectations in the post-pandemic reality, which should become a standard in the services provided by travel organisers. These activities, combined with active promotion in the media, will increase interest among the most demanding customers and affect their satisfaction, which will further increase trust in the company and enhance the chances of using repeat services of a given organiser.

In Table 1, support for the same characteristics before and after the pandemic are demonstrated. The presented features were selected as a result of an interview with a representative of the Almatour Polska travel agency. The highest rated indicators were: easy transfer of information between the office and the client, attractive process, the possibility of purchasing travel insurance, transparency of the terms in contracts and easy telephone contact. Those points that lost the support of respondents were: numerous direct sales points, a wide range of foreign trips around Europe, a wide range of exotics, the possibility of going on a residential trip (holidays), as well as the care of a tour leader and resident. The possibility of going on a sightseeing trip was assessed by potential clients of travel agencies as being as important before the pandemic as after its outbreak.

Creating a programme for a tourist event adapted to post-pandemic expectations will also enable faster response in the event that such a crisis situation should reoccur. Appropriate preparation will increase the competitive advantage over other organisers, which will translate into minimising losses caused by the occurrence of a similar predicament.

The COVID-19 pandemic announced by WHO in 2020 was a situation that travel companies did not expect. Companies such as travel agencies, as well as accommodation, catering facilities, carriers and everyone operating on the tourist services market, now in 2023, should know how to react to similar situations that may arise at any time.

One of the most important practical recommendations for tour operators resulting from the study is to invest in the development of travel agencies in the digital sphere. The need to stay at home prevented potential cli-

ents of travel agencies from visiting sales points in person. With this mind, travel agency owners should regularly update and develop their social media and websites, and ensure easy telephone contact with sales consultants. Access to reliable information on the Internet enables customers to conveniently purchase the offered tourist products. These must be adapted to the latest requirements related to the post-pandemic reality. They were identified as a result of a survey conducted on the expectations of travel agency customers in Poland regarding the services offered to them during the COVID-19 pandemic, guaranteeing a better chance of success.

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# RECRUITMENT PROCESSES AS PART OF THE POLICY PURSUED IN TOURISM ENTERPRISES IN A POST-COVID ENVIRONMENT

*Karolina Serwańska\**

## Abstract

**Purpose.** The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the impact of the recruitment processes carried out in the tourism industry on the policy-making of tourism enterprises in a post-pandemic world by identifying the recruitment problems in the implementation of tourism activities, which are driven by HR and recruitment problems. In the paper, the links between recruitment processes are highlighted, as well as the evolution of tourism services in the face of the industry crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The extent to which these problems impede effective operations in the market was investigated, as in service companies the qualifications and quality of staff are vital, especially when providing tourism services. The aim was to check what recruitment methods and tools the surveyed representatives of the tourism industry use as a method of counteracting staffing problems. Recruitment problems were analysed in terms of the deterioration of the quality of tourist services, the impact on the image and financial situation of tourist companies. The analysis consisted in determining in which areas the effects of existing recruitment problems occurred.

**Method.** The research was carried out through individual in-depth surveys, in which managers of tourism companies – regardless of their casual statements – were asked to answer 13 pre-prepared questions relating to recruitment problems accompanying entrepreneurs in the previous 24 months (2020-2022). The questions concerned the recruitment of staff for positions related to tourist services. Ten Polish businesses representing the main sectors of the tourism industry were surveyed, including travel agencies (organisers and brokers/agents), hotels and leisure tour operators.


**Findings.** It was found that recruitment problems existed, to a greater or lesser extent, in virtually all the surveyed companies. These are largely due to the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The nature and source of these problems, and whether and if so, what impact they may have on the implementation of the country's tourism policy, were verified.

**Research and conclusion limitations.** The qualitative studies were conducted on a small sample of entrepreneurs from Poland.

**Originality.** In the paper, the relatively rarely discussed topic of recruitment problems is dealt with, including the methods used to counteract this phenomenon pointed to the COVID-19 pandemic as a factor intensifying the importance of difficulties on the labour market in the tourism industry.

**Type of paper.** The results of empirical (qualitative) research are presented in this paper.

**Keywords:** human resource management, recruitment, tourism enterprise, tourism services, staff turnover, tourism policy

\*  <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-4342-0991>; MSc; University of Physical Education in Kraków; e-mail: k.serwanska@wp.pl.

## Introduction

The tourism industry is one of the leading sectors of the economy, maintaining a large share of jobs. It accounts for more than 10.3 percent of the GDP in the European Union and generates employment for some 27.3 million workers, or 11.7 percent of total EU employment [European Parliament 2021]. This potential indicates a strong threat to the EU economy as a whole from the decline in tourist arrivals as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic [Fernandes 2020]. The tourism economy, as a system [Nowakowska 1988], has the characteristics of an economic category influenced by tourism policy interactions [Mika 2014]. Its growth is severely hampered when tourism management is heavily constrained by the global pandemic, especially when these constraints affect the achievement of one of the primary tourism policy objectives, which is to satisfy the needs of the tourist. Bearing in mind that tourism policy is a set of activities aimed at satisfying the tourism needs of one's own society, ensuring rational use of resources in the field of tourism economy, shaping the optimum size of the tourism structure and traffic, and generally coordinating the development of tourism, taking its numerous functions and relations with other spheres of social and economic life into account [Alejziak 2005], it can be concluded that in addition to the difficulties of satisfying the needs of tourists, a problem of coordinating the functioning of the tourism market arose [Edgell et al. 2008].

The players on this market are primarily tourism businesses and their human capital. The restrictions introduced by the decree of the Polish Minister of Health from 20 March 2020<sup>1</sup> – such as the necessity of social distancing, the obligation to quarantine sick people, travel restrictions – resulted in the suspension of most tourism services across the country. The economic crisis and the collapse of the tourism economy occurred as soon as the first cases of COVID-19 were identified in March 2020. There was uncertainty that affected many industries [Szczęsny 2021]. While in the pre-pandemic world tourism businesses focused on taking measures to maximise profits, the current situation largely indicates that it may be equally important to develop solutions to minimise losses in a situation of continuous risk of possible infection [Novelli 2021]. The aim of the study is to point out the interconnectedness of recruitment problems as a vital and integral part of tourism business management, especially in the post-pandemic world. For the main research objective, individual in-depth surveys were conducted among

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation of the Minister Of Health from 20 March 2020 on the declaration of the state of epidemic on the territory of the Republic of Poland Pursuant to Article 46(2) and (4) of the Act of 5 December 2008 on preventing and combating infections and infectious diseases in humans (Journal of Laws from 2019, items 1239 and 1495 and Journal of Laws from 2020, items 284, 322 and 374).

tourism entrepreneurs, representing four major sub-sectors: the hotel industry, travel agencies, travel agents as well as tour and leisure operators. The research covered the last two years, thus, the dynamics of the phenomenon under study regard the period of the pandemic and its end.

### **Method and description of the study**

The conducted study was carried out using a survey, based on which in-depth interviews were conducted. The 10 surveyed entrepreneurs represented various sectors from the tourism industry, including hotels, travel agencies, tour operators, and companies organising sports and recreational trips. In terms of the number of employees, the surveyed employers represented small, medium and large enterprises. The respondents represented different types of tourist enterprises:

1. Tour operator, a large entrepreneur, employing over 1,500 employees.
2. Tour operator, a large entrepreneur, employing over 1000 employees.
3. Hotelier – hotel chain, a large entrepreneur, employing over 400 employees.
4. Hotelier – hotel chain, a large entrepreneur, employing over 300 employees.
5. Hotelier – small hotel chain, a medium entrepreneur, employing over 80 employees.
6. Hotelier – single hotel with recreational and wellness services, medium entrepreneur, employing over 50 employees.
7. Organiser of recreational and sports trips, a small entrepreneur, employing 25 employees.
8. Tour operator – a small entrepreneur, employing 14 employees.
9. Organiser of recreational and sport trips, entrepreneur, employing 12 employees.
10. Travel agency – a small entrepreneur, employing 12 employees.

The surveyed employers employ a total of over 3000 employees. The author contacted the respondents during personal meetings and phone conversations. All conversations were recorded using audio recordings and secured on a storage device. The questionnaire contained 13 questions related to recruitment (see: Attachment no. 1). The questions in the questionnaire raised issues related to recruitment problems, recruitment methods, the scale of employee turnover, the impact of recruitment problems on various areas of the company's operations and the general personnel situation in travel companies in the post-COVID era.



## **Main challenges in the human resources management process in tourism**

In Poland, tourism is one of the most dynamically developing sectors of the national economy. The Report by the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) published in 2021 confirmed that the total contribution of the travel and tourism sector to the Polish economy was PLN 129.5 billion (USD 33.8 billion) in 2020, accounting for 5.2% of the country's GDP. In the report, it was also noted that the sector supported 1.8 million jobs in Poland, which is 10.5% of total employment in the country<sup>2</sup>. It plays a major role on the labour market. In the paper, it is pointed out that the tourism industry is a significant component of the domestic labour market and supports a total of approximately 1.4 million jobs [Stojczew 2021]. The tourism product is mostly composed of services, which account for its intangible nature [Panasiuk 2019]. When comparing tourism enterprises to manufacturing enterprises, there is clearly a large share of human capital in the process of generating these services. The significant share of the human factor influences the large number of jobs offered by tourism entrepreneurs. This comprises the correct selection of personnel extremely important. Following the results of author's research and comments made by representatives of the industry, the selection of employees with the right qualifications and motivation translates into the effectiveness of services and, consequently, tourists satisfaction. The properly conducted recruitment process is crucial for the quality of offered tourism services.

Taking these observations into account, a study has been carried out that allows to identify the main types of problems related to the recruitment of new employees, which occurred in tourism enterprises during the period under study. Respondents were asked if their companies experienced any candidate sourcing issues in the last 24 months. By analysing the responses and comments given by the representatives of the tourism industry participating in the author's study, it was found that the respondents almost unanimously confirmed that during the pandemic, as well as in the period of its decline, there were numerous problematic situations related to the recruitment of employees in their companies. We therefore have an answer to the question of whether such problems have occurred. Nine out of 10 respondents undertook a discussion that testified to the difficulty of recruiting new staff, considering the whole socio-economic background related to the crisis in the tourism industry. When analysing the answers to the following questions, it is worth noting the wide array of problems encountered in the recruitment process, which may be indicative of the complexity of the

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<sup>2</sup> *Travel & Tourism Economic Impact 2021, Poland* – World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC).

phenomenon. The following phenomena, listed below in order of intensity, appeared to be the most frequently occurring issues. The analysis of the following issues directly relates to the study conducted by the author:

- 1) Many candidates, but few candidates matching the required qualifications.
- 2) Candidates resigned from further participation in the process during recruitment (e.g. due to taking up a job elsewhere).
- 3) Absence of candidates from job interviews – despite appointments being made, candidates did not turn up for interviews.
- 4) Candidates had too high financial expectations.
- 5) Communication difficulties with candidates.
- 6) Insufficient number of candidates for some positions in general.

**Re. 1.** Business owners faced difficulties in analysing the applications received when opening vacancies<sup>3</sup>. Large numbers of applicants were declared, making the process time-consuming while having a poor recruitment effect. The surveyed employers were unanimous in stating that the labour market now definitely offers fewer qualified candidates than two years prior, which determines the lower availability of such workers. Employers comment that they have observed a trend in which many people apply to advertised vacancies, despite not meeting the requirement clearly outlined in the published job postings. Respondents commented extensively on the problem, pointing out the characterising the behaviour of “young generation Y and Z” entering the labour market.

**Re. 2.** Another concern is the phenomenon of candidates frequently discontinuing the recruitment process. This problem is characterised by the fact that after the employers have selected suitable candidates by inviting them to the next stages of the recruitment process, the applicants, after initially confirming their willingness to participate in further recruitment, changed their minds after some time and reported that they had found a job elsewhere or did not give any reason for their decisions. This type of situation caused further time losses for the surveyed entrepreneurs due to the need to go back to the database of CVs received and spend time re-verifying applicants who were often already not interested. Candidate absenteeism from recruitment meetings also refers to those who have interrupted their participation in the recruitment process. This type of situation occurred when applicants were initially verified by recruiters, a telephone interview took place and, on this basis, candidates were offered a recruitment meeting (generally at the company’s premises). Following such an invitation to an interview, job applicants were expected to be punctual, or at least to inform

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<sup>3</sup> Dictionaries usually define a vacancy as an unfilled position [PWN <https://sjp.pwn.pl/po-radnia/haslo/wakat;8284.html>].

the interviewer of an anticipated lateness or absence and request a new appointment.

**Re. 3.** In the case of the cited absenteeism problem, the surveyed employers reported an almost total lack of feedback from candidates. This type of attitude was reported in the research many times. Lack of feedback was perceived as rude and inappropriate behaviour characterised by a lack of responsibility. The image of the candidate that emerges, according to respondents, is characterised by a lack of responsibility, a dismissive attitude towards employers and a lack of etiquette. These negative traits impact the way candidates are viewed by employers. The above correlates with an entitled attitude of potential employees in the later stage of the recruitment process, which is the acceptance of the terms and conditions of employment.

**Re. 4.** At this stage, the respondents declared problems related to the excessive financial expectations of candidates. Those with not very high qualifications expected a level of remuneration that differed significantly from standardised salary offers in enterprises. Respondents commented on this problem quite extensively, pointing to a tendency towards overstating salary expectations and possibly reducing them as the negotiation process progressed, especially among representatives of the youngest generation Y and Z entering the labour market. In addition, this correlates to the economic situation in our country (Poland), with runaway inflation as the main problem. The public is living in times when the cost of living is dramatically rising, so their financial expectations are also increasing. Entrepreneurs from the tourism industry who participated in the survey declared that they do not have much financial freedom, which is a consequence of the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In their opinion, only the most persistent and determined representatives of the industry survived the first sanitary restrictions. It is therefore difficult to speak of spare funds that can be freely used to increase salaries that are not in line with the qualifications of employees. This is quite a challenge for entrepreneurs serving tourists.

**Re. 5.** The next problem related to the initial stage of human resource management is the matter of candidate responsiveness. Difficult contact with candidates slowing down the process of acquiring new staff is a problem reported by the respondents of the study conducted by the author. The studied issue also introduces an element of uncertainty for employers. In this matter, most statements were made by representatives of the hotel industry in relation to lower level positions, in particular, floor service and catering staff. Among the respondents of the present survey were hotel managers who mentioned many situations indicating a break in contact on the part of candidates who did not respond to phone calls or emails, despite confirming their interest in the job. In such situations, the employer had no way of knowing what to do next with such applicants who had already been in the recruitment process for some time. Situations in which employ-

ers had waited too long to contact candidates resulted in a shrinking pool of people waiting to be recruited from a “reserve list”. “Reserve” job applicants who waited too long to hear back from a potential employer gave up waiting any longer. Recruiters, therefore, had little choice in a situation in which candidates already in the recruitment process did not respond to contact attempts and never returned to participate in the process again.

**Re. 6.** A number of vacancies set a slightly different trend – a situation in which there were few applicants. A lack of applicants was reported by 9/10 of the surveyed employers, but at different times and for different positions. The availability of a skilled worker on the labour market has decreased. As mentioned, situations were often reported in which people who did not meet the indicated guidelines still applied for jobs, which made the recruitment process longer and more difficult.

The survey also allowed to identify other problems that arise in the sourcing of employees, but analysis of these problems indicates that most of these challenges are in the area of the human factor – the surveyed employers unanimously stated that the quality of employees available on the labour market was worse than back in the days before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Representatives of tourism companies were invited to speak freely about the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the current human capital within their structures. The in-depth analysis resulted in a similar position, indicating links between the introduction of tighter restrictions related to countering the COVID-19 pandemic, and dynamic changes regarding employment in the tourism industry. When asked to comment, all entrepreneurs pointed to growing recruitment problems, especially compared to the period before the pandemic. In their opinion, this was related to the general market situation. This has affected the overall reputation of the tourism sector in the eyes of workers as unstable, and has resulted in an exodus of workers to other industries. Employees have had to financially secure their livelihoods in these uncertain times [Puciato 2022]. This, as a consequence, has had negative impact on the tourism industry as a whole, leaving the long-term image of a labile industry in terms of employment. The surveyed entrepreneurs cited this reason as the main source of the current recruitment problems at the end of the pandemic. Nowadays, when restrictions were considerably loosened, and the openness for tourism services has increased significantly, recruitment problems have not disappeared. After analysing the statements of the interviewed entrepreneurs, the conclusion is that potential job candidates no longer trust employers in the tourism industry and look back at the crisis situation that recently took away their jobs in tourism. Skilled workers mostly chose other industries without attempting to return to their previous positions in which they were specialised. They feared losing their

jobs again due to the observed instability of the industry. Jobs were being cut, redundant employees were leaving for other industries, and sometimes they gave their own notice in the face of an uncertain tourism market. Thus, with the crisis in tourism services, human capital has flowed away to other sectors. Experienced and skilled workers have moved to other sectors [Puciato 2022]. According to the “World Tourism Barometer” published by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in January 2021, the global tourism industry experienced a decline by 74% in international arrivals in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This massive reduction in activity in the tourism industry has resulted in widespread job losses and a significant exodus of skilled workers from the sector, as they seek employment opportunities in other industries. In the post-COVID environment, when the tourism market is starting to grow strongly again, and the demand for tourism services is increasing, there are not many skilled workers available on the market anymore [Staszewska 2022]. Entrepreneurs claim that there is little chance that even half of those who have left their ranks would return, citing a lack in sense of stability within an industry that has already once before taken away their source of income. Analysing the identified problems, it is worth emphasizing that in light of the changes taking place in tourism as a whole in the aftermath of the crisis caused by the pandemic, we are faced with a very difficult situation that requires entrepreneurs to modify their business strategies and be ready for challenges related to the specifics of a new quality of service.

### **Impact of recruitment problems on the provision of tourism services**

According to the analysis of the present research and a literature of review on the subject, it can be inferred that, as a result of problems related to the recruitment of new employees, employers are incurring increasing losses of time and money. Vacancies remain unfilled for longer periods of time. A suitably qualified and deployed workforce is a lever for service delivery. Entrepreneurs who have adequate human capital and are able to manage it skilfully develop their services, leading to the overall increased expansion of tourism services. Through their employees, the employers involved in tourism set the level of delivered services, but also contribute to expanding the country’s overall tourism offer. Human resource management is therefore crucial in shaping the structure of tourism enterprises. B. Dąbrowska, referring to tourism policy, which she defines as “the process of steering tourism development (...)” [Dąbrowska 2008], points out that well-managed human capital has positive impact on shaping the de-

velopment of tourism. The multiplication of services, setting standards and implementation of good practices are a general consequence of a correct HR management policy. Respondents' opinions indicate a situation in which the proliferation of difficulties in recruiting new staff and prolonged staff shortages have negative influence on the quality of tourism-related services. The management of tourism businesses is unable to provide services at an adequate level when faced with the consequences of the discussed problems. The aforementioned recruitment problems also affect the quality of services due to the employment of less qualified staff. The results of the survey clearly present that the indicated recruitment problems have negative impact on the provision of tourist services. The discussions with entrepreneurs confirmed that, at the very end, it is the tourist who has a lower level of satisfaction with the tourism services purchased. For this reason, responsible entrepreneurs actively take measures to minimise the negative effects of the discussed difficulties. Entrepreneurs complain that human resource management is difficult at the very beginning of the process, i.e. at the stage of acquiring a qualified employee, but the process of managing teams with differing competencies is also problematic. Handling tourists generally takes place in direct contact with staff, at both travel agencies and in the hotel industry. The statement of respondents surveyed by the author who claim that the tourism sector requires certain qualities and competencies in relation to staff to make customers satisfied with the service they receive has been confirmed in many studies. Service delivery is negatively affected by a number of situations arising from vacancies not being filled by suitably qualified people. In the case of hotel services, it was easiest to identify problematic situations in which the customer could not book a room because too few floor service staff are unable to prepare the rooms on time, or when rooms are cleaned below accepted standards. This leads to the dissatisfaction of the tourist. Inadequate service at the reception desk, which is the heart of any hotel, can also negatively affect customer satisfaction. Travel agents, on the other hand, working with too few staff to serve customers in their outlets, can complain of reduced sales, as customers have to wait a long time for service and advice on purchasing trips. In addition, if customers are served by incompetent staff when arranging a holiday trip, a number of problems may arise in relation to the safety of the tourist's stay during the trip. Difficulties in recruiting staff translate into problems in the overall management of human resources in a tourism company. The staff recruitment process is only the beginning of a strategy to manage the company's key capital. As declared by the surveyed entrepreneurs, recruitment problems in tourism enterprises in the last two years have negatively affected the implementation of the established policy and negatively translated into the provision of tourism services.

## **Impact of recruitment problems on the image of tourism businesses**

Corporate image is being raised as a key element in achieving business objectives as part of the implementation of tourism enterprise policies. Corporate image can be viewed as that of the company being an exceptional place to work in the minds of current employees and key external stakeholders [Minchington 2006], but also as promotion of a clear vision of what makes the company a unique and desirable employer [Ambler and Barrow 1996], or as a dynamic process that integrates the company's strategy with its brand, strategic human resource management and corporate social responsibility [Aggerholm et al. 2011]. Employer image is a set of characteristics and elements, which can include benefits, remuneration levels, development opportunities, organisational culture and which prospective and current employees associate with a given employer [Barbaros 2020]. This includes measurable components, such as remuneration, rewards, benefits, as well as non-measurable components, such as organisational culture, management style, development opportunities, company authority [Kozłowski 2016]. A strong employer image is crucial in the process of attracting new employees and, at the same time, has strong impact on service sales. In the course of the surveys, respondents were asked what impact they thought recruitment problems had had on their company image. Respondents mostly answered that it was not so much the recruitment problems themselves that affected their image, but rather the consequences of the problems under discussion. Entrepreneurs commented on the negative impact on their company image of the phenomenon in question. Among the respondents, there were two companies representing large travel agencies, those whose companies were characterised by a large scale of sales offices (more than 100 stores in a country), and they commented most extensively on this subject. Valuable remarks were given based on a number of current examples demonstrating the crucial importance of the company's image in direct customer service, both at the sales offices and on the hotline. Among others, situations occurring at travel sales outlets, where staff have direct contact with customers, were discussed. The discussion allowed to highlight the crucial role of a company's image towards the potential tourist due to the visual analysis of the staff in the store. When, as a consequence of a hindered human resource management process, stores were staffed with under-qualified personnel, customers had a negative perception of the company as a whole. In the same way, the image of the tour operator was adversely affected when there were staff shortages in the stores, resulting in longer waiting times for tourist services. Examples were given in which, seeing empty desks in the stores, customers commented "they're not doing well" in relation to the compa-

ny overall. The sight of an overworked, distracted employee in the store is also a consequence of staffing problems, and this, in turn, is a direct result of the need to introduce increased working hours for employees who remain in employment. These examples illustrate the negative perception of the company by customers. Sequentially, when analysing the image of the company from the point of view of the employer-employee relationship, it is worth pointing out the negative impact on employees' identification with the company, motivation to work, commitment and efficiency. When exploring this issue, a number of opinions were encountered, indicating a translation of the quantity and quality of applications received into advertised vacancies. Tourism entrepreneurs were quite explicit in suggesting that candidates, when analysing opinions among customers and employees about the store's service, created an image of an employer that, despite the excellent quality of service offered, was perceived as unattractive to the employee. Entrepreneurs in the tourism industry therefore have the difficult task of building a good image. The impact of recruitment problems has a bearing on the process of building a good image of tourism companies, which is based on a coherent and long-term strategy supporting sustainable development and value creation of the organisation [Page, Connell 2020]. In light of these considerations, the following question arises: Can we therefore speak of the consequences of recruitment problems in the form of reputational damage to the tourism industry as a whole?

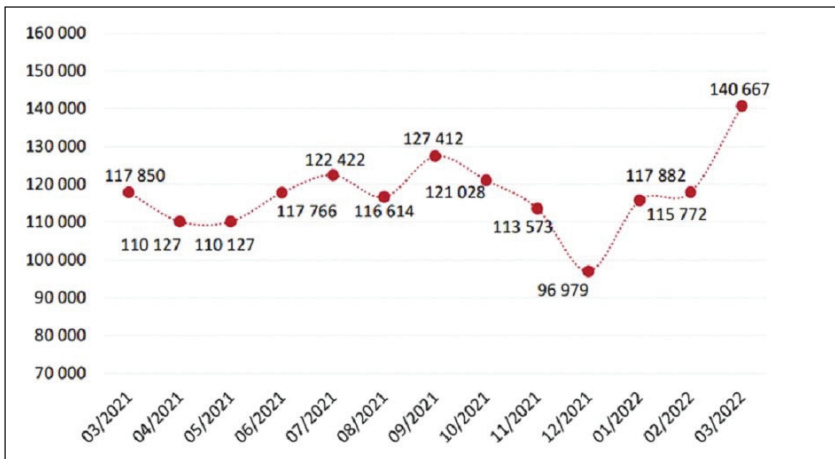
### **Impact of recruitment problems on the cost of running a tourism business**

Human resource management is a multi-stage process. The dynamic nature of the changes taking place on the labour market in light of the COVID-19 pandemic contributes to various modifications in human capital management policies. When tracing the dynamics occurring on the labour market in general compared to the pandemic (Figure 1), an upward trend is evident.

Given the indicated data, an increased number of jobs can currently be observed in relation to March 2021. This development suggests a highly competitive labour market. Conscious employers are taking these indicators into account and redesigning their business strategies to intensify the process of attracting new employees and make it more efficient.

Efficiency-oriented employers have also provided for additional solutions to better prepare lower-skilled staff compared to before the pandemic, implementing, for example, an extensive training system to facilitate the deployment of low-skilled staff. These additional solutions affect the change in business strategies, including the budget related to the preparation of new jobs. In the face of the pandemic, entrepreneurs have made changes





**Figure 1.** Number of job vacancies and economic activation in Poland between March 2021 and March 2022.

**Source:** *Labour market, education, competencies. Current trends and results of studies (April 2022).* Report commissioned by the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development prepared by: *Instytut Analiz Rynku Pracy Sp. z o.o.*, <https://iarp.edu.pl>.

to many aspects of their businesses. The types of new procedures and solutions implemented by Polish entrepreneurs as part of their change of management organisation are presented in Table 1.

The presented data point to various types of solutions, the implementation of which entails costs. It is obvious that implementing the digitalisation of services, the introduction of crisis management staff, or the contracting of new internal process outsourcing services, mostly entails an increase in financial expenditure. While changing to more flexible forms of employment or outsourcing services may reduce costs, one should bear in mind that the implementation of changes is itself associated with additional expenses. Given the above, respondents were asked whether, in their opinion, the recruitment discussed problems had negative impact on the financial situation in their companies. Analysis of the responses and numerous comments suggest that representatives of the tourism industry mostly indicated a link between the consequences of emerging recruitment problems and the deterioration of the financial situation in their businesses. In an in-depth survey, respondents stated that the indicated difficulties in filling vacancies contributed directly or indirectly to increased costs in the operations of their companies. Different types of situations in which employers needed to implement additional services or tools to maximise the efficiency of the recruitment process were discussed. Shaping internal structures in tourism enterprises has become a more complex process as compared to the pre-pandemic period. Managers of tourism businesses were forced to in-

**Table 1.** What changes for the activities of the facility can the current situation entail, and what new procedures and solutions are you implementing or planning to implement?

Types of actions	Percentage of entrepreneurs implementing the indicated action
Use of flexible employment forms	53.64%
Greater flexibility of work organisation (e.g. remote work, shifts)	52.64%
Implementation of crisis management procedures	57.89%
Digitisation of internal services	57.89%
Digitisation of external services	36.84%
Development of online sales channels	78.94%
Diversification of supplies	36.85%
Outsourcing of internal processes	31.58%
Renegotiation of existing supply conditions	42.11%
Lowering the price compared to pre-Covid times	78.95%
Capital and network connection	21.05%
Other	31.58%

**Source:** Survey of the Polish Institute of Tourism (compiled from the PARP report).

vest more money when purchasing services related to the publication of job advertisements. Examples were given of the prices of job ads published on various recruitment portals and the need to purchase tools several times more expensive than those used before the pandemic outbreak. Reference was made to the purchase of premium ads, as well as to the increased volume of purchased publication of lower-end ads. The competition for the employee required measures to be taken that went beyond existing standards, which translated into additional investment. The complexity of the recruitment process has forced most of the surveyed tour operators to devote more time to recruiters, thus, their efficiency with other tasks in the company decreased. In some of the surveyed tourism companies, new, separate units or positions staffed with recruitment specialists have been set up for this purpose, which resulted in higher costs of the recruitment process. The prolonged hiring process also translates into time and financial investment. When building a strategy for human resources, employers face problems at the stage of recruiting new staff and also when managing human resources. Respondents were asked to indicate the main reasons for recruiting new staff in the last 24 months. Responses were mainly concentrated in two areas, as respondents indicated the main reasons for undertaking new recruitment arising from the phenomenon of voluntary staff turnover in existing

positions and the need to expand the team due to company growth or increased customer demand for tourism services.

Referring to the phenomenon of voluntary turnover, it was understood as a situation in which an employee initiates his/her own departure from the employer [Łubieńska and Woźniak 2012]. In such a case, there is dysfunctional turnover, which is classified by the efficiency level of the departing employees. Functional turnover occurs when the dismissal of an employee has positive impact on the increase in the company's goodwill – when the efficiency of the dismissed employees is low, while the possibility of acquiring new, higher-efficient employees is high [Spychała, Bartecki and Brzóska 2019]. Dysfunctional rotation involves the loss of highly competent and very efficient employees [Urbaniak and Rogozińska-Pawelczyk 2010]. Voluntary employee turnover is one of the most important indicators for the efficient functioning of a company. It determines increased costs, both direct and indirect – hidden within the organisation (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Costs related to voluntary turnover of employees

<b>Costs before departure</b>	<b>Costs of finding a new employee</b>	<b>Costs of induction</b>
Decreased commitment of person who decides to leave	Costs of preparing and publishing job advertisements	Time devoted by person to learning about the company, responsibilities and procedures
Time devoted by departing worker to pass on his/her knowledge and responsibilities	Time needed for selection of applications	Time of other workers that is needed to train newcomer
Time of departing worker and of team devoted to farewells and talks about change of job	Time for job interviews (often more than ten interviews)	Cost of individual working aids, e.g. uniform or own earbuds
---	Time devoted to verification of references, agreeing upon employment conditions with selected candidate and preparation of contract	---

**Source:** [Sedlak 2017].

In Table 2, the adverse impact is illustrated of employee turnover on several cost aspects of the company. The indicated phenomenon may manifest itself in high costs of teaching and inducting new employees, a decrease in labour productivity, a decrease in the ability to create innovations, etc. In addition to these costs, there are also lost benefits relate to all areas of human resource management as well as company operations [Sedlak 2017]:

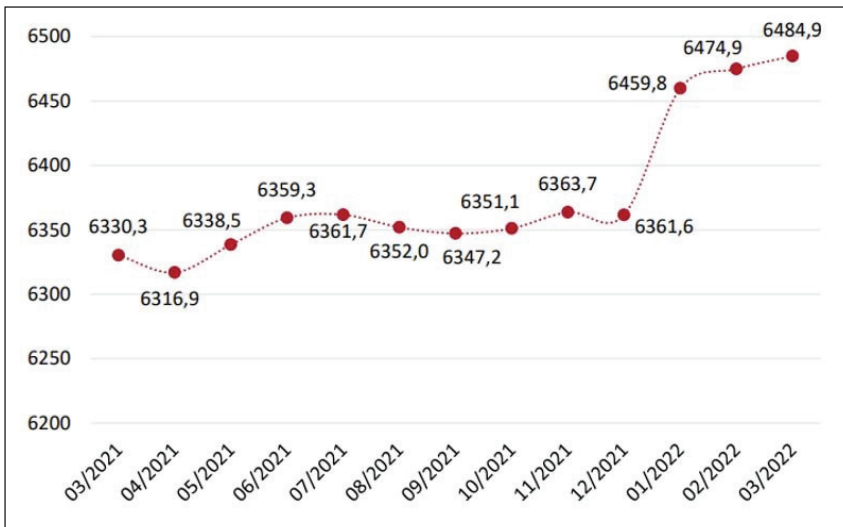
- the cost of lost knowledge that was not passed on by the departing employee;
- downtime for certain duties (if the old employee has left, and we still have to wait for a new one);
- temporarily burdening the remaining staff with the responsibilities of the outgoing person;
- a drop in customer satisfaction (internal or external) caused by a lower level of service induced by the departure of an employee;
- the departure of an employee has negative impact on the mood of those remaining on the team;
- an employee who has left may recruit former colleagues to his or her new company.

These effects reduce competitiveness and market position of the company, thereby causing a decrease in its efficiency. It is estimated that turnover costs between 30% and 200% of an employee's annual salary [Philips and Edwards 2009]. The impact of staffing problems in the tourism industry on the quality of tourism services is noted by industry representatives as well as consumers. Statements from representatives of various tourism sub-sectors confirm that recruitment problems have a negative impact on the functioning of their companies in terms of the quality of services provided, company image and financial condition. The discussed areas are rooted in the notion of instability when it comes to coordinating the business.

### **New recruitment methods used by tourism enterprises in response to current challenges of the tourism industry**

The respondents' declarations regarding the need to expand the team due to company growth or increased customer demand for tourism services was analysed. This situation is reflected in the overall data on the growth dynamics of tourism enterprises in 2022. Even before the pandemic, the tourism industry was a very dynamic economic sector. Today, tourism entrepreneurs are able to respond to market challenges very quickly. At the end of the crisis, general dynamics can be observed on the labour market, as indicated by data on the growth rate of average employment in Poland (Figure 2) [Czech 2020].

The demand for tourism services is growing. After months of isolation, tourists are experiencing an increased need to travel. As reported by the Polish Chamber of Tourism, taking the trends and phenomena dominating Polish outbound tourism into account, the results of the 2022 summer season in terms of value are approaching the pre-pandemic year of 2019 [Polish Chamber of Tourism 2022]. The dynamics of these changes currently in-



**Figure 2.** Average monthly employment in the enterprise sector in Poland between the period from March 2021 to March 2022 (in thousands).

**Source:** Study based on data from the Central Statistical Office GUS in *Raport Polskiej Agencji Rozwoju Przedsiębiorczości* by: Instytut Analiz Rynku Pracy Sp. z o.o., <https://iarp.edu.pl>.

dicate an upward trend. Therefore, tour operators are facing the enormous challenge of increased travel demand, which is amplified by the simultaneous staff shortages. In light of this issue, an in-depth survey was conducted to establish issues related to the need for increased tourist demand. Respondents representing travel and leisure operators, as well as travel agencies, extensively discussed the issue of company growth within the context of the discussed human resource management problems. The representatives of other sectors have not expressed their opinions on this matter. The great desire and need to expand the range of services was indicated. Respondent 5 declared that its clients wanted to go on new trips and explore new destinations, however, due to staff shortages, the entrepreneur was forced to put the expansion of their offer on hold. It was emphasised that in planning the expansion of the company, this person had started looking for new staff well in advance, bearing in mind the increased demand for services and the need to implement appropriate training to introduce people with little experience to this type of service. Similar statements were made by representatives of travel agencies organising individual trips abroad from the premium sector. They commented that they were preparing for increased sales of services as well as the addition of new destinations to their offer, which influenced their decision to expand their team. Unfortunately, these respondents did not succeed satisfactorily in doing so due to emerging difficulties in attracting

new staff. In light of this situation, indicating an increased demand for tourism services with concomitant difficulties related to human resource management, a discussion was undertaken exploring the methodology used by tourism entrepreneurs in the process of acquiring new staff. The surveyed employers were asked to list the recruitment methods used by their companies over the previous two years. Respondents were keen to respond and identified a number of different recruitment methods used to increase the likelihood of effectively recruiting staff to their ranks. The most frequently mentioned methods were as follows:

1. Publishing free job advertisements on the Internet.
2. Publishing paid job advertisements on the Internet, from the medium segment (up to PLN 120 per publication).
3. Publishing paid job advertisements on the Internet from the premium segment (several hundred PLN per publication).
4. Publishing free job advertisements on professional web forums.
5. Publishing paid job advertisements on the Internet from the premium segment with additional services (boosting offers, own graphic design, etc.).
6. Publishing paid job advertisements on recruitment platforms that bring together several advertising portals at the same time.
7. Publishing free advertisements on social media.
8. Publishing paid advertisements in campaigns purchased on social media.
9. Publishing paid job advertisements on professional and business portals such as LinkedIn, GoldenLine.
10. Publishing free job advertisements at employment offices.
11. Publishing free job advertisements at university career offices.
12. Implementing a system of free recommendations, so called “word of mouth”.
13. Implementing a system of paid recommendations.
14. Contracting paid recruitment services at professional HR consultancies.
15. Contracting paid recruitment services with freelance head-hunters.
16. Distribution of leaflets and/or posters at own branches.
17. Publication of paid job ads in the media (radio or press or TV).

The wide array of listed methods suggests a proactive approach by entrepreneurs to Human Resource activities. The use of the listed methods indicates that employers are moving beyond the basic recruitment methods used only a few years ago. Current recruitment trends in the tourism industry are essentially based on online searches for candidates. The analysis of the responses, together with interviews, made it possible to cite opinions on the effectiveness of the mentioned recruitment methods.

- Re. 1. The publication of free job advertisements on the Internet is the most widely used recruitment method. Employers publishing vacancies searched for portals offering free job advertisements and posted vacancies on several such sites simultaneously.
- Re. 2. Multiplication of advertisements was also used for websites offering relatively inexpensive publication of job ads, within the range of PLN 20-80 per published job ad. It was commented that this group of tools yielded relatively good results in terms of the number of candidates sourced for particular jobs. Hotel managers pointed to this source of recruitment as the most effective for assembling a team for floor service and catering staff.
- Re. 3. Ads from the premium segment – the respondents declared that they invested several hundred zlotys in publishing the offer in the case of recruiting more qualified personnel. The respondents confirmed the relationship that the more qualified staff they sought, the more they invested in recruitment tools. A tendency indicating the adequateness of the employees sought was also indicated. The more a key employee was sought, the more paid recruitment methods were used.
- Re. 4. Industry web forums were reported to be a fairly common form of job posting. The number of such online venues is very high, and the discussions there bring together many people from the industry, which shortens the distance between stakeholders on both sides. Respondents from the hotel industry indicated the varying importance of such forums and declared their experience publishing in such places. This method was assessed as effective in acquiring specialists for positions related to tourist services, such as receptionists or the sales department of accommodation.
- Re. 5. Publications with additional services were purchased as often as in point 3 of standard premium services and the answers of the surveyed entrepreneurs suggested that they treated paid premium services as a package that should be used as much as possible, which means buying additional services, such as bid boosting, to maximise recruitment efficiency, particularly, in relation to specialists.
- Re. 6. Recruitment platforms combining several tools for publishing offers at the same time turned out to be a solution almost unknown among the surveyed representatives of the tourism industry. None of the respondents used this method, although few indicated that they had heard of such a solution. One of the surveyed entrepreneurs, who represents a large travel agency, mentioned that such a method was not chosen at his company because in their opinion, this tool is more suitable in the case of mass recruitment for unqualified positions. This statement was not elaborated.
- Re. 7. Social media turned out to be a popular source of acquiring candidates. The answers were that there was no point in looking for the se-

lected employees elsewhere, because the candidates' competences and their specialisation, combined with the specificity of the age group to which the offers were addressed, were based on the philosophy of the generation living on social media. An example was given of young travellers reporting their tourist conquests on social media. Representatives of travel agencies wanted to attract such people to their ranks as specialists in the field of outbound tourism, to serve customers in their showrooms or on hotlines. As it results from the analysis of the respondents' statements, this method worked and effectively allowed to quickly verify the candidates applying for employment at travel agencies.

- Re. 8. Publication of paid social media campaigns was mentioned as a methods that every interviewee used, but most referred to their experience in this area as being as effective as the free use of social media. Paid campaigns were assessed as expensive, increasing the recruitment prestige and strengthening employer branding, but they were not added to the permanent package of methods used when searching for new personnel.
- Re. 9. Employers who chose to post job vacancies on professional and business portals, such as LinkedIn, stated that they purchased these services when recruiting highly specialised or higher-level staff such as managers. This medium makes it possible to verify the credibility of candidates, for example, by looking at their business ties to other members of the community, through peer recommendation networks and professional-business activities displayed on these social networks.
- Re. 10. The publication of free job advertisements at labour offices was mentioned as the one primarily used, but this recruitment path was not indicated as effective. According to the surveyed tourism companies, this is also not a source of acquiring qualified staff but rather blue collar workers. According to entrepreneurs, labour offices are not very effective in supporting employers in the tourism industry in terms of recruiting employees due to the various types of benefits and social allowances offered to the unemployed.
- Re. 11. The publication of free job advertisements at university career offices takes place when employers are looking for a person who needs to be trained. It is logical to offer temporary jobs to students or graduates of courses in the fields of tourism and recreation, hotel management, tourist services, etc. for example, the university career office at the University of Physical Education in Kraków is very willing to cooperate with employers and support the professional activation of students. Unfortunately, in the opinion of interlocutors, this source of obtaining candidates turned out to be insufficient when relying on it in the process of obtaining candidates for their companies.



- Re. 12. The free recommendation system was mentioned as the most commonly used recruitment method. Recommendations of job offers are made by friends and networks of different people. This form is usually/colloquially called "word-of-mouth". The method has its advantages in terms of integrated recommendation. If someone recommends an offer, it means that they know someone who found the offer worthy of recommendation. News spreads quickly, and generally, this method is the first one that yields recommendation results.
- Re. 13. The paid recommendations are all activities aimed at acquiring candidates using the method discussed above, however, the recommender may receive remuneration for successfully recommending a friend for work. Few of those surveyed had used a recommendation-based method enriched with a pay-for-performance element in the last two years. However, those who had implemented it boasted results fairly quickly and a relatively small financial investment was needed. This method involves setting up some form of remuneration - monetary, voucher, barter - for those who have led to the successful recommendation of a job candidate. A successful recommendation takes place when hiring occurs and after the employee has worked for a certain period of time. This is sometimes a month, and sometimes it is a differently defined probationary period. Employers apply various levels of remuneration. The amount of remuneration for the referrer increases with the urgency of filling a given vacancy. Surveyed entrepreneurs representing large enterprises admitted that they used this method, but when other methods had earlier failed.
- Re. 14. Very few admitted to purchasing paid recruitment services from HR consultancies. HR consulting firms and freelancers comprehensively handle the recruitment process on behalf of the employer, ultimately presenting the employer with one-three ideal candidates who meet the requirements. Thus, HR companies lead the recruitment process to the final stage, during which the employer has to make the final decision and contract the successful candidates. The respondents only generally referred to this method as too expensive. It was stated that professional personnel consulting agencies are not very popular and trusted among entrepreneurs from the tourist industry. In fact, none of the respondents entrusted recruitment to external professionals.
- Re. 15. HR freelancers - this type of service is also a kind of outsourcing the recruitment process. This type of method of attracting new staff is also quite expensive and was only mentioned by the largest companies representing the industry. The purchase of HR consultancy services was chosen in situations of searching for department managers, but this was years ago. However, it was emphasised that the relatively high cost of this service is offset by the time saved in the operation of the tourism company.

- Re. 16. Hotel managers with catering and event services in their portfolio indicated the use of poster campaigns at their facilities. Some used printouts with job offers in the form of posters and hung such information, e.g. in the main hall of their hotel or at the entrance to the hotel restaurant.
- Re. 17. Only one respondent used the method of publishing an offer in the press in the previous two years. The method was singled out as archaic and ineffective, although in specific cases, it had been used in small towns with a strong local community identifying with the region.

As presented above, in response to competition on the service market, managers in the tourism industry have taken a number of steps to maximise and optimise the process of attracting new employees. A number of innovative methods for attracting human resources to tourism enterprises makes it possible to minimise the losses associated with the aftermath of all the phenomena that have contributed to crisis in the tourism industry. Creativity and consistency, combined with an openness to innovation and modern trends, have made the modern tourism entrepreneur increasingly effective in tackling the challenges of the industry, including human resource management issues. The discussed set of measures is comprehensive, and seeks to shape an appropriate structure in tourism enterprises. In turn, tourism enterprises co-create a system that, in combination with tourism organisations and institutions, provides opportunities for influencing influence the actual sphere of tourism economy processes.

## Summary

In the conducted research, it was shown that recruitment processes in tourism enterprises between 2020 and 2022 remain one of the biggest challenges in light of building a robust tourism enterprise policy implemented in a post-COVID environment. The study helped to identify recruitment problems in the different sub-sectors of tourism services. Attention was drawn to the links between the recruitment process in tourism enterprises and the quality of provided services. The problems that had impacted the tourism market in the analysed period triggered a number of actions among industry entrepreneurs, forcing them to implement modern methods of human resource planning and management. After verifying the statements of the surveyed industry representatives, as well as market observations, it can be concluded that success in the tourism industry largely depends on attracting and maintaining good staff who will be able to provide high-quality services to satisfy their customers. In the trial, it was also demonstrated that difficulties in attracting new staff necessitated changes in the broad

management policies of the surveyed tourism enterprises. The changes consisted in the introduction of new recruitment methods and tools, largely based on online activities. The statements of the surveyed employers and the examples they cited make it possible to conclude that tourism entrepreneurs, through the use of new and effective recruitment methods, have not only positively influenced the situation of their companies, but – assuming a broader perspective of the issue – have contributed to positive changes on the market and the development of tourism in general.

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### **Attachment No. 1** **List of research tools**

Research on the topic: "RECRUITMENT PROCESSES AS PART OF THE POLICY PURSUED IN TOURISM ENTERPRISES IN A POST-COVID ENVIRONMENT" was carried out using a questionnaire with closed questions, single- and multiple-choice, on the basis of which in-depth interviews were conducted. The respondents provided information by telephone and during personal meetings – the author noted down the answers to the questions. The ten surveyed entrepreneurs represented various sectors of the tourism industry, including hotels, travel agencies, tour operators, companies organising sports and recreational trips. In terms of the number of employees, the surveyed employers represented small, medium and large companies. The respondents represented different types of tourism enterprises.

### **Questionnaire**

The full text of the questionnaire is presented below.

1. Has your company experienced any problems in recruiting candidates for tourism-related positions in the last 24 months?

- a) YES
- b) NO
- c) Not applicable

Please comment: ....

2. What types of problems did your company experience while recruiting new staff for your organisation?

- a) Insufficient overall candidate pool
- b) Recruitment advertisements on job portals proved to be too expensive
- c) High influx of candidates, but few candidates with the required qualifications
- d) During interviews, candidates showed qualifications inconsistent with their CV or lacked necessary competencies
- e) Candidates had excessive financial expectations
- f) Candidates withdrew from the recruitment process (e.g. due to accepting employment elsewhere)
- g) Difficulties in contacting candidates (e.g. not answering phone calls, not responding to messages, rescheduling appointments)
- h) Candidate absences from scheduled recruitment meetings
- i) Difficulty in selecting the best-suited candidates among those meeting the requirements
- j) Protracted negotiations regarding employment terms making the hiring process more difficult
- k) Other

Please comment: ....

3. At which stage did your company face the most difficulties?

- a) Job description creation and preparing an offer for candidates
- b) Job posting and recruitment-related service purchase
- c) Candidate selection
- d) Conducting job interviews with candidates
- e) Identifying ideal candidates
- f) Negotiating and hiring employees
- g) Probationary period

Please comment: ....

4. The indicated recruitment problems:

- a) have no impact on the provision of tourism-related services
- b) have negative impact on the provision of services
- c) have positive impact on the provision of services

Please comment: ....

5. The indicated recruitment problems:
- have no impact on the financial condition of your company
  - have negative impact on the financial condition of your company
  - have positive impact on the financial condition of your company
- Please comment: ....
6. Indicated recruitment problems:
- do not affect the image of the company/state
  - have negative impact on the image of the company/state
  - have positive impact on the image of the company/state
- Please comment: ....
7. The significance of the indicated recruitment problems for the company (importance scale of 1-4, where 1 means 'not significant', and 4 means 'very significant'):
- Significance 1: not significant impact on the functioning of the company
  - Significance 2: slightly significant impact on the functioning of the company
  - Significance 3: significant impact on the functioning of the company
  - Significance 4: very significant impact on the functioning of the company
- Please comment: ....
8. What recruitment methods did the company undertake to attract the indicated employees? (multiple answers possible)
- Publication of free advertisements online
  - Publication of paid advertisements in the middle segment (up to 120 PLN per published offer)
  - Publication of paid advertisements in the premium segment (several hundred PLN per publication)
  - Publication of paid premium advertisements with additional services (boosting the advertisement, own graphic design, etc.)
  - Publication of paid advertisements through recruitment platforms that bring together multiple portals at once
  - Publication of free advertisements on social media
  - Publication of paid advertisements on social media platforms
  - Publication of paid advertisements on professional business websites such as LinkedIn and Goldenline
  - Contracting paid recruitment services from professional personnel consulting firms

- j) Contracting paid recruitment services from freelancers such as head-hunters
- k) Publication of free job offers at the labour office
- l) Publication of free job offers at university career offices
- m) Publication of free job offers on Internet forums
- n) Distribution of paid materials such as posters/flyers at local distribution points
- o) Implementation of a recommendation system through free referrals (“word-of-mouth”)
- p) Implementation of a paid recommendation system (if you find someone for the job, we’ll pay you)
- q) Publication of paid job offers in the media (radio/TV/newspapers)
- r) Publication of paid advertisements in urban infrastructure (billboards, buses, bus stops, etc.)

Please comment: ...

9. Have you decided to lower the required qualifications for job candidates in the last 2 years?

a) YES

b) NO

c) N/A

Please comment: ...

10. Did lowering the expectations for candidates increase the number of applicants for advertised vacancies?

a) YES

b) NO

c) Hard to say

d) N/A

Please comment: ...

11. Lowering the requirements for candidates over the last 2 years:

a) did not affect service delivery

b) had negative impact on service delivery

c) had positive impact on service delivery

d) N/A

Please comment: ...

12. Lowering the requirements for candidates over the last 2 years:

a) did not affect the service delivery

b) negatively affected the service delivery

c) positively affected the service delivery

d) Not applicable

Please comment: ...



13. In the last 24 months, the need to recruit new personnel was mainly due to:
- a) personnel rotation in existing positions – voluntary turnover (resignation submitted by employee)
  - b) personnel rotation on existing positions – involuntary turnover (termination by employer)
  - c) the need to expand the team (due to company growth or increased demand for TiR services)
  - d) the need for talent replacement – replacing current employees with new ones due to modifications to the business model.

Please comment: ...

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## DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS OF THE BIAŁYSTOK PTTK BRANCH IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 1960s

*Marek Rutkowski\**

### Abstract

**Purpose.** The article is focused on showing the development prospects of the Białystok Branch of the Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society (*Polskie Towarzystwo Turystyczno-Krajoznawcze* – PTTK) in the first half of the 1960s through the prism of: (a) the relationship of this institution with state authorities; (b) revaluations of management structures; (c) determination of action objectives; and (d) premise capabilities.

**Method.** The research was carried out via an analysis of the content of archival source materials.

**Findings.** Despite the availability of natural assets, in confrontation with the reality, the development prospects of the Białystok Branch of PTTK in the early sixties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century did not prove to be significant. The analysis on the functioning conditionality of this tourist institution undertaken in this article (given the naturalness regarding the process of personal change of management staff) should be assessed as at least partly hindering development. However, external and internal constraints did not cause organisational paralysis, and could even become an indirect cause of a continually reviving programme initiative.


**Research and conclusion limitations.** A possible research limitation is the high selectivity of data resulting from previous selecting of archival material, often making it difficult to evaluate the broader context of the information obtained.

**Practical implications.** The conclusions resulting from the analysis of the article content may assume the existence of a constant need: (a) for clear interpretation of the legal framework in which tourism organisations operate; (b) for the constant evaluation of a single, long-term development line.

**Originality.** The article is completely original in terms of the presentation of the obtained data and their conclusive-generalising description.

**Type of work:** The results of archival research are presented in this article.

**Keywords:** Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society, Białystok Branch of PTTK, conditions of development, history of tourism

\*  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9553-4790>; Assoc. Prof.; University of Physical Education in Krakow, Faculty of Tourism and Recreation, Institute of Entrepreneurship and Management, Department of Law and Protection of Cultural Heritage; e-mail: [marek.rutkowski@awf.krakow.pl](mailto:marek.rutkowski@awf.krakow.pl).

## Introduction

The communist government-controlled process of tourist organisation consolidation in Poland in the period after World War II in the very beginning of the 1950s resulted in the establishment – at the great unification convention held on December 17, 1950 – of the Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society [Gaj 2006; Chmiel 2007]. As a result, also on the territory of the Białystok Province, all-regional structures of PTTK were created, and – consequently – its subordinate organs of more local range, including the Białystok Branch of PTTK, which is the subject of our interest in this article.

However, while at least key moments of the activities in the 1950s of the PTTK covering the whole of the then Białystok Voivodeship can be reconstructed fairly comprehensively on the basis of surviving archival resources, no such possibility exists with regard to the local tourist organisation covering the city of Białystok itself and selected parts of the voivodeship.

In the absence of relevant references in the company archives of PTTK in Białystok, from the data preserved in the State Archives in Białystok, it only appears that the key moment which we can trace in the development of the structure of the local tourist organisation of Białystok was July 18, 1953. At that time, an organisational meeting of the Board of the Branch took place on the premises 12 of the Pierwszy Maj Street. The newly elected Board of the Białystok Branch of PTTK (with its president – Mieczysław Uszynski) was charged with the duty of providing as much assistance as possible to its superior organisation authorities – the District Voivodeship Board of PTTK, “(...) especially in the area of organising excursions and tourist rallies, taking care of monuments and marking tourist routes (...)” [State Arch. in B-stok, file 4/149/0/20/616,37,70].

At least a partial possibility of beginning a description of the tractable activity of the Białystok Branch of PTTK begins at the very end of the 1950s. Recalling this starting date of the analysis is, at the same time, justified by the fact that the establishment in 1959 of a new legal framework – the statute for the functioning of the Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society, somehow began a new chapter in the activities of this institution, also at a regional level. From this moment on, new challenges accompanied Polish local tourism organisations throughout the first half of the 1960s. One of them was the PTTK Branch in Białystok, which covered areas of particular importance from a sightseeing wonders of nature perspective and, as such, attractive for visitors. However, the mid-sixties were considered the final time caesura of the present research, as the local statute of the Białystok Branch of PTTK was changed during this period.

This organisation, which was then actually faced with eventual prospects for significant development, deserved to undertake research on the

possibilities of using its development opportunity. However, no relevant analysis has been carried out so far.

The aim of the article is thus to present those aspects of the development of Białystok tourism in the 1959/1960-1965/1966 period, which in the most significant way, could have influenced the evolution prospects of the local branch tourism organisation. Such factors were identified as: (a) relations with the administrative authorities; (b) the scope of fluctuations concerning internal authorities of the local tourist institution and its staff as well as structural changes; (c) the determination of objectives for further operation of the local PTTK Branch; (d) the situation of the material base – mostly premises.

The elaboration and analysis of these issues should create a reliable basis for issuing a verdict as to the actual possibilities for the development prospects of the Białystok Tourist Organisation during the period of full post-Stalinist communism consolidation in Poland. These data and the resulting conclusions, touching upon the “tourism-sensitive area”, could be considered as reference point both for further research on the history of local tourism and – by generalisation – on the story of tourism organisations in post-war Poland. The obtained information should, to some extent, reveal the prospects for developing one of the few institutions in Poland that gave way to the genuine social initiative of the period in which absolute strengthening of the communist power’s iron embrace occurred.

### **Literature and sources**

The problem regarding the evolution of the Białystok PTTK Branch in the early sixties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has not yet been researched. Some small references to this issue are contained in the work by Waldemar Monkiewicz [1978]. This study was printed as a short description concerning Białystok tourist guides’ history of activity, published within the framework of the series called: “Information Materials of the Voivodeship Board of the Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society in Białystok”. In addition, much later, another monograph appeared, edited by Małgorzata Bajda-Gołębowska and Dariusz Kuźelewski [2005], describing, among others, the history of local tourism, where one could only encounter a mention regarding the creation of the Białystok circle of guides. The useful information contained in both of these publications is remarkably brief. Recently, a valuable text by Jerzy Nowik [2021] was also published relating to the history of physical culture in the Białystok region.

On a national level, an excellent addition to the description of the functioning of the PTTK in the period of our interest is the article by Wanda Skowron [2011], which appeared in the collective monograph “Studies and

materials on the history of Polish sightseeing”. The general image of Polish tourism history in the same span of time could obviously be found in the works of Jerzy Gaj [2006] and Aleksy Chmiel [2013]. Additionally, information on the rules for the election of the national authorities of this organisation in the early sixties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century can be found in short text of Edward Wiczorek and Grażyna Rybicka [2013].

The archival sources analysed in depth in this paper, and relating to the first half of the 60s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, is stored in two institutions: (a) in the State Archives in Białystok, and (b) in the archives of the District Branch of PTTK there. From the resources of the State Archive in Białystok, the files were researched, which were the records of local Provincial National Council [State Arch. in B-stok, file No. 4/149/0/20/616].

The Archives of the PTTK District Branch in Białystok contain a number of useful materials – reviewed for the purpose of this article – describing both in the form of reports, as well as in minutes, etc. some aspects of the history of the Białystok tourist organisation of the period of our interest, which are placed in individual folders, lacking their formal signature. These folders, however, possess their own individual specific names that are fully given in the bibliography. The whole of the archival material mentioned above is undeniably the basis for the elaboration of the content of this article.

## Research method

The general absence of undertaking this subject of the development prospects regarding Białystok tourism in the early sixties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the scientific literature was the reason for the adoption of the archival research method. As a result, the analysis of archival sources has been chosen as a priority research principle in this article as well as the findings and conclusions are based on their analysis. Relying on direct sources in research is an additional prerequisite in the possibility of reaching the right conclusions.

## Results

In accordance with the research assumption, such aspects of the functioning of Białystok Branch of PTTK in the period 1959/1960-1965/1966, which significantly affected the prospects of this institution’s development, were studied: a) relations with the state administration; b) changes in the staffing of the tourist institution’ internal authorities; c) articulation and determination of the goals of operation; d) the state of the material base. The results of these inquiries are presented in the following parts of this section of the article, and especially in its conclusion part.

### **Administrative barriers – problems with the registration of the Białystok Branch of PTTK in the October 1959-February 1962 (January 1966) period**

After the implementation of the new statute of the act on the national scale for the Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society in the last year of the 1950s [Biuletyn PTTK, 1959, No. 3, 1], the conditioning of all possible aspects with regard to the functioning of the local Białystok Branch of this tourist organisation was obviously dependent on the recognition of its legal personality within the new legal framework. Hence, it does not come as a surprise that during the second day of the General Congress of the PTTK Białystok Branch from October 24-25, 1959, a resolution was adopted, from which it was clear that the said Congress of the PTTK Branch “(...) acknowledges and applies the statute of the PTTK Branch, constituting an annex to the statute of the [nationwide] PTTK (...)”, approved by the Office of Internal Affairs of the Capital City of Warsaw on January 8, 1959. At the same time, the local touristic authorities were obliged to apply to the Presidium of the PTTK Main Board in Warsaw to obtain permission for the Białystok Branch to conduct its activities under the new authorisations, which was to take place altogether “(...) with the granting of [the Branch’s] legal personality”. In addition, the territorial scope of its activity was defined as the area of counties: Białystok, Hajnówka, Mońki, Łapy, Sokółka, Bielsk Podlaski and Siemiatycze. Finally, the city of Białystok was recognised as the seat of the local branch’s Board.

After about a month, on November 26, 1959, the authorities of the Białystok Branch of PTTK sent a letter to the Presidium of the PTTK Main Board in Warsaw, notifying them of the “acceptance and application” of the new statute of the branch tourist organisation. At the same time, they informed that the organisation represented by the senders had adopted the formal name “PTTK Białystok Branch”, ordering its subordinate organisational entities to comply with all the provisions contained in the new statute, with particular emphasis on Articles: 6, 7, 13, 17 and 18 of the regulations on Branch activities of a statutory nature [Arch. PTTK in B-stok, Report for 1959, 2; State Arch. in B-stok, file No. 4/149/0/20/616, 117].

Consequently, the Presidium of the PTTK Main Board in Warsaw, as a result of considering the above-mentioned resolutions, at its meeting of December 16, 1959: a) approved the activity of the PTTK Branch in Białystok “(...) as a member of the PTTK – a legal entity”, with the standard statute of the PTTK Branch being in effect in this regard; and b) accepted the territorial scope of the organisational activity of the Białystok Branch as given in the resolution from October 25, 1959. Issuing an official letter to this effect on December 23, 1959, the Warsaw’s PTTK Main Board also requested that the Białystok Branch of PTTK be formally recorded in lo-

cal registers kept by state authorities as soon as possible. In the letter from 23 December 1959, it was also stated that a summary of the “assets” and a “closing balance sheet [of the previous legal and organisational form of the local PTTK]” had to be sent to the Main Board by the end of January 1960 at the latest.

Having received the relevant documentation, the Presidium of the Municipal National Council in Białystok did not undertake the registration procedure. On March 22, 1960, its Office returned the documents to the local Branch of the PTTK, stating that the registration application (together with the documents required to be attached in accordance with Article 19 of the Law on Associations still in force – Journal of Laws No. 94, item. 807 of 1932) and a list of 50 founding members of the PTTK Branch, should be instead submitted to the Presidium of the Voivodship National Council. In the meantime, procedural confusion was growing. In view of the significant difference in the interpretation of the regulations appearing at that time, at the beginning of May 1960, the Office of the Main PTTK Board made a direct request to the Chairman of the Presidium of the Municipal National Council in Białystok requesting the registration of the PTTK Branch in this provincial city. The PTTK headquarters office argued that this Białystok tourist organisational unit “(...) has fulfilled all the required formalities (...)” and yet, it was not registered. According to the Main Board of PTTK, the lack of registration of the Białystok Branch occurred due to a wrong interpretation of the Law on Associations. It was emphatically pointed out that throughout Poland at that time, PTTK branches were registered on the basis of Articles 40 and 41 of the Law on Associations, and not on the basis of Article 19 of the same law (which as such, was rather supposed to refer to the central bodies of associations). The chairman of the Municipal National Council in Białystok was also asked to give an order for “swift and positive” settlement of the matter presented [State Arch. in B-stok, file No. 4/149/0/20/616, 117, 132-134, 138].

In response to these demands, on May 13, 1960, Michał Marczuk, the head of the Internal Affairs Department of the Municipal National Council in Białystok, sent the request received from the Warsaw authorities of the PTTK to the Presidium of the Voivodship National Council in the same town, asking for resolution of the dispute: according to the sender – Michał Marczuk, the PTTK Main Board had misinterpreted its own statute. It was highly significant that the answer came only after six months, when – on November 19, 1960 – the Presidium of the Voivodship National Council in Białystok acknowledged the position of the Municipal National Council on the legal basis for the registration of the local PTTK branch. The same letter demanded that the Municipal National Council in Białystok strictly ensure and enforce that the local PTTK Branch be finally registered on the basis of Article 19 of the Law on Associations, which was the main axis of this unexpectedly arising problem.

In addition, the Social-Administrative Department of the Ministry of the Interior indirectly interfered in the matter, issuing a circular letter on June 29, 1960, in which it reacted to multiple signals coming from various parts of the country about legal doubts appearing during the registration of individual PTTK branches, claiming that "(...) during the registration of these branches, no amendments should be made to the submitted statutes". This position was justified by the Ministry as follows [State Arch. in B-stok, file No. 4/149/0/20/616, 113-134, 136-138]:

In accordance with the statutes of the PTTK approved by the Office of Internal Affairs of the City of Warsaw on January 8, 1959, county, city and district branches of the Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society have legal personality and are established on the basis of Article 19 of the Law on Associations (...) [and] the statutes containing provisions concerning branches constitute the whole of the statutes already registered in the Office of Internal Affairs of the City of Warsaw (...).

Under these circumstances, the Department of Internal Affairs of the Municipal National Council in Białystok, having resolved the disputed matter with the Provincial National Council in that city, and referring to the mentioned position of the Ministry of Internal Affairs from June 29, 1960, "clarified the obvious matter" for the Białystok PTTK organisation on December 3, 1960, namely stating that "(...) branches of the PTTK have legal personality and are subject to registration under the Law on Associations (...)". The management of the local tourist unit was also called upon once more to immediately fulfil its obligation to register with the administrative provincial authorities. Ten days later (i.e. on December 13, 1960), the Branch of Białystok PTTK (letter – No. 530/60 – was signed by the then president: Jerzy Zajewski and by the Branch Secretary: Klara Żakowska) therefore turned to the Presidium of the Provincial National Council with a new letter, requesting the registration of its association.

Simultaneously, the Board of the Białystok Branch of the PTTK sent a letter to the Department of Internal Affairs of the Presidium of the Municipal National Council in Białystok (No. 531/60 – so it was a later note than the one delivered to the Provincial National Council), in which it informed the municipal authorities, citing Article 41 of the Law on Associations, that "(...) we have established a branch of the Association registered with the Presidium of the National Council in the Capital City of Warsaw under No. 308, under the name Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society". In the same letter, it was requested that the organisation be entered in the official register. In response to the above, on December 20, 1960, the Presidium of the Municipal National Council in Białystok spontaneously, as it were, sent "(...) the case file of the Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society in Białystok"



to the Presidium of the Białystok Voivodship National Council, with a request for registration of this organisation.

However, before formal registration could finally take place, another problem arose. Namely, the Department of Social Affairs of the Office of Internal Affairs of the Provincial National Council in Białystok, on December 28, 1960, returned the list of founders of the Białystok Branch of PTTK to the Municipal National Council due to fact "(...) that some names and surnames are written illegibly, making it impossible to enter them into the register in accordance with Art. 22 (...) of the Law on Associations". There was a demand for completion in agreement with the PTTK Branch, namely to send the whole list again, with the individuals' written legibly. As a result, already in the first days of January 1961, the Presidium of the Municipal National Council sent, for the second time, a list of the founders of the PTTK Branch to the Provincial National Council, together with a typewritten copy of this list prepared by the officials [State Arch. in B-stok, file No. 4/149/0/20/616, 139-140, 164, 187-189, 193].

The list of founding members of the Białystok PTTK Branch presented, for registration at the turn of 1960/1961 (in three versions) to the state administration authorities and finally transcribed, was as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Founding members of the PTTK Białystok Branch in 1960

<b>Name and surname</b>	<b>Year of birth</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Place of residence</b>
1. Jerzy Zajewski	1928	Researcher	Białystok
2. Ryszard Gołubowski	1934	Mechanic	Lapy
3. Lucyna Chojnowska	1931	Senior accountant	Białystok
4. Wanda Kozakiewicz	1928	White-collar worker	Białystok
5. Cezary Wójcicki	1931	Secretary of District Management of PTTK	Białystok
6. Janina Kalinowska	1940	White-collar worker	Białystok
7. Bogusława Zajewska	1934	White-collar worker	Białystok
8. Piotr Kalinowski	1937	White-collar worker	Białystok
9. Maurycy Birula	1928	Technician	Białystok
10. Antoni Gajewski	1919	White-collar worker	Białystok
11. Helena Ładna	1941	Teacher	Białystok
12. Ryszard Karczewski	1928	White-collar worker	Białystok
13. Apollonia Poć	1931	White-collar worker	Białystok
14. Alicja Kroisz	1932	White-collar worker	Białystok
15. Ludwik Ratyński	1942	Student	Białystok
16. Wiesław Jankowski	1933	White-collar worker	Białystok
17. Zdzisław Chojnowski	1928	White-collar worker	Białystok
18. Danuta Pankiewicz	1930	White-collar worker	Białystok
19. Melania Gajewska	1920	White-collar worker	Białystok
20. Albin Paszenko	1924	White-collar worker	Białystok
21. Felicja Chodakowska	1923	White-collar worker	Białystok
22. Danuta Sokół	1936	White-collar worker	Białystok
23. Czesław Konopiej	1926	White-collar worker	Białystok
24. Jan Frączkowski	1925	White-collar worker	Białystok
25. Eugeniusz Mrówka	1926	White-collar worker	Białystok

26. Teresa Rudkowska	1935	White-collar worker	Białystok
27. Zygmunt Kummer	1936	White-collar worker	Białystok
28. Alojzy Pogorzelski	1941	White-collar worker	Białystok
29. Józef Rósiłowicz	1931	White-collar worker	Białystok
30. Alojzy Niprocolewski	1909	White-collar worker	Białystok
31. Zdzisław Roinko	1934	White-collar worker	Białystok
32. Ryszard Woroszyło	1938	White-collar worker	Białystok
33. Wiesław Wróbel	1941	White-collar worker	Białystok
34. Lech Barszczewski	1940	White-collar worker	Wasilków
35. Jan Jankowski	1940	White-collar worker	Białystok
36. Maria Moniela	1924	White-collar worker	Łomża
37. Jerzy Beer	1932	Student	Białystok
38. Zofia Haberko	1939	Student	Białystok
39. Krystyna Wójcicka	1933	White-collar worker	Białystok
40. Lech Opęchowski	1931	White-collar worker	Białystok
41. Kazimierz Antonowicz	1931	Student	Białystok
42. Bogusław Adamowski	1928	White-collar worker	Białystok
43. Jerzy Maliszewski	1929	White-collar worker	Białystok
44. Władysława Rowińska	1931	White-collar worker	Białystok
45. Eugeniusz Wielewski	1914	White-collar worker	Białystok
46. Zdzisława Kamińska	1932	White-collar worker	Wasilków
47. Henryk Panasewicz	1911	White-collar worker	Białystok
48. Antoni Steckiewicz	1929	White-collar worker	Białystok
49. Alina Wielewska	1931	White-collar worker	Białystok
50. Stanisław Nowakowski	1923	White-collar worker	Białystok
51. Władysław Ulaczyk	1918	White-collar worker	Białystok
52. Adam Wojciechowski	1909	White-collar worker	Białystok

**Source:** State Arch. in B-stok, file No. 4/149/0/20/616,190-193,195.

As it can be observed, despite the fact that the number of founding members was 50 people formally, the list included in the text of this article contains 52 people, and this is because the individual versions (three of them have survived) of the list of members-founders of the Białystok PTTK Branch from the turn of 1960/1961 slightly differ in staffing.

The authorities of Białystok were finally informed about the registration of the local PTTK Branch, also by the Presidium of the Provincial National Council, which took place on January 20, 1961, along with sending the statute of this tourist organisation to the Municipal National Council. The decision (No. USW-I-9/1576/60), signed by the deputy head of the Office of Internal Affairs of the Provincial National Council in Białystok – Jan Onacik, was finally issued on the basis of Article 21 of the Law on Associations from October 27, 1932. The Białystok Branch of PTTK was then entered into the register of associations under the number 188/61. The society's address was recorded as: 18 Lipowa Street in Białystok.

Notification was sent that this organisation was registered in the "Register of Associations" of the Voivodeship National Council, and the city authorities were also instructed by the Provincial National Council that "(...) for this [PTTK] Branch, a specific file register should be opened, and is should be (...) supervised in accordance with the Association Law".

This sort of supervision was formally primarily meant – it seems – to require periodic reports that should be submitted by concerned tourist organisation. Therefore, already in the autumn of 1961 (exactly: on October 18, 1961), the Department of Internal Affairs of the Department of the National Council of the City of Białystok (on the basis of a new decree of the Minister of the Interior from June 2, 1961 “on the adjustment of the economic activity of the associations to the provisions of the resolution (...) of the Council of Ministers of November 17, 1958”) sent new verification regulations “for application” by the Branch of the PTTK in this voivodeship city.

Furthermore, it was stated that as a result of inspecting selected associations from the territory of the city of Białystok, it was found that some of their boards did not notify the Municipal National Council of “(...) change in composition of the board [or] change of the headquarters (...)” and this local administrative body filed a request to the PTTK Branch in Białystok on February 1, 1962, in order to: a) present the exact list of its authorities; b) systematically deliver periodic reports, etc. Moreover, further “remembrances” on this matter occurred in early February of 1962. Therefore, responding to the requests of the state administration, the Board of the PTTK Branch in Białystok passed on the remarks to the questions asked by the Municipal National Council, delivering the information on the personal composition of its Board in the first place. This data had to be verified shortly afterwards, because on March 3 and 4, 1962, the 8<sup>th</sup> Congress of the local PTTK Branch was held in the locality of Białowieża, where, among others, the election of a new board took place [State Arch. in B-stok, file No. 4/149/0/20/616, 195-199, 214, 218, 220].

Five years after conducting and – it would seem – finalising the “break-through” registration procedure, some unexpected perturbations concerning the wording of the contents of the registration title of the local PTTK Branch occurred. On January 14, 1966, the Board of the Branch delivered a note to the Voivodeship National Council in Białystok, in which they requested that the name of the represented organisation be corrected; motivating this by some difficulties in settling financial (account) formalities in the National Bank of Poland. In response, however, the Voivodeship National Council, in a letter dated January 19, 1966, informed that there was no need to correct the wording of the name used to date.

Another undoubtedly important issue related to the registration problems turned out to be unanimously adopting the statute of local PTTK by the participants of the 10<sup>th</sup> Congress of delegates of the Branch (at the request of Maurycy Birula, its chairman) on March 7, 1965. As in the previous situation, in this case, it also did not go without “office” difficulties, as the Voivodeship National Council decided not without considerable delay – only after a year – on March 5, 1966 (by decision No. US III -9/210/66) – to approve the suitable changes to the statute [State Arch. in B-stok, file No. 4/149/0/20/616, 328-329, 335, 338].

The considerable chain of succession of administrative difficulties associated with the registration of the Białystok PTTK Branch in the early 1960s must have had a clearly negative effect on the effectiveness of this institution's functioning.

### **Personal and organisational conditions. Changes on the Board of the Białystok Branch of PTTK and its organisational posts**

Apparently, the composition of the Board of the Białystok PTTK Branch was subject to periodic changes in the first half of the 1960s. The new Executive Board, which was responsible for the work of the Branch at the very beginning of the period in question, was elected at the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress of delegates of the organisation's members on October 24-25, 1959 [Arch. PTTK in B-stok, Report for 1959,2; State Arch. in B-stok, file No. 4/149/0/20/616, 203, 276]. It consisted of the following individuals.

**Table 2.** Composition of the Board of the Białystok PTTK Branch elected at the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress of Delegates held on October 24-25, 1959

Name and surname	Function within the organisation	Place of residence
1. Jerzy Zajewski	President	Białystok
2. Krystyna Koneczna	Vice-President	Czarna Wieś
3. Klara Zakowska	Secretary	Białystok
4. Franciszek Lewicki	Treasurer	Białystok
5. Cezary Wójcicki	Member of the Board	Białystok
6. Andrzej Kawecki	Member of the Board	Białowieża
7. Antoni Gajewski	Member of the Board	Białystok

**Source:** State Arch. in B-stok, file No. 4/149/0/20/616, 199.

As the general meeting of the Branch's members should have been held once every two years, on March 3 and 4, 1962, the 8<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Białystok PTTK Branch took place in Białowieża, participants of which, among others, elected its Board. At that time, the personal composition of the Board had changed in the matter that Eugeniusz Wielewski was elected President; Krystyna Koneczna was to remain Vice-President, while the previous President, Jerzy Zajewski, became the Secretary. Other Board members were Ryszard Karczewski, Antoni Gajewski and Cezary Wójcicki. As the minutes of the Congress revealed, a list of candidates for the (proposed) Executive Board was simply submitted by one of the delegates to the present members of PTTK for approval, but this did not mean that the top-down line-up was accepted without any "resistance". Finally, having slightly amended the text of the proposed list, it was accepted.

At the end of 1964 and the beginning of 1965, the Board of the PTTK Branch was obliged to fill in two reporting questionnaires, addressed to both the Municipal and Provincial National Councils in Białystok. The first of these (to the Municipal National Council) was sent to the requesting administrative body on December 8, 1964 (and therefore, before the end of the reporting period), while the second questionnaire (to the Provincial National Council) was drawn up slightly later – on January 15, 1965 [State Arch. in B-stok, file No. 4/149/0/20/616, 201,211,214, 218, 220, 273-274, 279, 316].

These questionnaires provided an incomplete, but quite significant image of the diverse conditions in which the Board of the local Branch of PTTK operated. First of all, it was possible the questionnaires information about the strictly professional activities of some functional members of the Board.

**Table 3.** Employment status of higher members of the Board of the Białystok PTTK Branch as of December 8, 1964 and January 15, 1965

Name and surname	Position held at PTTK Branch	Primary employment/position held
1. Eugeniusz Wielewski	President	Investment Bank / Voivodship Branch
2. Krystyna Koneczna	Vice-President	Researcher at the Medical University
3. Maurycy Birula	Secretary	Technitian
4. Jerzy Zajewski	Treasurer	Head of Economic Department of PTTK District Board

**Source:** State Arch. in B-stok, file No. 4/149/0/20/616, 275, 316.

Further changes to the composition of the Executive Board took place at the beginning of March 1965, when the 9<sup>th</sup> Congress of delegates of members of the Branch was held in the locality of Tykocin on March 6 and 7, 1965. This convention was unusual in that only 19 delegates out of the 28 who had been previously registered attended, which was about 60% of the planned member-

**Table 4.** Composition of the Board of the Białystok PTTK Branch elected at the 9<sup>th</sup> Congress of Delegates held on March 6-7, 1965

Name and surname	Function within the organisation	Place of residence
1. Zdzisław Chojnowski	President	Białystok
2. Maurycy Birula	Vice-President	Białystok
3. Józef Bereżański	Secretary	Białystok
4. Eugeniusz Wielewski	Treasurer	Białystok
5. Cezary Wójcicki	Member of the Board	Białystok
6. Hieronim Kajsanowicz	Member of the Board	Ogrodniczki in the vicinity of Białystok
7. Tadeusz Mikietyński	Member of the Board	Białystok

**Source:** State Arch. in B-stok, file No. 4/149/0/20/616, 275, 316.

ship, but still the actual number of participants ensured a quorum. As it was customary, on the second day of the 9<sup>th</sup> Congress, a new Executive Board was once again elected. A list of the chosen individuals is given in Table 4.

According to fragmentary data, on average, the Executive Board met once a month during the period in question, so there would have been theoretically about 12 meetings per year. The plenary meetings of the Branch discussed, among others, the current guidelines for programme and organisational activities, paying particular attention to the various forms of activity of the association. In addition, financial issues (both for the organisation as a whole and for individual clubs, etc.), as well as the schedules of training and courses, were also to be discussed there.

Another issue to be considered was the fluctuation in the number of posts at the disposal of the Białystok PTTK Branch. The first available data referring to the organisational structure of this tourist organisation of interest was contained in a report drawn up in November of 1963. At that time, the Branch had 4.5 full-time positions to its disposal (sic – probably only the Białystok office was counted here), all of which were manned, generating monthly costs of about 6,595 PLN, which totalled an average of 1,465.5 PLN per person. However, according to a questionnaire sent to the Provincial National Council on January 15, 1965, in total, the Branch already had 15 full-time positions to its disposal at that time (including, of course, the employees of the touring houses this time). The distribution of these posts was as follows: a) office manager; b) chief accountant; c) two tour managers; d) bus driver; e) five porters (sic); and f) four cleaners [State Arch. in B-stok, file No. 4/149/0/20/616, 231, 277, 280].

The employment and staff turnover of the Białystok PTTK Branch in the mid-1960s (1965) was as shown in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Employment and turnover of the staff in Białystok's PTTK Branch of in 1965

Organisational unit	December 31, 1964	Dismissals 1965	Employments 1965	December 31, 1965
Bureau of the Branch	5	2	4	7
Touring house Białowieża	6	2	6	10
Touring house Tykocin	4	1	1	4
Total	15	5	11	21

**Source:** Arch. PTTK in B-stok, Report for 1965, 4.

Finally, according to a statement from February 3, 1966, at that moment, the local Branch structures of PTTK formally employed: a) 18 people on a full-time basis; b) two part-time employees; and c) two individuals received contractual agreements. These figures include, once again, the employees of the Branch bureau and the Białowieża as well as Tykocin Touring Houses [State Arch. in B-stok, file No. 4/149/0/20/616, 326].

The changes in the composition of the Board of Directors, which were natural in view of the frequent meetings of delegates and the election processes associated with it, together with the failure to determine the firm number of staff in the Branch administration, this necessarily contributed to the some sort of instability regarding the line of development among the Białystok tourist organisation.

### **Programme considerations – conclusions, goals and tasks of the Białystok PTTK Branch**

Undeniably, the developmental horizon of the Białystok PTTK Branch has been fundamentally influenced by the conclusions articulated by its members, resulting from experience, and by the goals and tasks set for this institution. Meanwhile, the objectives and tasks that the Białystok Branch of the Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society pursued with particular vigour in the final year of the 1950s – basically, through work in the circles and sections – included, first and foremost, quite generally sounding postulates, such as: a) “awakening [sic] love for the Fatherland and its regions”; b) “developing tourism and sightseeing in all its forms”; and c) “familiarising the public with nature, history and the cultural and economic achievements of the country”.

Other tasks carried out by the local Branch of the PTTK at that time were even more detailed or sophisticated. As it was then proposed, the members of the Branch should have also paid attention to such issues as: d) “protecting nature [and] cultural monuments (...)”; e) “familiarising foreigners with the country’s nature, history and cultural as well as economic achievements”; f) “familiarising the Polish public with the achievements of tourism and sightseeing in other countries”. The suggestions to: g) develop cross-border tourist exchanges should be regarded as another significant proposal. To this were to be added few even more specific objectives articulated in 1959, such as: h) the publication of touristic guides (in this case: for Białowieża Forest) [Arch. PTTK in B-stok, Report for 1959, 1,3-5; State Arch. in B-stok, file No. 4/149/0/20/616, 200, 202-203].

When the general Congress of the local PTTK Branch took place in October 1959 (i.e. on October 24-25, 1959), it defined the main directions for future activities of the organisation in the following year - 1960. The first of these was to draw the attention of the Branch Board to the necessity of increasing (broadening) the activity in the field of sightseeing and propagating the idea of nature protection. Secondly (and here again we have a repetition of the postulate, at least in the opinion of the Congress participants), in order to popularise the extent of knowledge about the Białowieża Forest in the Polish society, it would be appropriate to publish a guide for this for-

est. On the other hand, the new proposal that occurred in October of 1959 was the idea of “potentially discussing” the creation of a programme for the local celebrations of the Millennium of the Polish State (to be held in 1966).

In addition, the work plans of the Białystok Branch for 1960 included questions of organisational nature. At that time, the delegates recognised the important task to be: a) a need for continuation and expansion of the permanent cooperation with local PTTK circles, which should have been done by means of establishing the habit of systematic meetings every three months; b) organisation of factory PTTK clubs; c) training of organisers of tourism and sightseeing activities in individual factories; d) further training of professional guides; and f) organisation of tourist and sightseeing exhibitions [Arch. PTTK in B-stok, Report for 1959, 2].

In turn, on April 24, 1960 (during the extraordinary Congress, the main purpose of which was to elect two local delegates to the forthcoming national gathering of the PTTK), it was decided to draw up some new “general proposals” to be presented at the nationwide meeting, which were obviously a reflection of the needs and views of the Białystok staff. A few of the most important issues can be mentioned here, and they are presented below in the order in which they were raised at that extraordinary April Congress of delegates.

The first of these (fully, as it seems, unrealistic) was to draw attention to the role that the local Branch of the PTTK should have played “(...) in the events of the Grunwald battle [i.e. of 1410] celebrations”, by which the responsible speaker (Dańkowski) meant the fulfillment of the need to study and learn the routes of the Polish army’s march to the site of this battle, along a somewhat hypothetical route through Bielsk Podlaski – Brańsk – Ciechanowiec – Serock. Further on, it was pointed out (by Konaszewski) that there were a number of unrealised resolutions of the previous national PTTK general meeting concerning the affairs of the north-eastern region. The need for them to be implemented or at least raised again by the next congress was also then highlighted. These included such postulates as: a) encouraging the Warsaw’s General PTTK Board of to take interest in the development of the waterways of the Białystok Region, which would take place “(...) before other institutions may occupy the most attractive places”. Among the issues concerning local matters, the question (raised by Dańkowski again) of the possibility to set up a tourist station at the gate of the Basilian Monastery in town of Supraśl seemed to be of significance.

In the end, regardless of the variety and “wishful thinking style” of some of the postulates, the formal “conclusions of the extraordinary Congress of delegates of the Białystok PTTK Branch” were drawn up on April 24, 1960. According to the compiled list of these postulates, they were divided into two, unevenly distributed parts. The first of these, consisting of only two points, concerned the proper activities of the Białystok PTTK Branch.



Here we finally find, in all its seriousness, a request to “study and describe” the route of the march of the Polish army on Grunwald battlefield, along the axis of localities: Brańsk – Ciechanowiec – Serock .

The second part, much more extensive as it consisted of eight postulates, dealt with issues directly addressed to the members of the national Congress of the PTTK. Only two of them referred to specific matters of interest and (indirectly) the responsibility of the Białystok touristic organisation. The first of the postulates approved in this respect concerned the need to demand an clarification as to “(...) why the resolution of the Third National Congress of the PTTK concerning the transfer of the T[ouring] H[ouse] in Augustów to the administration of (...) the Białystok District Board was not implemented”. Secondly, it was formally proposed that the Water Committee of the Main Board of the nationwide PTTK should take an interest in the development of “(...) the attractive water routes of the Białystok Province”. It should be noted with emphasis that, despite the elaboration of these detailed demands, the extraordinary assembly of the Białystok Branch of the PTTK finally held at the end of April 1960 authorised its delegates, elected to the national Congress to “(...) freely take a position appropriate to the situation” [Arch. PTTK in B-stok, Minutes of Congress of April 24, 1960, 1-2].

The 8<sup>th</sup> gathering of the Białystok PTTK, held on March 2 and 3, 1962 in Białowieża, was also full of proposals and comments. It was suggested, for example, that the local PTTK should build a small “base of its own” near Białystok, where the idea of “festive holidays” could be developed. Complaints were also voiced about the difficulties of carrying out what were considered, in a way, standard tourist activities in the Białystok area. Indeed, one speaker even mentioned “(...) difficulties arising for tourism organisers in our [i.e. Białystok’s] environment, where the society is not as interested [in tourism or sightseeing] as in central Poland”. In order to properly compile the new ideas, a special committee was set up (chairman: Jerzy Zajewski), which successfully summarised all the proposals. In the opinion of this committee, the most noteworthy proposal was to activate local PTTK clubs, etc., which was to be achieved by: a) organising joint meetings with the Board; b) drawing up periodic work schedules for the clubs; and c) dissemination of knowledge about the Society’s activities among the whole of its members. Particularly noteworthy was also the motion calling for the development of a “programme of propaganda activity”, which included: a) “propaganda in factories [created] by PTTK members”; b) more printing by the publishing house; c) displaying information boards; and d) holding lectures [State Arch. in B-stok, file No. 4/149/0/20/616, 213-214, 216].

Finally, the postulates that were raised at the members’ convention of the local Branch of the PTTK on March 6 and 7, 1965, referred, for example, to: a) the requirement to popularise the work of local tourist organisa-

tions; b) improving the work of the Branch's individual clubs; etc. Among the recommendations to the newly chosen authorities, it was strongly suggested that "more space" be given in the work plans of the new Board for cooperation with the clubs.

The proposals envisaged for implementation in the very specific year of 1966 (which was also exceptional for the communist establishment – anniversary of the country's millennium), were presented in great detail and boiled down to a number of demands of organisational and supervisory nature. For instance, it was decided to adopt a principle stipulating that only full members of the PTTK should be admitted to qualified tourism clubs. As for the clubs themselves, it was decided to take a special look at their activities by drawing up a schedule of visits to individual units by members of the Branch Board and local PTTK administrative staff. It was also proposed to increase the number of qualified tourism clubs as well as their members by the end of 1966 [Arch. PTTK in B-stok, Development conclusions for 1966, 1; State Arch. in B-stok, file No. 4/149/0/20/616, 335].

The variety of proposals outspoken in the first half of the 1960s for the future activities of the Białystok PTTK Branch indicates a strong conceptual (ideological) ferment of this organisation at the time.

### **Physical base of the PTTK Branch in Białystok**

The possession of a physical base, being an obvious necessary and direct background for the functioning of local tourist organisations, significantly influenced the further development possibilities of this institution. Hence, the information available in this respect should be regarded as important for the assessment of such developmental prospects.

The initial situation can be described as not too difficult. According to a report on the activities of the Białystok PTTK Branch from 1959, the administration of this institution had access to usage of a total of 253 "accommodation places", of which as many as 210 were only "seasonal" locations. In all the tourist facilities to the disposal of the Branch 9,972 overnight stays were provided during the whole of 1959.

What is more, when after more than two years, in a report from March 3, 1962, the PTTK Branch presented the general picture regarding the functioning of its accommodation base for the 1960-1961 period (most of all, boasting about the positive effects). The results even seemed to look more than correct. In the first place, it was mentioned here at that time that the Tourist Hostel/Dormitory in Białowieża was considered to be the most important "provider" of the Branch. This dormitory's revenues were then the basis of granting subsidies or general financial assistance to the clubs existing within the local PTTK Branch. The accessible archival records show

that, while in 1960 this tourist lodge provided 11,410 overnight stays, in the following year of 1961, it already provided 12,055 overnight stays (thus, a total of 23,465 overnight stays were provided in Białowieża between 1960 and 1961). A total income of 320,000 PLN was raised from this. However, it should be mentioned that – as it turned out – the decrease in net profit from the operation of the Białowieża Tourist Home in 1961, shown in this statement, was “only illusory”, as it was associated with the need to allocate funds for the renovation of the building of this hostel. In general, the achievement of such good financial results of the Białowieża shelter was to be linked to the appearance of signs there indicating: “proper organisation” and “great effort of the staff” [Arch. PTTK in B-stok, Report for 1959,4; State Arch. in B-stok, file No. 4/149/0/20/616, 204, 206].

This positive image of the PTTK Białowieża Hostel/Tourist House was disturbed by somewhat later accounts, as confirmed by the records of the PTTK Branch activities for the year 1965, stored in the institutional archives. From the description of the accommodation base contained there, it was clear that the Białowieża shelter required – at least as of 31 December 1965 – “significant building and structural alterations”. These improvements were to consist of, among others, “converting multi-bedded rooms into few-bedded rooms”, and (design) changes to the reception area itself. It was also proposed to install a specific “kitchen for tourists”, where they could prepare hot meals on their own. It was highlighted that the entire facility located in Białowieża (the former Tsarist stables, leased from the Białowieża National Park) was in need of renovation, including the supply of hot water infrastructure, and that the hotel equipment required, in general, immediate repair “(...) as the beds are old with worn-out nets”. Another shortcoming of the accommodation in Białowieża was even the “lack of proper pillows [to be put] under one’s head”.

It was not only the Białowieża Hostel/Tourist House that became the object of increased criticism over time. After commissioning of the Tourist House in Tykocin, which had been under the responsibility of the Branch since 1963, even more significant problems occurred. Respectively, this accommodation and the way it was managed were soon to become seriously questioned. Particularly in the records of the report supplemented by the Białystok PTTK Branch for the year 1965, diverse comments can be found on the poor condition of the aforementioned facility. The critical statements referred first and foremost to the matter of “insufficient popularisation” and poor “promotion” of the Tourist House in Tykocin. In relation to the material problems, it was for example claimed that in the said Visitors’ House, there were constant difficulties in supplying running water, because the hydrophore was permanently damaged and the uninsulated water supply system was subject to failure (freezing and bursting pipes). According to the rapporteurs, the lack of a local “canoe port” and of “floating equip-

ment” also had very negative impact on the attractiveness of the Tykocin site, which all in all, was considered “particularly regrettable”.

Another serious drawback was the lack of adequate catering facilities in Tykocin in the mid-1960s, “(...) as the local GS shop [i.e. Communal Peasant Self-help Cooperative shop] sells its products in rather discouraging conditions for tourists”. Alternatively, in order to improve the economic situation of the Tykocin Tourist House, which was running at a substantial financial loss, it was proposed at the beginning of 1966 that the building could be used as a venue for “residential holidays and courses”, or for training courses held by various institutions. One way or another, all this was to be done while maintaining the essential service role of a facility intended generally for the development of tourism. The Tourist House in Tykocin was to become the destination of the so-called Białystok “festivity/holiday trips” [Arch. PTTK in B-stok, Report for 1965,1-3].

It was a matter of fundamental importance to obtain suitable premises for the functioning of the Branch authorities and especially its Board. Meanwhile, even the questionnaire addressed to the Provincial National Council as late as on January 15, 1965 included as assets of the Branch: “its own [used jointly with another organisational unit – the PTTK District Board] office premises and club” – consisting of three rooms. The lack of a separate office premises was mentioned among the main obstacles to the work of the Branch at the turn of 1964/1965, considering the above described joint use of the office premises with the Provincial Board of PTTK as a significant drawback. At the same time, it was requested that the PTTK District (Regional-Voivodeship) Board be moved to another place. Also, a year later, during the 9<sup>th</sup> PTTK Branch in Białystok Congress, the burning issue of finding suitable office space for the Branch Board was raised, as – at least according to the participants of this meeting – “the present conditions do not provide the minimum working conditions”. The office premises in use were still considered to be “cramped, neglected and insufficiently heated in winter”. This situation was said to have decisive negative impact on the organisation of work. Furthermore – according to the discussants – “the inadequate appearance of the premises also has a deterrent effect on ORT [Tourist Services Office] customers”.

There was one more issue that could be added to the general casus of important premises, possibly significantly impeding the development of the discussed Branch of PTTK. This was (noticed and raised at the turn of 1964 and 1965) the lack of a tourist hostel managed by PTTK in the city of Białystok. It should be noted here that the applicants even indicated a specific building that could be taken over for a tourist hostel in Białystok at the time.

In the mid-1960s, in view of the existing shortages, the members of the Białystok PTTK postulated that the material base should be further “enlarged and improved” by developing or organising private accommodation in

a number of smaller towns, such as Supraśl or Wasilków, and for the longer perspective, in the localities of Kuźnica Białostocka and Czarna Białostocka [State Arch. in B-stok, file No. 4/149/0/20/616, 277, 277v, 318v, 334].

A certain significant postulate, in a way summing up the condition and importance of a physical base for the Białystok Branch of PTTK, and risen due to introducing the principle of full transfer of income from overnight stays to the PTTK Central Board in the capital – was the call at the beginning of 1966 for the Board to consider the option of resigning from further administration of the Tourist Houses held by the Branch, with particular emphasis on the Tourist House in Białowieża [Arch. PTTK in B-stok, Development conclusions for 1966,1].

The noted fluctuations in the assessment of the extent to which the facilities (Tourist Houses) belonging to the Białystok Branch of PTTK were being used, plus the pressure for their improvement, noticeable at least from the middle of the analysed period, as well as the articulation of the need to acquire the necessary office premises – all illustrated, when viewed as a whole, the considerable extent to which the problem was multifaceted.

## Conclusions

The conditions and prospects for the development of the Białystok PTTK Branch in the first half of the 1960s are shown in this article in terms of four issues: relations with administrative authorities; the functioning of the institution's authorities and the number of the posts allocated; the verbalised objectives of the activity; and a physical base. All these factors had obvious impact on the possibilities and directions of development regarding the described tourist institution.

Referring to the revealed problems in the relations between the state administration and the Białystok Branch of the Polish Tourist and Sight-seeing Society, the impartial observer should, first of all, express his/her conviction that the surprising number of difficulties and delays in the registration of the Branch in the relevant registers of the state administration of communist Poland under the new regulations in force could not have been directly connected (which would be a too far-fetched supposition or conclusion) with some kind of top-down or local obstruction. The only case that might raise some doubts in this respect was the casus of the one-year delay in the approval of the Branch's amended statutes in March 1965. In the opinion of the author of this text, the main reason for the protracted registration process was probably a kind of substantive and clerical inadequacy and the related impediments to a clear and transparent flow of multilateral "expectations, demands and requirements". Similarly, the super-

visory expectations specified in January 1961 did not represent any kind of “degeneration” atypical for the period in question, but – to the contrary – they turned out to be indispensable components of the administrative procedure at that time.

On the other hand, the authorities of the local PTTK Branch (as evidenced by correspondence with the Provincial National Council from January 1966) were also themselves “indulging” in – a probably overly detailed – interpretation of the existing legal conditions. Consequently, from the analysis of the registration and organisational problems of the local PTTK during the period of relative stabilisation of the government under communist leader Władysław Gomułka and his team (i.e. the first half of the 1960s), we can draw not too flattering conclusion about the – at least periodical – domination in the relations between the national administration and the formal as well as legal activists of the local PTTK with incomplete understanding and lack of proper interpretation of the binding norms and regulations.

Another issue raised regarded changes in the composition of the Board and administrative posts of the local tourist organisation. According to accessible sources, during the analysed period of three changes on the Board of the Białystok Branch of the PTTK – each time a new president was elected (consecutively: Jerzy Zalewski, Eugeniusz Wielewski, Zdzisław Chojnowski). It was also possible to observe significant fluctuation in the majority of the Board’s personal composition, but it is difficult, on this basis, to state that any negative impact of these extensive changes occurred on the stability and effectiveness of the implementation of decision-making powers. This is all the more so given that it was neither an (unwritten) rule nor a principle that the composition of the Management Board should be completely overhauled. This may be confirmed by the fact that at least one person (Cezary Wójcicki) was on all three Boards. In turn, the way in which candidates for the Branch’s authorities were initially presented (admittedly in an exceptional way) during the Congress of March 3 and 4, 1962 was not surprising in times of strong limitations in democratic procedure in the state as a whole; meeting, one way or another, some resistance from the participants of the Convention. The above assertions seem to testify to the far-reaching – albeit not entirely complete – consolidation of the principles of “real socialism” among the activists of the Białystok PTTK in key issues concerning the selection of “appropriate” authorities. This attitude – with all the conditions behind it – must have influenced the principles of limited creativity among the local management staff.

Also, while it is obvious that the data from November 1963 do not simply include the staff of the Białystok Branch Tourist Houses, in any case, in the middle of the 1960s, there was a clear increase in the number of employees of this institution, which was particularly noticeable in

1965. Apart from testifying to the unquestionable organisational development of the Branch, the indicated data also provide an indirect image of the increase in the activity of this institution (as it probably resulted from a real need for such an increase in staff). The question of the effectiveness of the proper “management and employment” of this expanding staff remains open.

Assessing the postulates of the members of the Białystok PTTK Branch described in this article, it should be mentioned that many of them were well-founded, reflecting an attitude of concern for almost fundamental issues. Without going into too much detail, we should not be surprised, for example, that among the proposals and motions put forward by the authorities and speakers at individual Congresses of the Branch from the very beginning of the period in question, issues related to the countryside and the idea of protecting nature were raised. Among the important postulates that should also be noted – in chronological order – were of course: a) the desire “to acquaint the public” with many other matters, such as history, cultural heritage; b) a repeated proposal to carry out publishing initiatives, etc.

However, if we focus on a group of postulates of hardly verifiable nature, one could discover that the concept of developing or increasing public knowledge on “the achievements of tourism and sightseeing in other countries” may have sounded somewhat euphemistic and general at the time – for it is difficult to classify the exact meaning of this initiative, especially in the reality of a Poland practically almost cut off from the world (Western, but not only) in the early 1960s. Being even more specific, there is no doubt – as it can be surmised – about the extent to which the concept of “researching and learning” the routes of the march of Polish armies some 550 years ago was feasible, prompting questions about the degree to which some of the postulates put forward were even realistic.

After all, the wide range of proposals and postulates expressed in the early 1960s undoubtedly not only reflects the multiplicity of problems of the Białystok tourist world at the time, but also testifies to the creativity of its representatives.

Finally, with regard to the facilities/material assets under the control and management of the Białystok PTTK Branch in the first half of the 1960s, two key issues emerge, so to speak: a) the functioning of the hostels/tourist houses/shelters (these various names appeared in the documentation); b) the issue of obtaining suitable office premises for the authorities of the local tourist organisation. Both of these matters were not satisfactorily resolved.

The first issue – linked to the locations in Białowieża and Tykocin (the latter only since 1963), even despite the apparently growing interest in the use of the facility by tourists, encountered barriers related to: a) the inadequate provision of standards necessary in the long-term to accommodate

visitors; and b) problems of infrastructural nature and the lack of adequate economic facilities. Looking at this from another angle, the inability of the Branch Board to quickly acquire its own office premises – at least according to the rapporteurs and applicants – clearly restricted the freedom to undertake tourism initiatives. Whether we are talking about the tourist houses and their immediate neighbourhood, or about the headquarters of the Management Board, in both cases, the consequences of neglect seemed to be downright devastating. There was talk of conditions of stay or use of facilities that “put off” (for one reason or another) potential customers.

“The premises issue” was a somewhat reliable reflection of the whole conditions concerning the functioning and development of the Białystok tourist organisation in the first half of the 1960s. On the one hand, the various postulates concerning the acquisition of premises for the Branch Office and the modernisation (improvement of the condition) of tourist houses, or the proposal to build such a tourist house (or a tourist hostel) in Białystok itself, sounded very quire sensible. However, their realisation could not depend on the Białystok PTTK community, being subject to legal, administrative and economic conditions – basically under the control of the provincial and national state administration.

Summarising the development prospects of the Białystok Branch of the PTTK in the first half of the 1960s based on the conditions outlined above, one can first of all notice the lack of adequate compatibility between the significant theoretical advantages to intensify tourist traffic in this – one of the most attractive in Poland – area and the level of its actual growth. When searching for the reasons for this state of affairs, the general need appears to point to their objective nature, connected with the influence of such factors as not the best relations with the state administration, or simply the lack of an adequate material basis. Focusing on too many proposed action objectives, linked, to some extent, with significant fluctuations in management, was probably also a burden.

Consequently, the not very impressive balance sheet of the Białystok tourist organisation’s activity in the early 1960s – paradoxically – should be assessed without pointing to the prevailing positives or negatives. The Białystok Branch of the Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society functioned reasonably well at that time, taking the necessity to face a number of significant constraints of both an external and internal nature into account. Its members did not lose their enthusiasm, visible for instance in the ever-reviving programme initiatives. It seems that, with their development prospects considerably limited (also sometimes as a result of their misguided behaviour), they made decent use of their restricted opportunities.



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## FATHER MAXIMILIAN MARIA KOLBE – SAINT AND TRAVELLER

*Liliana Kowalczyk\**

### Abstract

**Purpose.** The main objective of the research presented in this paper was to demonstrate the figure of Saint Father Maximilian Maria Kolbe as a traveller.

**Method.** For the purpose of the research, the biographical method and textual analysis were used. The studied materials included Maximilian Maria Kolbe's letters and diaries published in print, as well as literature on the subject found on the Internet.

**Findings.** In the course of the research, a number of documents were identified, proving that Father Maximilian Maria Kolbe was a traveller. His interest in journalism and the desire to expand his publishing as well as missionary activity were among the main motives behind his travels.

**Research and conclusion limitations.** The paper is based primarily on the private records of Father Maximilian Maria Kolbe kept from his diaries and letters. The events and experiences described may have been presented in a subjective manner. Some stages of his life were recorded with single entries and therefore, only a comparative analysis can be carried out based on similar events described in the source materials.

**Practical implications.** The results of the research can be a source of biographical information, with particular focus on the aspect of travels in the saint's life.


**Originality.** The existing research on the figure of Saint Maximilian Maria Kolbe has mainly been centred around the life of the Franciscan as a whole, especially his imprisonment and death in Auschwitz I Concentration Camp. References have only been made to his travels to the Far East. An analysis of his travels as a whole, however, presents him in a new light, as an outstanding traveller.

**Type of research.** The paper presents the results of empirical research.

**Keywords:** prisoner, travel, missions, Catholic press, journalism.

### Introduction

Rajmund Kolbe, more widely known today as Father Maximilian Maria Kolbe, is one of the most eminent saints of the Catholic Church. The Franciscan became famous mainly for his heroism during his imprisonment in the former German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp *Auschwitz-Birkenau*. He was remembered by his fellow prisoners as a man of humility and devotion to the Immaculate Heart of the Virgin Mary. Based on

\*  <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-2842-8557>; MSc; University of Physical Education in Krakow, Department of Tourism and Recreation, Institute of Tourism; e-mail: [liliana.kowalczyk@awf.krakow.pl](mailto:liliana.kowalczyk@awf.krakow.pl).

their testimony, even the SS men used to say among themselves: “The priest is quite a decent man. We have never seen one like him here before” [Bor-gowiec 1946, p. 66-67]. Due to his cordial attitude towards people, he was able to quickly establish friendly relationships. His strong empathy was behind his decision to volunteer to die in place of a fellow prisoner.

Maximilian Maria Kolbe was considered a courageous and open-minded man. He wanted to spread the teachings of the Church and to be active through the means of social communication, chiefly through the press. One of the most important works of his life was the monthly periodical “Rycerz Niepokalanej” (“Knight of the Immaculata”), which even reached other corners of the world and is still highly regarded by many social groups. Father Kolbe claimed that journalists should observe the principles of truth and peace in their work to properly serve people. In his work, he mainly focused on the lower strata of society, especially the poor, often deprived of opportunities to expand their knowledge and deepen their Christian faith. He was perceived as a bridge between people of different strata, cultures and nationalities.

When the Second World War broke out, Kolbe was 45 years old. His well-established publishing and social activities at Niepokalanów had considerable impact on the readers. Nazi Germany saw that and ruled the Franciscan Order either had to be brought into their sphere of influence and allied with Hitler or completely destroyed [Kolbe 2018, p. 19-20]. On the 19<sup>th</sup> day post outbreak of the war, Kolbe was arrested and, together with 34 other men, was deported first to the camp at Lamsdorf (Łambinowice), then to Amtitz (Gębice) and further to Ostrzeszów. Looking at the situation of his fellow prisoners, Kolbe found that the presence of the friars in the camps was necessary to raise the morale of the inmates. Eventually, the friars were released and returned to Niepokalanów on 8 December 1939. However, since the Order was not allowed to return to its previous social activity, it concentrated on providing help and support to the local population. The friars took care of the homeless, those displaced from their homes by the occupant (many of whom were Jews) and repaired agricultural tools. Maximilian Maria Kolbe obtained permission to publish one issue of *Rycerz Niepokalanej*, which brought him to the attention of the Germans, dispelling their doubts regarding the possibility of collaboration with the friar. In the end, Kolbe, along with his closest companions, was sent to *Auschwitz I* on 28 May 1941 and given the number 16670. The group of priests he was assigned to was treated with exceptional cruelty [see: <https://dzieje.pl/aktualnosci/29-lipca-1941-r-ojciec-kolbe-zglosil-sie-w-auschwitz-na-smierc-za-wspolwieznia>].

The inhumane treatment and living conditions in *Auschwitz I* did not break Kolbe down. He was one of the few who maintained their human integrity and dignity. After one of the prisoners escaped, all the fellow pris-

oners in his block had to assemble at the roll-call square and remain there until the escapee was found. The search went on for hours without success. The Commander-in-Chief chose 10 random prisoners to die by starvation as a form of collective responsibility. One of them was Franciszek Gajowniczek (number 5659) [see: <https://radioniepokalanow.pl/120-lat-temu-urodzil-sie-franciszek-gajowniczek>], who upon hearing the sentence, began to beg for mercy for his wife and sons sake. Kolbe, who witnessed the situation, decided to volunteer and die in place of Gajowniczek. Initially, the commander was sceptical about the proposal, but finally gave his permission [see: <https://edukacja.ipn.gov.pl/edu/materialy-edukacyjne/wirtualna-paczka-edukac/pierwszy-transport-do-a/artykuly/101253,Zakonnik-redaktor-meczennik.html>].

Kolbe spent two weeks in his starvation cell praying and lifting the spirits of his fellow prisoners on their last journey. After 14 days, on 14 August 1941, he was given a lethal injection of phenol in his left arm [Kowalczyk 2023, p. 150-172]. In the camp, he became a paragon of heroism.

Most people, upon hearing the name of Father Maximilian Maria Kolbe, mainly perceive him in the light of his martyrdom. However, it is also worth analysing the life of the saint, which may provide many surprising insights. Based on analysis of a number of documents, it can be concluded that the Franciscan was not only a devout and zealous Christian, living in the seclusion of a monastery, but also an outstanding traveller who, in his time, visited many countries and became acquainted with a number of cultures. His travels were primarily missionary in nature. Nonetheless, in his letters, Father Kolbe often described to his relatives and companions what he had visited, learned and discovered during his travels, so in a sense, he combined work and travelling.

## Literature review

The subject of the travels made by Maximilian Maria Kolbe has been mentioned in various types of publications. Most of such literature, however, was biographical in nature and portrayed the entire life of the saint, without exclusively focusing on his travels. Father Jerzy Domański, in his collection of short essays entitled *Św. Maksymilian Maria Kolbe* [*Saint Maximilian Maria Kolbe*], portrays the friar's path to sanctity and his devotion to the Polish cause [Domański 2012]. Kolbe's biography or its elements, together with mentions of his travels, are also included in such publications as: *Człowiek XX wieku. Święty Maksymilian Maria Kolbe (Man of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Saint Maximilian Maria Kolbe the Franciscan)* by Władysław Kluz [Kluz 1992], *Św. Maksymilian Maria Kolbe franciszkanin (Saint Maximilian Maria Kolbe the Franciscan)* by Father Zdzisław Józef Kijas [Kijas

2011], *Skąpiec Boży. Rzecz o O. Maksymilianie Maria Kolbe (God's Miser. About Father Maximilian Maria Kolbe)* by Jan Dobraczyński [Dobraczyński 1946], *Wiara i ofiara. Życie, dzieło i epoka św. Maksymiliana M. Kolbego (Faith and Victim. Life, Work and Era of Saint Maximilian M. Kolbe)* by Czesław Ryszka [Ryszka 2021] as well as *Maksymilian Kolbe. Kaptan, dziennikarz, męczennik (Maximilian Kolbe. Priest, Journalist, Martyr)* by Maxence Philippe [Philippe 2011]. Descriptions of the travels of Maximilian Maria Kolbe, both in Poland and abroad, have been concluded in the publication *Maksymilian M. Kolbe Męczennik ze Zduńskiej Woli (Maximilian M. Kolbe. Martyr from Zduńska Wola)* written by Mariusz Budkiewicz [Budkiewicz 2021]. The author primarily focused on missionary journeys.

In the course of the research, the author also discovered articles relating directly to Kolbe's travels, albeit, not as a separate subject. Aleksandra Kijak-Sawska, in her publication *Morskie podróże św. Maksymiliana (Sea Travels of Saint Maximilian)* mostly focused on the period of the saint's life when he made voyages to the Far East, with particular emphasis on his experiences during sea voyages, including the names of ships, voyage routes, etc. [Kijak-Sawska 2014, p. 103-147]. A similar topic was addressed by Leon Dyczewski in his article *St. Maximilian's Kolbe missionary heritage*, who discussed the missionary attitude of the friar and his activity with particular emphasis on Asian countries, including Japan [Dyczewski 1988, p. 71-87].

Detailed descriptions and information on both his activities and travels were provided by Father Maximilian Maria Kolbe himself in his letters and diaries, which were collected and compiled by a team from the publishing house Wydawnictwo Ojców Franciszkanów Niepokalanów, edited by Father Joachim Roman Bar OFMConv [see: <http://frater.lt/index.php/sample-page/>]. The resulting work with texts authored by Maximilian Maria Kolbe himself was entitled *Pisma (Scriptures)* [Kolbe 2018]. It features Kolbe's accounts of events and his experiences, especially during his travels.

## Method

The research carried out and presented in this paper was intended to show the figure of Father Maximilian Maria Kolbe as a man who was not only a holy martyr, but also a traveller. The figure of Father Kolbe is held in high esteem in both the Catholic Church and Polish history, which is why it is important to draw attention to his activity before his arrest and deportation to *Auschwitz I* Concentration Camp. The existing historical analyses have mainly been focused on his final moments. However, one should not ignore the fact that the journeys he made and the initiatives he undertook had significant impact on the development of the Catholic press, as well as social mechanisms in Poland and around the world.

In order to carry out the research, the biographical method and textual analysis were used. The analysed materials included letters and diaries by Father Kolbe published in print, as well as scientific and historical articles. The main source of information was the publication *Pisma* containing texts by Father Maximilian Maria Kolbe himself, compiled by a team led by editor Father Joachim Roman Bar of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual and published by Wydawnictwo Ojców Franciszkanów Niepokalanów publishing house. The publication, divided into two parts, contains private letters and diaries written by Father Kolbe during his life, describing his experiences, journeys, undertaken initiatives, as well as difficulties encountered. The addressees of the aforementioned letters were Father Kolbe's closest relatives and companions, including his mother Maria Kolbe, his brother Alfons Kolbe and his closest fellow brethren and superiors. According to the editor's note discussing the principles for compilation of the texts, contained in the introduction to Part 1 of *Pisma*, the publication was mainly documentary rather than literary in nature and aimed to present the Author's thoughts as he himself put down, without embellishment or distortion [Kolbe 2018, p. 9-11]. Given that the collection of these texts was compiled by an organisation which Kolbe himself founded, one can assume that the presented accounts faithfully reflect his thoughts. For this reason, the author of this paper decided to base this research on Kolbe's letters and notes, published in a printed version, considering them to be the source that is characterised by the highest level of objectivity and reliability in conveying the thoughts of the Franciscan.

The materials have been analysed in detail to extract information concerning Father Kolbe's travels. In the research process, the author has found multiple evidence and statements made by the friar himself, which confirmed that the Franciscan was a traveller. Most of his journeys were mainly missionary in nature, aimed at finding new markets and audiences for the growing publishing activity of the Knights of the Immaculata. On the other hand, aspects strictly related to tourism, including sightseeing and cognitive elements, are also mentioned in the analysed documents.

**“I have been to many countries,  
I have seen a lot and talked to different people (...)”  
[Kolbe 2018, p. 625-630]**

Saint Maximilian Maria Kolbe was a man with an open mind and devotion to God. In 1917, in Rome, he founded the “Knights of the Immaculata” movement, the main aim of which was to spread devotion to Mary and strengthen the Christian faith [Kolbe 2018, p. 13]. Kolbe's main objective was to create new opportunities for the poorest strata of society, who were often unable to receive a proper education or even to learn the basics crucial



to the proper functioning of society. As his initiatives spread, Father Kolbe planned to expand his activities to other countries. The desire to spread the faith was one of the main motivations for his travels.

### *Educational travels*

Maximilian (at the time still known as Rajmund) embarked on his first important journey as early as 1907 [Kolbe 2018, p. 23], at the age of 13, when, along with his brother Francis, he was admitted to the Minor Seminary of the Franciscan Order in Lviv. This very first long trip made in January 1894 had crucial impact on the entire life of the boy born in Zduńska Wola. The motivation behind the trip was to pursue his religious vocation and obtain a proper education. In 1910, Rajmund and his brother Francis began their novitiate at the Order of the Franciscan Fathers in Lviv [Kolbe 2018, p. 24].

The second journey in the young man's life began on 28 October 1912, when he and the other seminarians left for Rome to study. In the same year, Rajmund began his philosophical studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University, where he obtained a doctorate degree in philosophy on 22 October 1915. On 4 November of the same year, he enrolled in another study programme – theology at the Pontifical University of St. Bonaventure of the Franciscan Order in Rome. He obtained a second doctorate degree in 1919 [Kolbe 2018, p. 24]. His stay in Rome was crucial, not only due to its educational aspects, but also because during his studies, Kolbe was ordained a priest (taking another name, Maria), and, inspired by the atmosphere of the Chapel of the International Seraphic College, he decided to found a Marian association of the Knights of the Immaculata, whose mission was evangelisation of the world. The young seminarian wanted to make the most of the opportunities he had so, after classes at the college, he attended additional lectures in mathematics and natural sciences. Later, he used the knowledge gained to create one of the first designs for an interplanetary vehicle called the 'Ethereoplane' that was capable of moving in a vacuum (according to contemporary scientists and specialists, Kolbe's plans and calculations were correct from the point of view of current technical knowledge) [Kolbe 2018, p. 15-16].

The magnificence of Rome captivated Kolbe. He was fascinated by the Holy See, which for centuries had collected records of the early Christians. Father Kolbe visited the places of execution of the first martyrs, the famous shrines and images of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He was deeply moved by every visit to the Vatican, as well as by the meeting with the Holy Father [Kolbe 2018, p. 15-16].

### *Health-related travels*

Father Maximilian Maria Kolbe completed his education in Rome on 29 July 1919 and returned to Poland, where he began his activity in Kraków [Kolbe 2018, p. 24]. He was planning to establish a publishing house in his homeland, as well as travel to other places to popularise the initiative of the Knights of the Immaculata. Until August 1920, he lectured on church history at the local Major Seminary of the Franciscan Order, but then, due to progressing tuberculosis, he was recommended by his superiors to travel to Zakopane, where he underwent treatment and, at the same time, served as chaplain of the Climatic Hospital. He completed his treatment in April 1921, and in May of the same year, he left for Nieszawa where he remained convalescing until 3 November. The friar returned to Zakopane for another treatment between 1926 and 1927 [Kolbe 2018, p.24].

In January 1922, Kolbe returned to Kraków where he began publishing the “Knight of the Immaculata” periodical. This was a turning point in the life of Father Kolbe – as the publishing house grew, so did the initiative to expand its activities. In the years 1922-1930, efforts were made to establish official headquarters of the Franciscan Order in Niepokalanów and to settle formal issues related to the Knights of the Immaculata movement, which eventually was granted a number of privileges and powers as an organisation.

### *Travels across Europe*

With the necessary resources and opportunities, Father Maximilian Maria Kolbe decided to begin preparations for a journey to the Far East. In less than a month (between 14 January and 5 February 1930), the Franciscan visited Vienna, Rome, Assisi, Turin, Marseilles, Lourdes, Paris, Lisieux, Augsburg, Berlin, Toruń, Aleksandrów Kujawski and Würzburg. As he wrote in his letter to Niepokalanów (letter No. 193) from 23 January 1930 on the train from Rome to Padua: “(...) Instead of waiting for Father General, I am going to meet him in Padua and continue through Turin, Marseilles to Lourdes and Paris. I have my ticket in my pocket, all the way to Paris (...)” [Kolbe 2018, p. 326-327], or to Father Alfons Kolbe (letter No. 195) on 28 January 1930 while sitting on a train crossing the Italian-French border [Kolbe 2018, p. 328-329]:

Dear Brother! Since I have been called back to Rome from Padua by telegraph by the Reverend General, who wanted me to go to Assisi, I will not be able to make it this Sunday, because only today I have been in Turin for six hours and visited the “Little House of Divine Providence”, as well as, although very briefly, the Blessed Don Bosco Institute. Around midnight I will cross the border. We are now (7:22 p.m.) crossing a section of the border. The Italians have already inspected and stamped our passports (...).

The above quotations show that Kolbe would give his relatives and collaborators a detailed account of the journeys he made and the experiences he had during them. In a way, these accounts can be regarded as a kind of travel diary. In another letter, addressed to seminarian Marian Wójcik (letter No. 194) dated 26 January 1930, written in Assisi, the author describes the reasons why he undertook this particular journey [Kolbe 2018, p. 327-328]:

(...) I am writing from Assisi, where I arrived from Rome at noon today. Tomorrow morning I leave for Turin (not far from Fribourg), and then for Lourdes, Paris, Lisieux, Augsburg and Würzburg. I have undertaken this journey to Rome mainly to see about the possibility of publishing “Rycerz Niepokalanej” in Chinese, Japanese and Hindi (...).”

Judging by the description of the successive stages of the journey, it is clear that its route and purpose were carefully thought out and planned by Father Maximilian, who described each of the places visited in his diary. Text No. 867 in Part 2 of *Pisma* contains entries from the diary made between 17 January and 5 February 1930, which comprise brief notes on some of Father Kolbe’s experiences. An example is an excerpt from a note made during his visit to Lourdes [Kolbe 2018, p. 132]:

30 I C – Lourdes: by tram 13 to the Grotto – mass in the crypt in front of the side altar – entry in the book – to the Grotto; nice place, still raining – crutches as a sign of the graces granted and candles of the pleas made – part of rosary – feel a little sad afterwards – I leave, it’s raining – no shelter around – I go to the office and ask about the train at five o’clock, no third class – I ask about the exchange of money (in broken French, mangling words) – unfortunately, the offices close, because it’s twelve o’clock, so I have to wait hungry again in the rain. Where should I go?

The reflections and observations recorded by the friar clearly show that when travelling for missionary purposes, especially with a view to spreading his activities, Kolbe took the opportunity to visit the most popular tourist attractions of the region. The sanctuary at Lourdes, the family home of St. Teresa of the Child Jesus converted into a museum, the Colosseum or other well-known sites were important stops on his itinerary.

He made visits to other European cities to see about the possibility of expanding his activities in the Far East, mainly Japan, China and India. He travelled outside Europe, mainly between 1930 and 1933.

Due to the expansion of the Wydawnictwo Ojców Franciszkanów Niepokalanów publishing house, Father Kolbe had to postpone his journeys to the Far East. In subsequent years, he generally focused on Europe. In 1937, he went to Italy to participate in the reorganisation of the Knights of the Immaculata movement and to take part in the celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anni-

versary of its founding [Kolbe 2018, p. 27]. Upon his return to Poland, he was mainly involved in promoting Niepokalanów – appearing, for example, on the Polish Radio. In 1938, he went to the Congress of Poles in Germany which was held in Berlin [Kolbe 2018, p. 27] in order to investigate the political and social situation there. One of his last major journeys was a trip to Latvia in May 1939, the main purpose of which was establishment of the Latvian counterpart of Niepokalanów.

### ***Travels outside Europe***

Father Kolbe's missionary expedition to Asia began on 26 February 1930, together with four other friars: Zeno Żebrowski, Hilary Łysakowski, Seweryn Dągys and Zygmunt Król, he left for China [Kolbe 2018, p. 26]. However, he did not stay in China for long. Along with Żebrowski and Łysakowski, he decided to go as far as Nagasaki, where Bishop Yanuario Hayasaka employed Maximilian as a professor of philosophy at the local seminary and allowed him to run a publishing house there. The result of his efforts was the publication of the first Japanese issue of "Rycerz Niepokalanej" ("Mugen-zai no Seibo no Kishi" in Japanese) on 24 May 1930 [Kolbe 2018, p. 26]. Between 1930 and 1936, Father Maximilian repeatedly travelled between Japan and Poland. The purpose of these journeys was primarily to expand his missionary and publishing activities, and the exposure to a completely different culture and exoticism caused Kolbe to broaden his horizons of thought and open up even more to the world. He described his travel experiences in great detail, especially his maritime journeys, taking notes every single day, including the most important observations and remarks [Kolbe 2018, p.140-142]:

(...) 17 P – Djibouti at seven o'clock – Black women in the water asking for money – taking a motorboat to get to land – Capuchin friar in a yellowish habit. At the Capuchins – sent a smart black man to the post office – back by motorboat; at twelve o'clock we set off – 2 study chairs for 75 francs (rental). Better time schedule.

18 W – Time change forward at night (fourth changed compared to France).

19 W, 20 C – Fish jumping 200 to 1000 metres up.

20 C - 23 N – *Ocean Indyjski* – Indian Ocean – red sea snakes (...).

During his journeys to the East, Maximilian encountered sights that most Poles at the time could not even imagine. When taking notes of his expedition, he described the various sections of the route, the ports and the people he met. He kept a travel diary which could also be regarded as a guidebook in a way, not only for missionaries, but also for regular tourists who, using his descriptions and observations, would like to follow in his footsteps. Father Kolbe repeatedly expressed his admiration for the mon-

uments, infrastructure and nature he encountered along the way. As he travelled through subsequent regions and places, he mentioned the historical events and religious beliefs associated with the places. For example, he described his crossing of the Suez Canal in the following way [Kolbe 2018, p. 142]:

Near Mount Sinai

On 13 March, Thursday, we arrived in Suez, crossed the man-made Suez Canal, where once was the road that the Virgin Mary travelled with the Infant Jesus and St. Joseph to Egypt and back, and sailed into the Red Sea, or rather its branch, between the famous deserts, where many hermits lived, including St. Paul the hermit and St. Anthony the abbot – the cradle of monastic life – and the Sinai Peninsula. Here, we crossed the stretch of the sea which parted when leading the Israelites from Egypt to the Promised Land and sailed towards Mount Sinai. According to our companion on the voyage – a professor from Paris, who had been here before – we were supposed to see the triple peak of Mount Sinai around evening. But already by the afternoon we could see it in the distance, looming far away against a backdrop of rugged rocky peaks and sands. The summit is part of a long, high range of rocky mountains, and at its foot, a vast sandy plain stretches out, several kilometres or more long, bordering the sea. Perhaps this is where the Jews were camping, waiting for Moses? Mount Sinai... This is the place where God gave man His first commandments, which were to become the basis of human conduct. The mountain is located in the middle of the three parts of the world, which the vast majority of mankind inhabits.

Japan and China were not the only stops on Father Maximilian Maria Kolbe's expeditions. In 1932, he also made a two-month journey to India, the main purpose of which was to analyse the situation in that country with regard to developing his publishing activities there, but also to open up a new direction for missionary travel [Kolbe 2018, p. 152-153]. In his diaries, Father Kolbe focused on the trip in which he took part, to the religious centre of St. Teresa of the Child Jesus in Nishinomiya. He was fascinated by the church, which he described in detail. His accounts clearly indicate that he took the opportunity to do some sightseeing while there, visiting and exploring new places, commenting on the events and sights he encountered.

The outbreak of the Second World War complicated the situation of both the Franciscan publishing house and Maximilian Maria Kolbe himself, who had to suspend his publishing and missionary activities. Father Kolbe and his collaborators tried to strengthen the patriotic attitude of the Polish people and to provide aid under occupation. Due to his brave attitude and rejection of the offer to cooperate with the occupant, he was arrested and sent on his final journey to *Auschwitz I*, where he died a martyr's death.

**Table 1.** The most important travels of Maximilian Maria Kolbe

<b>Time</b>	<b>Destination</b>	<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Effects</b>
1907	Then Poland – today Ukraine (Lviv)	Education	Joining the Franciscan Order
October 1912 – July 1919	Italy (Rome)	Education/Studies	22 <sup>nd</sup> October 1915 – obtaining a doctorate degree in Philosophy at the Pontifical Gregorian University; 1919 – obtaining a doctorate degree in Theology at the Pontifical University of St. Bonaventure of the Franciscan Order in Rome
July 1919 – August 1920	Poland (Krakow)	Publishing activities	Founding of the publishing house; work as an academic teacher at the local Major Seminary of the Franciscan Order
1920 – 1921	Poland (Zakopane)	Treatment	Undergoing treatment; serving as chaplain at Climatic Hospital
May 1921 – November 1921	Poland (Nieszawa)	Treatment	Undergoing treatment
1922	Poland (Kraków)	Publishing activities	Start of publishing “The Knights of the Immaculata”
1926 – 1927	Poland (Zakopane)	Treatment	Undergoing treatment; convalescence
January – February 1930	Austria (Vienna), Italy (Rome, Assisi, Turin) France (Marseilles, Lourdes, Paris, Lisieux), Germany (Augsburg, Berlin, Würzburg), Poland (Toruń, Aleksandrów Kujawski)	Research into the possibilities of expanding publishing activities	Preparing a trip to the Far East
February 1930	China	Missionary and publishing activities	Start of publishing “The Knights of the Immaculata” in Chinese
February 1930 – 1936	Japan (Nagasaki)	Missionary and publishing activities	24 <sup>th</sup> May 1930 – first publication of “The Knights of Immaculata” in Japanese; publishing activities in Japan
1932	India	Missionary and publishing activities	Research into the possibilities of expanding publishing activities
1937	Italy	Participation in religious event	Participation in the reorganisation of “The Knights of the Immaculata” movement; taking part in the celebration of the 20 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of its foundation
1938	Germany (Berlin)	Participation in congress	Examination of the political and social situation
May 1939	Latvia	Publishing activities	Research into the possibilities of expanding publishing activities

**Source:** Own elaboration based on the publications and articles used for preparation of the article.

## Discussion

The figure of Maximilian Maria Kolbe has been the subject of numerous publications and studies. However, their authors have mainly focused on the biography of the saint as a whole, rarely paying attention to the aspect of travels in Father Kolbe's life, although there are some publications touching upon the maritime expeditions made by the Franciscan to the Far East, and his activities on the path to sanctity. The research presented in this paper is focused on Maximilian Maria Kolbe as a traveller, as journeys were an integral part of almost every stage of the friar's life. The main motivations behind undertaking the journeys were Father Kolbe's professional goals, cognitive aspects combined with journalism, but also what is known today as business tourism and congress tourism [Różycki 2022, p. 267-330]. Before Father Kolbe set out on his mission to evangelise Asia, he travelled for educational purposes (educational tourism [Różycki 2022, p. 267-330]), as well as for health-related reasons, which is referred to nowadays as so-called medical tourism. The information presented in this article makes it possible to define Father Kolbe as a traveller in the full sense of the word. It should be noted that even if Kolbe himself did not consider his travels in terms of tourism, by contemporary standards, he could be defined as a tourist and a traveller. The former term is in line with the definition of tourism proposed by Krzysztof Przeclawski, who defines tourism as "the entire set of spatial mobility phenomena connected with the temporary and voluntary change of place of stay, rhythm and living environment, and coming into personal contact with the visited environment (cultural, natural and social)" [Przeclawski 2001, p. 52]. In line with the above-mentioned definition, Father Kolbe voluntarily and temporarily changed his surroundings, coming into personal contact with the visited environment in the broad sense of the word, and could, therefore, be considered a tourist and traveller.

## Conclusions

Father Maximilian Maria Kolbe is a very important figure in Polish history. His work for society led him to sainthood and made him a paragon of love and mercy for brethren. As a friar, he was a modest man who pursued knowledge and self-development. His ambition and altruism were behind a number of the expeditions and journeys he undertook, which not only allowed him to develop his journalistic and publishing activities, but also gave him the opportunity to come into contact with new, completely different people, cultures and nature. On his missionary travels, he took the opportunity to see the most interesting and popular places at a visited destination.

The analysis of the documents and materials gathered for the purpose of the research, allows the conclusion that Maximilian Maria Kolbe was an outstanding traveller. He described his expeditions and experiences in detail, taking notes containing all sorts of instructions for those who would like to travel in his footsteps. It could be said that he was, in a sense, one of the pioneers of organising missionary expeditions to the East. He learnt languages and made acquaintances, which he later made use of in his journalistic activities. Father Kolbe kept a kind of travel diary, adding entries each day and creating itineraries, which he later modified based on gained experiences and travel knowledge. The education and knowledge obtained in the early stages of his life allowed him to experience the journeys in a conscious manner and to examine phenomena in relation to history, culture, religion and other aspects of a given place, which were linked to his missions and activities.

Father Kolbe was no stranger to the hardships of long and distant journeys. He tried to find inspiration in everything and use his experiences as a source of knowledge for his own sake and for the sake of others. The courage of the friar is also evident in the context of the destinations of his missionary expeditions. Asia was considered one of the most inaccessible places at the time, especially in terms of spreading the Christian faith there, but Father Kolbe felt that a trip to this place would bring innovative and revealing insights to Europeans.

Analysing each of the stages of the Franciscan's life, it can be said that in a sense, his entire life was a journey. He spent his childhood and youth away from home, travelling for educational purposes (to Lviv and Italy) while, at the same time, developing his cognitive and cultural competence. Later in his life, he travelled for business purposes related to the Knights of the Immaculata movement and his publishing activities (to Italy, France, Austria, Germany. He also travelled for health-related reasons to treat recurring tuberculosis (to Zakopane and Nieszawa). He undertook great expeditions to the Far East – to Japan, India and China – popularising “Rycerz Niepokalanej”, which, thanks to his efforts, became an international periodical. In the meantime, he also travelled to various congresses in Poland and made a trip to Latvia for missionary purposes. His final journey was his imprisonment in the German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp *Auschwitz-Birkenau*. As can be seen, Maximilian Maria Kolbe was a traveller in the true sense of the word. Each of these journeys was a valuable source of life wisdom for him.

During his time in the Far East, in such exotic countries as Japan and China, he was also able to explore the beliefs and teachings of Eastern psychology and medicine. As a man who was curious about the world and very well versed in various fields of science, he discovered and explored local practices. According to the testimony of witnesses, Father Kolbe survived



in the starvation cell for as long as two weeks, which was considered almost impossible, given his emaciated body and a number of other conditions. Perhaps he was able to last that long using the art of meditation and other techniques he had learnt from the people of Asian. After all, the Japanese are famous for their longevity and good health, even into old age. The influence of Eastern science and medicine on the life of Father Maximilian is undoubtedly something to be taken into account.

Father Maximilian is an example that monastic life is not limited to prayer and does not focus solely on the Order. The missionary activities carried out within the Order gave him the opportunity to obtain additional resources and support in the organisation of various expeditions. The publishing house he founded was an important vehicle for promoting positive attitudes and role models based on traditional Christian values.

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**DISCUSSION, ESSAYS, SCIENTIFIC REPORTS AS WELL  
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**ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR PATTERNS  
AMONG PARTICIPATING OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> EDITION  
OF THE CRACOVIA MARATHON  
(Poland – Krakow, 14 April 2024).  
RESEARCH NOTICE**


***Tomasz Walek\****

**Abstract**

In this study, a summary is presented of empirical research conducted among participants of the 21<sup>st</sup> edition of the Cracovia Marathon—one of the most popular and largest running events organised in Poland. The main goal of the research was to identify the needs and expectations of runners, as well as to understand their motivations, preferences, running habits and behavioural patterns. The research was carried out using the CAWI method among all participants of the aforementioned Cracovia Marathon edition. Ultimately, 364 runners took part in the study, the majority of whom were from Poland (over 98% of respondents). In general terms, the results of the research revealed that physical activity in the form of “running” is becoming increasingly popular among the Polish society, growing into an important element of lifestyle and a means of consciously shaping health, regardless of age or level of physical advancement. This form of activity is supported by the development of sports infrastructure, such as running trails and parks. More detailed research results—described in the report titled *Expectations and Needs of Runners Based on Research into Preferences, Motivations, and Behavioral Patterns of Participants in the 21<sup>st</sup> Cracovia Marathon*—indicate socially anticipated directions for the development of running events to better adapt them to the evolving needs and preferences of runners. It is worth noting that, until now, no such studies have been conducted in relation to a running event held in Krakow.

**Introduction**

Running—as a form of human physical activity—is gaining popularity, leading to a shift in how it is perceived. Once regarded primarily as a recreational activity or a way to lose weight, it is now seen as a serious sport that requires appropriate physical and mental preparation. For many, running

\*  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7180-0932>; Dr. Ph.D.; University of Physical Education in Kraków, Faculty of Tourism and Recreation, Institute of Entrepreneurship and Management, Department of Economics and Management; e-mail: [tomasz.walek@awf.krakow.pl](mailto:tomasz.walek@awf.krakow.pl).

has become not just a physical activity but also a deeply rooted passion. It serves as a means for millions of people to improve their fitness while providing joy, satisfaction and personal growth. A passion for running manifests itself regular training, participation in competitions, discovering new routes and active involvement in the running community. Running attracts people from various age groups, backgrounds and lifestyles. For some, it is a way to escape daily problems and stress; for others, it serves inspiration to lead a healthy lifestyle.

Motivations for running are diverse and include health goals, the desire to set and meet athletic challenges, to build social relationships and gain personal satisfaction from surpassing one's limits. One of the key changes is the professionalisation of the approach to running. An increasing number of people engage in regular training, utilising advanced methods and techniques to improve performance and achieve new goals. The role of personal trainers, research-based training plans and progress-monitoring tools is growing, enabling runners to manage their training more effectively and efficiently. The perception of running as a social activity is also evolving. Organised running groups, mass events and online communities foster integration among runners, creating strong bonds and facilitating the exchange of experiences as well as motivation. Running is no longer just an individual effort; it is becoming a collective, even social endeavour, in which people work together to develop their skills and overcome challenges.

Additionally, a growing health awareness in the context of running has become visible. Runners are starting increasingly pay attention to diet, recovery and injury prevention, employing modern physiotherapy and rehabilitation techniques. This not only enhances their athletic performance but also improves quality of life by maintaining health and fitness at a high level. The main objective of the conducted study was to gather information about the running habits, motivations and needs of individuals taking part in the 21<sup>st</sup> edition of the Cracovia Marathon—a running event held annually in Kraków, Poland, with this edition taking place on April 14, 2024.

Organised since 2002, the Cracovia Marathon is a key running event in Kraków and the largest spring marathon in Poland at the classic distance. The course covers exactly 42 kilometres and 195 metres, attracting runners from around the world, making this marathon the most international in Poland. It boasts the highest participation of foreign runners among all Polish marathons. To date, participants from 70 countries have taken part in the Cracovia Marathon, with over 67,000 individuals joining all its editions to date. Organising such a large-scale event is a significant challenge, which the City of Kraków successfully accomplishes every year.

The analysis of runners' preferences, motivations and behaviours provides insights into the reasons why they choose to participate in such events and identifies the key factors influencing their experiences during prepara-

tion and the race itself. Understanding these aspects can help organizers better tailor their offers to participants' expectations and more effectively support them in achieving their athletic goals. The study also aims to promote running and obtain a deeper understanding of runners' preferences. The conducted research was focused on identifying the main expectations and needs of runners, using a methodology that allows to analyse preferences, motivations and behavioural patterns to enhance knowledge about what "drives" and inspires participants to take on the challenge of completing a marathon.

### **A review of research on the needs and expectations of participants in running events organised in Poland**

Running is a multifaceted topic, encompassing not only the physical aspects of training but also psychology, sociology and public health. Research in this field is diverse and constantly evolving, enabling a deeper understanding of the role running plays in people's lives. The area of study focusing on the needs and expectations of runners aims to understand the factors influencing their running experiences and how to address them.

Runners have varied motivations, such as improving health, achieving athletic goals, relaxation or social integration. Comprehending these motivations is crucial for encouraging regular training and participation in events. Recognising these needs and expectations is important for race organisers, coaches and equipment manufacturers, as it allows for offers to be better tailored to runners and more effectively support their pursuit of athletic goals.

Several studies have been conducted to explore the needs and expectations of runners. These studies were focused on various aspects, such as motivations for running, training preferences, the running community, safety and comfort, education and support, as well as the emotional aspects of running.

In recent years, several studies on runners have been conducted in Poland, providing valuable insights into their needs and expectations. One such study is titled *I Run Because I Like It – The Motivations of Amateur Runners from the Perspective of an Andragogist*, conducted in 2020 at the University of Silesia. In this research, running trends and runners' motivations were analysed within the context of adult experiences in the era of liquid modernity [Majewska-Kafarowska 2020, p. 77].

In 2021, Poznań University of Economics carried out a study called *The Profile of the Amateur Runner*, gathering data on the demographics, training habits and preferences of amateur runners in Poland [Waśkowski 2021, p. 21]. A year later, the Polish Running Association conducted a project titled *The Impact of Running Groups on Motivation*, focusing on how participation in these groups affects training regularity [*The Impact...*].

In 2022, Jagiellonian University in Kraków undertook a project on *The Emotional Aspects of Running in Poland*, identifying psychological benefits of running, such as stress reduction and improved well-being [*The Emotional...*]. In turn, the “Let’s Run Together” Foundation conducted research in 2023 on *Education in Healthy Lifestyles Among Runners*, assessing runners’ knowledge about healthy eating and injury prevention [*Education...*].

Unfortunately, in Poland, relatively few studies have been carried out so far on runners and their habits. This limitation in available data has several significant consequences. The lack of research makes it difficult to understand the specifics of runners in this country—such as their motivations, training preferences and behaviours related to nutrition and recovery. Knowledge of these aspects could help in creating better training programmes and support for people engaged in running. The small number of studies affects the development of infrastructure and the organisation of running events. Understanding the expectations of runners could contribute to the better organisation of marathons and half-marathons, as well as improving training conditions in different regions of Poland. Additionally, the limited amount of research hinders the ability to conduct effective campaigns promoting a healthy lifestyle and undertaking physical activity.

It is worth investing in studies that will provide reliable information about runners, which could contribute to popularising running as a form of physical activity in society. For this reason, encouraging further research in this field is crucial for the development of runners in Poland and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle.

## Methods

The study was quantitative in nature and was conducted using the CAWI method (Computer-Assisted Web Interview), with a survey questionnaire developed as a Google Form. An invitation to participate in the study was sent via email to all participants of the 21<sup>st</sup> edition of the Cracovia Marathon, i.e. to 5,679 individuals. Data were collected in late April/early May 2024. A total of 364 runners participated in the study, ultimately resulting in a nationwide, representative group of Polish runners.

The questionnaire consisted of three sections and a so-called “metric” at the end. The first section (14 questions) was focused on basic information about running (distance, frequency, motivation). The second section (15 questions) comprised enquires about the respondents’ expectations and needs related to participation in running events. The final, third section of the survey concerned the evaluation and opinions on the 21<sup>st</sup> edition of the Cracovia Marathon. At the end of the questionnaire, a metric was included, allowing for the characterisation of the runners participating in the study

(age, gender, place of residence). Not all participants answered all questions, thus, the percentage distribution of responses for each question was calculated based on the number of respondents who provided an answer to that particular question.

The detailed results and conclusions of the study were published in the report titled *Expectations and Needs of Runners Based on Research on Preferences, Motivation, and Behavioral Patterns of Participants in the 21<sup>st</sup> Cracovia Marathon*. Selected results from the study are presented in the following section of the article.

## Results

Based on the conducted research, it appears that in recent years, running has undergone a significant transformation. What was once a recreational activity and a method for weight loss has evolved into a full-fledged sport discipline, requiring advanced physical and mental preparation. Running has become not only a way to improve fitness, but also a source of joy, satisfaction and personal development. The passion for running is reflected not only in regular training, but also in participating in competitions, discovering new routes and running techniques, as well as integration with the extensive running community. In response to the question about motivations, runners often emphasize their concern for physical health as a counter-measure to a sedentary lifestyle, as well as the desire to reduce stress and improve their well-being. They also value belonging to a community that allows for building strong bonds during joint training and competitions. Additionally, they point to the pleasure derived from running, contact with nature and the opportunity to admire changing landscapes.

The most important reason why many people start running is the desire to make changes in their lives (34.5%) and to lose weight (25.8%). The third most common reason was "I've always been drawn to it" (24.4%). One in five runners indicated that they began running to better manage stress. Only 6.6% of respondents stated that their decision to start running was due to health problems. Self-development and improvement are also crucial for runners. Running provides the opportunity to set challenges and achieve personal goals, leading to a sense of satisfaction and motivation. While many reasons for running are common across genders, differences may arise from individual needs and priorities. Women often focus more on health and emotional aspects, while men may pay more attention to competition and achieving specific results. Men frequently view running as a way to build and maintain social relationships, both in running groups and during races.



Although the respondents emphasize the significance of belonging to a community, most of them train alone to better adjust the sessions to their personal needs, such as pace and intensity. In the case of many runners, this form of activity becomes an opportunity for reflection and a break from daily responsibilities. Solo training promotes introspection and contemplation, which is key in their self-development and pursuit of excellence (81.2%). As much as 87.9% of Cracovia Marathon participants train several times a week, and 4.4% train daily. The majority of them are experienced amateur athletes. Over 69% rate their running level as intermediate. Only 1.1% classify their skills as expert level, while almost 12% consider themselves beginner runners. It is concerning that more and more people who rate their skills as beginner-level are deciding to participate in marathons. This trend could lead to dangerous situations during races, including injuries, fainting and even hospitalisation, posing a risk to the lives of participants who are unprepared for such intense exertion.

Short-distance races are becoming increasingly attractive to runners. They do not require such a long preparation period, making them more accessible to people of different skill levels. Competition at shorter distances is often characterised by greater dynamics and intensity. Participants of the Cracovia Marathon mainly acquire knowledge about running from online sources and social media. Although books are still popular, traditional magazines and television are losing significance.

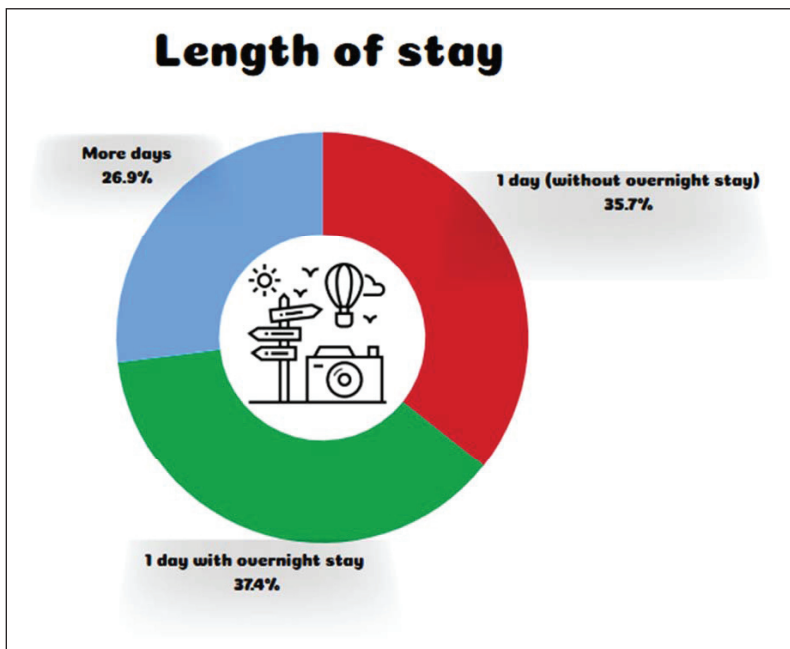
According to the conducted research, running expenses are highly varied. As much as 62.6% of respondents admitted that they spend between 501 and 2,000 PLN annually, while 20% invest between 2,001 and 5,000 PLN. Running is an adaptable sport that can be adjusted to one's financial capabilities. When it comes to the largest expenses related to running, 57.7% of respondents point to spending money on footwear. Runners most often choose products from ASICS (56.6%) and Nike (31.3%).

The data analysis revealed that the 21<sup>st</sup> edition of the Cracovia Marathon attracted a highly diverse group of participants, including both first-time runners in organised events and experienced athletes with multiple starts behind them. The largest share of this group (31.3%) consisted of individuals who had participated in over 50 different races. It is no surprise that many runners choose to tackle the marathon distance only after gaining experience in several or even dozens of races, often starting with half-marathons. Successful performances motivate runners to seek new challenges and participate in more prestigious events.

Runners typically participate in events individually, although sometimes they choose to join a race with a more experienced companion who can offer support along the way. Respondents are less likely to race with coworkers, friends or family members. It turns out that finding close ones who share a passion for running can be challenging. Running solo allows

participants to have complete control over their pace and strategy, which is particularly important for those with specific time goals or who prefer to run at their own rhythm.

The largest group of participants in the study (37.4%) chose one-day trips with overnight stays. Their decision was driven by economic factors and a limited number of vacation days or free time. One-third of runners (35.7%) travelled to the race and returned home on the same day, as they aim to minimise the time spent away from their daily responsibilities and want to spend time with family or fulfil other personal obligations. A quarter of the participants in the study (26.9%) opted for a longer stay at the race location, combining the trip with work or leisure (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Length of stay in the city related to participation in a running event

Source: [Walek 2024].

Runners do not always prioritize the popularity or brand of a given event, nor do they pay much attention to the reputation of the organiser. Instead, they particularly focus on details related to the event, such as the design of the medal, the quality and design of the running shirt and the availability of other accessories. For event organizers aiming to attract a large number of participants, it is crucial to choose the right date to avoid clashes with other well-known running events in Poland. The route's attractiveness and the thoughtful design of the medal and t-shirt are also essential,

as these elements are an integral part of every running event. For participants, important factors include: refreshment and nutrition points (50%), contents of the race packet (36.8%), the finish (33.5%) and the start zones (31.3%). Runners appreciate gadgets, food products and practical information found in race packets, while they consider flyers unnecessary. It is also worth noting that one in every four runners (27.3%) does not place much importance on the contents of the packet, instead valuing the affordable participation fee more.

As much as 70.9% of participants in the 21<sup>st</sup> Cracovia Marathon rated the organisation of the event as very good. For 72% of participants, the event was extremely attractive, and 92.7% of respondents would recommend participating in it to others. Among the participants, 72.5% expressed a willingness to participate again in 2025, while 25.8% were unsure of their decision. The main reasons for this uncertainty are the time gap until the next marathon and limited knowledge about the dates as well as schedules of other running events held in Poland.

## Conclusions

In Poland, there is a growing number of people actively engaging in sports, including running. Runners are increasingly appearing on streets, sidewalks and trails, which indicates a rising interest in this form of physical activity and its beneficial impact on health and fitness. Running events are becoming more popular in Poland, attracting an ever-growing number of participants each year. The increasing interest in such events is driving the dynamic development of the running community in the country. The impressive number of runners participating in these events highlights the growing popularity of running as a form of physical and sporting activity in Poland. This trend of growing popularity is not limited to Poland—there is also an increase in the number of runners abroad, as well as a rise in the organisation of more running events. This trend reflects a global interest in running as a form of physical activity, a healthy lifestyle and an opportunity for social integration through sport. More and more countries and cities around the world are becoming involved in the organisation of various runs, which signifies the increasing role of running in the sporting culture of the global community.

Running events organised in Poland have reached a very high level, thanks to the experience gained by organisers over the years. However, to maintain this quality and adapt to changing trends, it is crucial to regularly research the needs and expectations of runners. This approach allows event organisers to effectively introduce innovations that respond to the increasing interest in running and adapt to the expectations of participants. A good

example can be found in international running events that have gained popularity worldwide through dynamic changes and adaptation to new trends. The New York City Marathon, the largest marathon in the world with over 50,000 participants, takes place on the first Sunday of November. It runs through all five boroughs of New York, with the finish line in the scenic Central Park. Another exceptional event is the Boston Marathon, the oldest annual marathon in the world, held since 1897. Every year, approximately 30,000 participants take part in the race, held on the third Monday of April. The Berlin Marathon, dated in September, attracts around 45,000 runners from all over the world. Its course is famous for being fast and flat, which has led to the setting many world records. The race finishes at the iconic Brandenburg Gate, adding prestige to the event. In April, the London Marathon also takes place, attracting around 40,000 participants. The course passes many iconic landmarks of London, with the finish line located at Buckingham Palace. This marathon is also known as one of the largest charitable events, raising significant amounts for various causes. In Asia, the biggest and most famous running event is the Tokyo Marathon, which annually attracts over 30,000 runners in February. In the fall, the Chicago Marathon is held, drawing around 40,000 runners every October. The Paris Marathon, taking place in April, gathers an impressive number of over 50,000 participants. The course takes runners through the most picturesque corners of Paris, including the Champs-Élysées, the banks of the Seine and around the Eiffel Tower, offering unforgettable experiences. It is also worth mentioning the Athens Authentic Marathon, which attracts about 20,000 runners every year. The course of this marathon, held in November, recreates the legendary route of the messenger Pheidippides from Marathon to Athens, making it one of the most symbolic running events.

These events not only attract an increasing number of participants but also continuously evolve by introducing innovative solutions and improvements. Thanks to their flexibility and responsiveness to the needs of runners, these events maintain a high organisational standard and gain recognition on the international sports stage.

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## **REPORT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE AND COMPETITION TITLED “SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION IN TOURISM & HOSPITALITY: 2023 GLOBAL STUDENT CHALLENGE” (TAIWAN 24 NOV. 2023)**


***Aleksandra Błotnicka\**, *Ziemowit Górski\*\**,  
*Dominik Jurasiński\*\*\****


On November 24, 2023, the International Scientific Conference on Hotel, Tourism and Management entitled – “Sustainable Innovation in Tourism & Hospitality: 2023 Global Student Challenge” (NKUHT IMTH) was held, which gathered participants from around the world (16 countries, 35 teams). The event was organised in hybrid form (both on-site and remote) by the National Kaohsiung University of Hospitality and Tourism – the first and only public university located in Taiwan. The aim of the conference was to discuss the latest trends and challenges in the tourism and hotel sectors, with particular emphasis on sustainable development and the possibilities of adapting entities operating within the aforementioned sectors to dynamically changing economic and social conditions.

The condition for participation in the conference was inclusion in an international competition. Its first stage consisted of sending titles and abstracts of presentations, which were subject to verification – by a committee of experts appointed for this purpose – in terms of content and compliance with the conference theme. The second stage required the preparation of a film promoting the undertaken research topic, which allowed participants to creatively present the essence of their research in a way that was understandable, yet innovative and engaging for the audience. This stage was

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\*  <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-1640-9621>; M.A.; University of Physical Education in Kraków; e-mail: [aleksandrablotnicka98@gmail.com](mailto:aleksandrablotnicka98@gmail.com).

\*\*  <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-5609-1960>; M.A.; University of Physical Education in Kraków; e-mail: [ziemko144@gmail.com](mailto:ziemko144@gmail.com).

\*\*\*  <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-8766-3215>; M.A.; University of Physical Education in Kraków; e-mail: [djjurasinski@gmail.com](mailto:djjurasinski@gmail.com).

subject to evaluation by a committee of experts and users of social media, such as Facebook and YouTube, in a formula that each 'like' and 'share' of a given video was converted into points obtained by a given team of authors.

The event began with a ceremonial welcome by the organisers, who emphasized the importance of sustainable development in tourism and hospitality. The keynote speech entitled: *The Future of Sustainable Tourism: Trends and Opportunities* was delivered by Professor Joseph Cheer (Western Sydney University) – an expert working in the field of sustainable tourism, who drew attention to the need to engage local communities and implement pro-ecological practices in the hotel and tourism industry. The main programme of the conference consisted of two panels: the first panel was an expert forum consisting of guest speakers, while the second panel was the continuation and conclusion of the student competition.

In the expert panel, the first presentation was by MSc Gabriele Seewald (Danube University, board member of SKAL International Taipei), on the impact of climate change at popular tourist destinations. In her research, the author demonstrated how rising temperatures and extreme weather events affect tourists' decisions and local ecosystems. The expert forum was then attended by Professor Fevzi Okumus (University of Central Florida), presenting the topic *The Role of Enterprises in Sustainable and Socially Responsible Development: the Case of Rosen Hotels* and Doctor Hiram Ting (UCSI University, member of the expert panel on tourism, UNWTO) with the presentation *Responsible Innovation: A Call for Youth Leadership in Tourism and Hospitality*. The above presentations and papers concerned, among others, digital transformation in tourism and the use of artificial intelligence in hotel services. One of the programme items was a discussion panel on the reconstruction of the tourism sector after the COVID-19 pandemic, during which experts discussed strategies for combining profitability with sustainable development goals.

After completion of the scientific session, the conference participants began the second panel and the last, third stage of the competition. As part of this, they were divided into five blocks related to the topics and abstracts submitted. The competition committee consisting of: Dr. Meng-Chun Hsu (National Kaohsiung University of Hospitality and Tourism), Dr. Mei-Jung Wang (National Kaohsiung University of Hospitality and Tourism), Dr. Jennifer Pasion Loverio (University of the Philippines – Diliman), Dr. Phương Bùì (Hong Bang International University), Dr. Aunkrisa Sangchumrong (Suan Dusit University), after presenting the materials prepared earlier by the participants, asked the authors questions related to the research issues contained in them. The best team turned out to be Marsha Indrasakti (Indonesia) with the topic *Preservation of the Kya-Kya Area's Sense of Place (Chinatown Area in Surabaya) as a Tourism Heritage Site*, which was honoured with a financial prize. The second team received an award based on their

Facebook and YouTube scores. This team comprised Khate T. Advincula, Aaron Jember R. Devora, Andrei Leonor G. Gagarin, Nathaniel M. Leonin and Marcus Genesis D.R. Pelaez (Manila). They presented their work titled *A Laborer's Ballad: A Phenomenological Study on Work Precarity of EMBO Service Crews Amidst the Makati-Taguig Territorial Dispute*. An additional six teams received honourable mentions and gifts from sponsors and partners of the conference.

It is worth noting that there was one European team among the conference participants, representing Bronisław Czech University of Physical Education in Kraków (Poland) and the Faculty of Tourism and Recreation associated with this university. The team, under the substantive direction of Paweł Stelmach, M.A., comprised: Aleksandra Błotnicka, Ziemowit Górski and Dominik Jurasiński, preparing and presenting a video entitled *The Role of the Virtual Tour Platform in Creating Sustainable Development of Spa Resorts*, which was positively received by the organisers and participants of the conference. For the aforementioned team, participation in the conference was an excellent opportunity to establish contacts and exchange experiences, and as a result – further development.

In conclusion, the conference organised by NKUHT allowed to highlight the significance of sustainable development and innovation in the tourism and hospitality sector. At its end, the organisers thanked the participants for their commitment and expressed their hope for further deepening cooperation between scientists and practitioners. Following editions



**Figure 1.** Graphics of the international conference in Taiwan.

**Source:** [https://www.facebook.com/nkuhtimth2023?rdid=xIqL33poDMR4z72r&share\\_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fshare%2FQ6sTiJhfjBoRtunn%2F](https://www.facebook.com/nkuhtimth2023?rdid=xIqL33poDMR4z72r&share_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fshare%2FQ6sTiJhfjBoRtunn%2F) (accessed: 03 Nov. 2024).



of the conference have already been announced, which will continue the dialogue on the future of the indicated sectors in the face of global challenges. The conference provided many valuable conclusions that can serve as a basis for further research and practice in the hotel and tourism sector, with emphasis on innovative and sustainable approaches to doing business in these sectors.

**REVIEWS, COMMENTS,  
SCIENTIFIC CONTROVERSY, MEMORIES**

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**A BOOK REVIEW:  
"METHODODOLOGY OF TOURISM RESEARCH.  
ONTOLOGICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL  
FOUNDATIONS AND HISTORICAL-INSTITUTIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT" BY LESZEK BUTOWSKI**

*Wiesław Alejziak\**

The present book under review is undoubtedly the result of the author's in-depth literature studies on the issue of methodology – both those general and some specific. He tries to transpose the knowledge from these studies and his own reflections into the field of tourism research. Considering that the current state of such studies is often assessed very critically and the fact that its methodological shortcomings are viewed as the basic reasons for this state, the choice of the book's topic seems to be completely appropriate. All the more so because its author is one of the few Polish tourism researchers (there are no more than a few) who, for years in his works, often undertook the difficult issue of research epistemology and methodology regarding this phenomenon. When writing about difficult issues, I mean first of all, paradigms and canons of scientific knowledge on tourism resulting from the conducted research are still poorly established. Although in the case of young scientific disciplines (or fields of



\*  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0604-7577>; Associate Professor; University of Physical Education in Krakow, Faculty of Tourism and Recreation, Institute of Entrepreneurship and Management (formerly Department of Tourism Policy), Poland; e-mail: [wieslaw.alejziak@awf.krakow.pl](mailto:wieslaw.alejziak@awf.krakow.pl).

knowledge e.g. tourism that are only aspiring to such status), this certain situation is quite common, the expected breakthrough and progress in research is still not visible. Furthermore, the publication record in the field of tourism research methodology – especially in terms of books, monographs and works comprehensively covering the issue – is very modest in Poland. Therefore, it should be stated that the publication of L. Butowski's book is fully justified. It is worth adding that this is its second edition (the first was published in 2020), which has been improved, not only by expanding the content presented in the first edition, but also by including new threads. All this makes the study a position that should interest many readers, regardless of their methodological advancement.

The text of the reviewed work consists of 227 typewriter-written pages. The paper is of compact and uniform structure, the concept of the work is well-thought-out and internally coherent. Although some of the issues discussed are known and have already been described in the literature (especially in the first part of the book, devoted to the understanding of tourism and definitions of this phenomenon), the author's merit can be found in his skilful connection and presentation in a comprehensive, standardised convention. The work comprises an 'Introduction', seven problem-based chapters and a section entitled 'Final reflections – How to pursue the truth about tourism?'. The entire book is complemented by appropriate lists and itemisation of tables as well as figures, and an extensive 'References' section – counting 646 items (not counting netography or websites). In the 'Introduction', the author justifies the need for broader and deeper reflection on the philosophical and methodological issues of tourism research and studies. He emphasizes the fact that although this is postulated by many researchers, there are still few publications on the subject. On this occasion, he cites the few books and monographs that have been published in Poland and indicates the main centres at which advanced research is conducted and knowledge shaped in this field. They are mainly located in the United States, Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand (however, the author also notices achievements in this field of researchers from France, Spain and Latin American countries). Already in the 'Introduction', it is indicated that for the reflection on the ontology and epistemology of tourism research (especially on the basis of "empirical geography as a complex science"), the author applies the assumptions of John Searle's social ontology, which – in his opinion – is very well-suited for this purpose.

The first chapter of the book is devoted to etymological and semantic analyses regarding the concept of tourism and definitions of this phenomenon found in literature. The Author's concept of an "analytical matrix of tourism definitions" was used for this purpose, and the considerations were based on five basic criteria: logical, axiological, market, functional and the conceptual scope (in the latter case, separating tourism perceived *senso stricto* and *senso largo*). In the second chapter, the scope of tourism research is defined, distinguishing its field and empirical sets, applying them to the

subject matrix, while taking practical applications into account. According to the author, this is presented in a "...way which, on theoretical grounds, can transform the previously defined empirical tourist reality into the subject of its scientific exploration" [p. 15]. The third chapter is rich in ontological and epistemological reflections on tourism, in which the author asks fundamental questions concerning the nature of tourism (he uses the term "tourist reality") and, in particular, tries to determine "...how it is created, what it consists of, how it exists in the world and what are its distinctive features" [*ibid*]. He is interested in the possibility of knowing the already mentioned and previously defined tourist reality on an ontological level, and determining the objective or subjective status of knowledge about tourism. Considerations on this subject are conducted based on two opposing philosophical positions, namely realism and relativism. In the case of the former, the assumptions of the aforementioned new realist social ontology proposed by John Searle were used to present them, while in relation to relativism, the basis for considerations are the assumptions of social constructionism. The result of these deliberations is a synthetic, and in a sense indirect, authorial approach (taking into account, among others, the influence of the researcher's individual characteristics and various external factors on the image of the studied reality), which the author calls the realistic-humanistic approach.

Against the background of the views, concepts and interesting original considerations presented in the first three chapters of the book, in the fourth, selected aspects of tourism research are characterised, subjecting them to quite detailed analyses conducted from the perspective of two opposing methodological orientations: naturalistic and humanistic-interpretive. In a sense, a separate part of the analyses is the consideration of tourism research disciplinarity and the autonomisation of studies in this area, which are presented in the final part of this chapter. The fifth chapter is devoted to the genesis and development of tourism research. In the entire history of such studies, the author distinguishes two basic periods: "precursor" and "research proper". In relation to global research, the author stops at this division, indicating the most important scientific centres and specific authors who had the greatest influence on the development of knowledge and theory in the field of tourism. In the summary of this chapter, he concludes that [p. 147]:

...a retrospective analysis regarding the development of tourism research, conducted from a possibly broad perspective, going beyond the framework of one country, language area or scientific tradition, has allowed us to distinguish three basic phases, partially overlapping in terms of time.

With this in mind, he distinguishes three periods, where, in addition to the "precursor" period and that of "research proper", he differentiates (within the latter) the period of research proper characterised by an inter-

disciplinary approach. According to the author, it is the most advanced phase of tourism research in terms of theory and methodology, and the feature that distinguishes it to the greatest extent is the emphasis on the interdisciplinary synthesis of research results conducted from the perspective of individual sciences. In his opinion, it is this synthesis that constitutes the most important added value and determines the theoretical development of studies and research on the phenomenon of tourism conducted in this manner.

The sixth chapter is devoted to geographical studies on tourism, which is the author's scientific specialisation. This chapter is a supplement to the first edition of the book. It presents the development of geographical studies of tourism in more detail, enriched with philosophical and methodological considerations, for which John Searle's social ontology presented in the earlier parts of the book was applied. In this chapter, the author tries to determine whether a better term for geographical research on tourism would be "geography of tourism, tourist geography or tourism geography". In conclusion, he proposes a certain scheme [Fig. 20, p. 160], which presents the positioning of the geography of tourism, tourist geography and tourism geography in the general system of geographical sciences. The final part of the considerations included in this chapter is devoted to general methodological issues, especially those that constitute the scopes of the ontology and epistemology regarding the empirical field of tourism geography. This thread of analysis is continued in chapter seven, in which the author attempts to apply the assumptions of Searle's social ontology to the analysis of the empirical field of geography as a complex science, encompassing two different research fields, i.e. the natural world and the world created by man. The considerations contained in this final part of the book go beyond the scope of tourism and the geography of tourism, constituting – according to the author's declaration – "...his modest contribution to philosophical reflections on geography, especially in relation to the ontology of its empirical field" [p. 173].

In summary of this description of the book's content, it should be stated that – despite certain repetitions which are probably difficult to avoid – each of the described chapters basically meets the criteria for being distinguished as an independent part addressing an important aspect of the overall issues of the book. In general, the layout and internal structure of the work are clear and well-oriented in terms of topics, and the entire book is edited in a way that facilitates the perception of the presented content. Given the potentially difficult issues for some readers – this is of great importance. The content included in the study is reliably documented, modern in its message and, at the same time, presented with great care concerning the discipline of the word and clarity of style.

The book is based on good knowledge of literature, which concerns both strictly methodological issues and the generally understood theoretical achievements, which regard – as it is worth emphasizing – several different disciplines involved in tourism research. The author skilfully compared and analysed them, emphasizing the interdisciplinarity of tourism and most

studies on this phenomenon. It is difficult to find any significant gaps in the list of referenced publications that should have been included, but were not. The work is largely based on foreign language publications, and it is worth adding that not only English, but also those published in German and French. Among the cited items are both compact publications (books, monographs) and articles in scientific journals.

The book, although consisting of seven chapters, in fact concerns two main groups of issues to which the author devoted the most space and attention. The first, less interesting to me personally, concerns historical, terminological-definitional and classification issues. Although assessed in such a way, the author certainly provides some stimulating concepts in this area (e.g. describing and visualising the process of shaping the concept of tourism as an element of broadly understood social reality, analysing the relationship between denotation and connotation of the concept of tourism, defining the empirical field of tourism or analytical matrix of understanding this phenomenon). The views and content presented in the book on this subject – despite the fact that some of them may provoke discussions among readers – to a large extent, organise and explain the difficulties and inconsistencies concerning the scope of meaning and definition of the phenomenon of tourism, which researchers of this phenomenon have been trying to deal with for many years. I get the impression that this part of the book is unnecessarily so extensive, and the essential content and author's concepts could be presented in a more condensed, without detriment to the explanatory values of the study.

On the other hand, however, terminological and definitional issues and a broad presentation of the problem of tourist reality as a fragment of social reality, which is a difficult subject of research and studies conducted in various scientific disciplines, were the basis for the discussion on the nature of the tourism phenomenon and the possibilities of its comprehension. For this reason, perhaps my remark about the excessive expansion of this part is unjustified. The considerations on this topic were conducted in relation to two basic ontological-epistemological positions found in social sciences, which are realism and relativism. The basic differences between them are determined by questions and explanations concerning the nature of tourist reality, and especially, the possibilities of its objective or subjective perception. The second - in my opinion much more interesting – methodological part of the book, is devoted to this issue, where ontological and epistemological aspects of studies and research on tourism are presented against the broad background of various conditions.

The author is fully aware that although tourism – as a social, economic, spatial, cultural, etc. phenomenon – has been a frequent subject of research and publications for quite some time now. There are few works devoted to the methodology used in this research. Hence, he once again takes up this issue in his publications, trying to encompass the definitional-meaningful, ontological-epistemological and generally methodological issues within a co-

herent, comprehensive framework. Additionally, an interesting factor, and also a rarely used solution in terms of the adopted conventions of statements and analyses, is the fact that the author largely ‘bases’ his considerations and the concepts that arise from them on the views of one author. He relates them to the publications of an outstanding contemporary representative of the humanities and social sciences, John R. Searle. This American linguist and philosopher, whose publications have had great influence not only on knowledge in the field of “philosophy of language” and “philosophy of mind”, but also on other various areas of socio-economic and cultural reality, would probably be surprised if he learned (or maybe he already knows? – after all, in 2011 he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Łódź, the University with which the author of the book reviewed here is associated) that his concepts are also used as a tool for analysing the reality of tourism and serve as an inspiration for improving the methodology of research on a phenomenon as distant from his main interests as tourism. In any case, making the concept of Searle’s so-called realistic social ontology a specific axis for considerations on the ontological and epistemological dimension of empirical geographical research, and consequently– tourism research – is undoubtedly Leszek Butowski’s original and interesting contribution to discourse on the directions of tourism research development.

Against the background of the (new) realist vision of the world, which treats the reality of tourism as objectively existing and, to a large extent, possible to know, the author presents an oppositional (especially in terms of epistemological issues) relativist approach, which is – based on the relativist paradigm – social constructivism. It is the basis for tourism research, which is conducted on the foundations of the humanistic (interpretive) paradigm. In the case of considerations on this topic, the author abundantly refers to and presents the works of John Tribe, particularly including those concerning cognition and the “truth about tourism” and – in the final part of the book – considerations on the disciplinarity of research as well as the possible autonomisation of tourism science/sciences. In addition to the two authors cited in the review (J. Searle and J. Tribe), other theories and concepts are also presented in the book regarding various aspects of the so-called reality of tourism, which results from the fact that the author attempts to present the phenomenon of tourism from different perspectives (see Tables 8 and 9 on pages 100-107). Of course, the list and presentation of the concepts and theories that reflect them are incomplete and not exhaustive, which the author himself emphasizes (in footnote 76 on page 108).

As a consequence of the ontological-epistemological and realistic-relativistic considerations presented in the book, the author demonstrates a kind of synthesis in the form of an original concept, which he calls the realistic-humanistic approach. Its basic objective and advantage is an attempt to overcome the dichotomy between objectivistic realism and subjective relativism of tourist reality cognition. Characterising the realistic-humanistic approach, the author writes about this in the following manner [p. 94]:

From a metaphysical perspective, it assumes the existence of a very complex, but certainly empirically real, and therefore, knowable world of tourism. This entails the adoption of a fundamental assumption about the existence of an objective truth about it. This means, therefore, that at an ontological level, in the realistic-humanistic approach, the main assumption of realism is accepted, assuming the existence of a knowable reality. At the same time, taking the complexity of this reality into account, it is fully permissible to learn about it using various traditions, scientific schools or methodological orientations. Within this context, emphasis is placed on the creative abilities of the researcher, but also on his limitations, shaped by both internal and external (socio-cultural) factors. This assumption constitutes the essence of the humanistic element in relation to the cognizing subject.

Looking at the content presented in the book as a whole, it seems that despite the author's clear concern for maintaining proper proportions between various issues, problems and positions, which he tried to balance well, the proportions between the demand and supply understanding, as well as analysis of tourism, are somewhat unsettled. The book is dominated by the demand understanding of tourism, defining it through the prism of activities undertaken exclusively by tourists, which may have impact on the epistemological dimension of empirical research regarding tourism and the assessment of the resulting and holistically perceived tourist reality. The book is also dominated by the geographical and spatial perspective, which is understandable considering the fact that it was written by a geographer. However, it should be appreciated and emphasized that L. Butowski is fully aware of the complexity and multi-aspect nature of the phenomenon of tourism and the contribution that other fields and disciplines of science also have to knowledge about it. The author emphasizes this many times, clearly recognising that such an interdisciplinary approach can most fully reflect the complex issue of contemporary tourism.

In the reviewed book, it is also very valuable that the author does not end the discussion on the topics raised, encouraging an exchange of views and further research. He even postulates the need for further studies on the genesis of studies and methodology of tourism research, writing that "The author can also hope that the above challenge will be taken up, even (which is equally valuable) in a polemical form, perhaps questioning to some extent the findings and theses presented in this work" [p. 151]. This position clearly shows research and methodological maturity and a specific scientific humility towards the difficult task of tourism research.

In conclusion of this review, it should be stated that Leszek Butowski's book: *Metodologia badań nad turystyką. Podstawy ontologiczne i epistemologiczne oraz rozwój historyczno-instytucjonalny* [Methodology of Tourism Research. Ontological and Epistemological Foundations and Historical-Institutional Development] is a work needed on the publishing market, in which, on the one hand, the author appropriately describes the conditions, genesis and development of tourism research to date, and on



the other, tries to indicate the direction of their further progress, showing the most important methodological concepts that will largely determine this development.

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Leszek Butowski, *Metodologia badań nad turystyką. Podstawy ontologiczne i epistemologiczne oraz rozwój historyczno-instytucjonalny* [Methodology of Tourism Research. Ontological and Epistemological Foundations and Historical-Institutional Development]. Second edition, revised, Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, Warsaw 2023, pp. 227 (in Polish).

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## INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR AUTHORS

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### GENERAL INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS PREPARING ACADEMIC ARTICLES

1. The Editorial Office accepts for publication only original empirical and review papers that address tourism from interdisciplinary points of view, such as theory of tourism, cultural anthropology, philosophy, sociology, geography, law, psychology, history, economics, management, and marketing.
2. Submitting a paper for publication is construed as transferring the copyright to the Editorial Office. This means that neither the paper nor a part of it can be published in other journals or digital media without the Editorial Office's written permission.
3. The article should be prepared according to the "**Instructions for authors preparing academic articles**", found below. Otherwise, the article will be sent back to the Author(s) for correction.
4. Do not provide personal data or any other information that could enable identifying the Author(s). Instead, provide personal data in a separate **Author Form**, available on the Journal's website, and submit it together with the article.
5. The paper, together with a filled Author Form, should be submitted to the Editorial Office's e-mail address: **folia.turistica@awf.krakow.pl**.
6. The Editorial Office will not accept papers that show signs of scientific dishonesty, such as *ghostwriting and honorary (guest) authorship*, for publication. The Editorial Office will disclose any recognized cases of dishonesty; this includes informing institutions employing authors, scientific associations, etc.
7. All papers are reviewed by at least two independent reviewers (the review form is available on the Journal's website) and maintaining full anonymity. In other words, a double-blind review process will be implemented; otherwise, the reviewers are obliged to sign a declaration that there exists no conflict of interests between them and the authors of the paper. The Editorial Board will accept the paper for publication or reject it based on the reviewers' opinion. This procedure is in accordance with guidelines provided by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.
8. The Editorial Office reserves the right to modify the style makeup of submitted papers.
9. The author of the paper will receive an electronic version of the Journal issue in which the article was published, free of charge.

## Instruction for Authors Preparing Academic Articles

### I. PREPARING TEXT

1. The volume of submitted papers should not exceed 20 pages of normalized manuscript, i.e., 40,000 characters (one author's sheet).
2. Text files should be created in the Word 6.0-XP editor in DOC format.
3. Page setup:
  - paper size: A4;
  - margins: all margins 2.5 cm;
  - line spacing: 1.5.
4. Title: use 14-point Times New Roman font, bold. Capitalize the entire title. Insert a 14-point line of space following the title.
5. Abstract in English: between 1500 and 2000 characters (including spaces); use 10-point Times New Roman font.
6. The abstract should comprise the following, clearly separated (presented in the form of a list) parts:
  - Puropse.
  - Method.
  - Findings.
  - Research and conclusions limitations: comment on the representativeness of your research and its potential limitations due to cultural, environmental, geographical, or other conditions.
  - Practical implications.
  - Originality: describe how your research (results and opinions) differs from other publications on the subject.
  - Type of paper: specify whether your article presents empirical research or theoretical concepts or whether it is a review, a case study, etc.
7. Key words: 3-6. Insert a 12-point line of space following the key words.
8. The paper should include elements listed below. Titles of elements may be changed if justified by content. Furthermore, especially in the case of review articles, the paper may have a more complex structure, i.e., it may comprise more elements or have a given element subdivided further (such as the Literature Review section).
  - A) For empirical papers:
    - **Introduction** (subject of research, aim of the article, and justification of the aim),
    - **Literature review** (a review of Polish and foreign publications presenting the aim of the article and describing current knowledge on the subject matter),
    - **Method** (aim of empirical research, research hypotheses and questions, and a description of methodology and how the research was conducted)
    - **Results** (research results, including the answers to the research hypotheses and questions),
    - **Discussion** (a discussion of the study results in view of results obtained by other authors in Polish and foreign publications on the subject matter),
    - **Conclusions** (conclusions from the study results and their discussion, including practical implications and suggested directions for further research on the subject),
    - **References.**
  - B) For review papers:
    - **Introduction** (subject of research, aim of the article, and justification of the aim),
    - **Literature review** (a review of Polish and foreign publications related to the aim of the article describing current knowledge on the subject matter),
    - **Discussion** (a discussion of current knowledge on the subject matter, including critical analysis based on Polish and foreign publications),
    - **Conclusions** (conclusions from the discussion, including its practical implications and suggested directions for further research on the subject),
    - **References.**

9. Headings of each part of the paper: use 12-point Times New Roman font, bold, centered. Number the parts with Arabic numerals. Insert a 12-point line of space following each heading.
10. Running text: use 12-point Times New Roman font and 1.5 line spacing. First line indent: 1 cm. Use tools available in the editor to format the text rather than the space bar, as using space bar makes markup and typesetting difficult.
11. Do not use the bold face, capitals, and underlining in the text. Italics should only be used for titles listed in the footnotes and the References section and for letter symbols in the running text. Insert a space after punctuation marks, not before them.
12. Use an en dash (–) to indicate breaks in a sentence and between numbers that denote close values not provided precisely (such as time periods); do not use a hyphen (-) or an em dash (—). Examples of use:
  - “Secondly – as tradition dictates – every student should wear formal attire tomorrow”.
  - “The years 1914–1918, or the times of World War I, is an extremely important period in the history of Europe”.
  - “Relevant information can found on pages 12–24 of the aforementioned publication”.
  - Most waters in the area of Wysowa belong to the sodium-bicarbonate type and have a high concentration of carbon dioxide.
13. Footnotes can be used (sparingly) to complement the running text: use 10-point Times New Roman font with 1.0 line spacing.
14. References in the running text should be formatted according to the Harvard System (i.e., provide the last name of the author of the quoted or referenced publication, the year of publication, and the page or pages you refer to in square brackets within the running text). Do not place a comma between the name and the year. If two or more publications are referenced in the same parentheses, separate them with a semicolon.
15. The References section, located at the end of the article, should only include texts that are quoted or referred to in the article. References should be given in an alphabetical order with full bibliographic descriptions. Guidelines for and examples of bibliographic descriptions can be found in Part III of these instructions.

## II. PREPARING TABLES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Tables and illustrations (figures, charts, and photographs) should be included in separate files and described in detail. Mark their locations in the running text through centered titles, as in the example below:

**Tab. 1.** Tourist activity inhibitors  
**Tabela 1.** Inhibitory aktywności turystycznej

2. The entire article should use the division into tables and figures (i.e., everything that is not a table, e.g. charts, diagrams, or photographs, is considered a figure). Refer to figures in the abbreviated form (“Fig.”).
3. Place titles of tables above tables, and titles of figures below figures.
4. Write the titles of tables and figures in 10-point Times New Roman font.
5. Under each table/figure provide its source (using 10-point Times New Roman font).
6. Figures should be scanned at a resolution no lower than 300 DPI (optimal resolution is 600 DPI) and saved as line art files in TIFF format.
7. Charts should be created in black. Gray tints or textures are allowed.
8. Digital photographs should be saved in TIFF or JPEG format at full resolution. Do not use compression.
9. If the article includes figures, tables, etc. taken from other academic papers, the author is obliged to obtain a reprinting permission. The permission should be sent to the Editorial Office together with the article and other attachments.

## III. PREPARING THE REFERENCES SECTION

1. The References section, located at the end of the article, should only include texts that are quoted or referred to in the article. References should be given in an alphabetical order with full bibliographic descriptions.
2. References to papers of different types should be prepared according to the guidelines below. Note that all references should be provided in a single list (the division into types, found below, is meant only to provide examples of referencing different sources).
3. For two or more papers written by the same author and published in the same year, add subsequent lowercase letters to the year, as in: (2014a), (2014b), etc.
4. List Internet sources (webpages) for which the appropriate elements of a full bibliographic description cannot be provided in a separate Internet Sources section. The list should provide URL addresses of the referenced webpages in alphabetical order, described as in the following sample:
  - <http://www.unwto.org/facts/eng/vision.htm> (08.09.2014).
5. For articles to be published in the English issues of the Journal, provide English translations of the titles of non-English publications (in square brackets), as in the following sample:
  - Winiarski, R., Zdebski, J. (2008), *Psychologia turystyki [Psychology of Tourism]*, Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, Warszawa.

### Sample references to different types of papers in the References section

#### A. Books:

Urry J. (2001), *The tourist gaze*, Sage, London.  
 McIntosh R.W., Goeldner Ch.R. (1986), *Tourism. Principles, Practices, Philosophies*, John Wiley & Sons, New York.

#### B. Edited books and joint publications:

Ryan C., ed., (2003), *The Tourist Experience*, Continuum, London.  
 Alejsiak W., Winiarski R., eds. (2005), *Tourism in Scientific Research*, AWF Krakow, WSIZ Rzeszow, Krakow-Rzeszow.

#### C. Chapters in edited books and joint publications:

Dann G.M.S. (2002), *Theoretical issues for tourism's future development*, [in:] Pearce D.G., Butler R.W., eds., *Contemporary Issues in Tourism Development*, Routledge Advances in Tourism, International Academy for the Study of Tourism, London, New York, pp. 13-30.

#### D. Articles in scientific journals:

Cohen E. (1979), *A Phenomenology of Tourism Experiences*, „Sociology”, Vol. 13, pp. 179–201.  
 Szczehowicz B. (2012), *The importance of attributes related to physical activity for the tourism product's utility*, „Journal of Sport & Tourism”, Vol. 18 (3), pp. 225–249.

#### E. Articles in trade magazines and trade newspapers:

*Benefits tourism not OK (2014)*, [in:] „The Economist”, Nov 15<sup>th</sup>.

**F. Papers without a stated authorship, including research reports  
and statistical yearbooks:**

*Tourism Trends for Europe* (2006), European Travel Commission.

*Tourism Highlights. 2010 Edition* (2011), UNWTO.

**G. Legal acts:**

*Act on Tourism Services, of 29 August 1997*, Dz.U. of 2004, No. 223, item 2268, as amended.

**H. Publications available on the Internet:**

*International tourism on track to end 2014 with record numbers*, <http://media.unwto.org/press-release/2014-12-18/international-tourism-track-end-2014-record-numbers> (20.12.2014).



## GENERAL INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS PREPARING ACADEMIC REVIEWS AND POLEMICS

1. Only original reviews of Polish and foreign monographs, academic articles, and handbooks, as well as other types of academic and didactic papers, such as research reports, doctoral theses, and habilitation theses, will be accepted for publication.
2. The Journal publishes reviews of papers on the theory of tourism, as well as papers that address tourism from the viewpoint of cultural anthropology, philosophy, sociology, geography, law, psychology, economics, management, marketing, and other academic fields and disciplines.
3. Submitting a paper for publication is construed as transferring the copyright to the Editorial Office. This means that neither the review nor a part of it can be published in other journals or digital media without the Editorial Office's written permission.
4. The article should be prepared according to the **"Instructions for authors preparing academic reviews and polemics"**, found below. Otherwise, the article will be sent back to the Author(s) for correction.
5. The review should be submitted to the Editorial Office's e-mail address: folia.turistica@awf.krakow.pl.
6. The Editorial Team reserves the right to modify the style makeup of submitted reviews.
7. The Author of the review will receive an electronic version of the Journal issue in which the review was published, free of charge.

### Instruction for Authors Preparing Academic Reviews and Polemics

1. Text files should be created in the Word 6.0-XP editor in DOC format.
2. Page setup:
  - paper size: A4;
  - margins: all margins 2.5 cm;
  - line spacing: 1.5.
3. Name of each Author: use 12-point Times New Roman font, bold. Insert a 12-point line of space following the name(s).
4. Provide each Author's academic degree or title, affiliation (i.e. name of the institution represented by the Author, in this order: university, faculty, department, etc.), phone number, and e-mail in a footnote. Footnote formatting: use 10-point Times New Roman font and 1.0 line spacing.
5. Samples of title formatting:
  1. REVIEW OF "INTERNATIONAL TOURIST ORGANIZATIONS" BY WIESŁAW ALEJZIAK AND TOMASZ MARCINIEC.
  2. AN OPINION ABOUT "POLAND'S MARKETING STRATEGY IN THE TOURISM SECTOR FOR 2012-2020".
  3. RESPONSE TO THE OPINION...
 etc.
6. Title: use 14-point Times New Roman font, bold. Capitalize the entire title. Below the title, provide a full bibliographic reference for your article, including ISBN and the date of submission to the Editorial Board.
7. Format the titles of responses to reviews or other forms of academic polemics according to the guidelines above (e.g. Response to the Opinion...).
8. Insert a 14-point line of space following the title.
9. Headings of each part of the review (if appropriate): use 12-point Times New Roman font, bold, centered. Number the parts with Arabic numerals. Insert a 12-point line of space following each heading.

10. Running text: use 12-point Times New Roman font and 1.5 line spacing. First line indent: 1 cm. Use tools available in the editor to format the text rather than the space bar, as using space bar makes markup and typesetting difficult.
11. Do not use the bold face, capitals, and underlining in the text. Italics should only be used for titles listed in the footnotes and the References section and for letter symbols in the running text. Insert a space after punctuation marks, not before them.
12. Use an en dash (–) to indicate breaks in a sentence and between numbers that denote close values not provided precisely (such as time periods); do not use a hyphen (-) or an em dash (—). Examples of use:
  - “Secondly – as tradition dictates – every student should wear formal attire tomorrow”.
  - “The years 1914–1918, or the times of World War I, is an extremely important period – in the history of Europe”.
  - “Relevant information can found on pages 12–24 of the aforementioned publication”.
  - “Most waters in the area of Wysowa belong to the sodium-bicarbonate type and have a high concentration of carbon dioxide”.
13. Footnotes can be used (sparingly) to complement the running text: use 10-point Times New Roman font with 1.0 line spacing.
14. Illustrative materials (tables and figures) should be formatted according to the same guidelines as academic articles (see “**Instructions for authors preparing academic articles**”).
15. References in the running text should be formatted according to the Harvard System (i.e., provide the last name of the quoted or referenced publication, the year of publication, and the page or pages you refer to in square brackets within the running text. Do not place a comma between the name and the year. If two or more publications are referenced in the same parentheses, separate them with a semicolon.
16. The References section, located at the end of the article, should only include texts that are quoted or referred to in the review. References should be given in an alphabetical order with full bibliographic descriptions, prepared according to the same guidelines as for academic articles (see “**Instructions for authors preparing academic articles**”).

***Folia Turistica*** is a specialist forum for exchanging academic views on tourism and its environment, in its broadest definition. It is one of Poland's leading academic periodicals, published continuously since 1990. The magazine publishes articles in the field of tourism studies, from a broad interdisciplinary perspective (humanist, economic, geographical/spatial, organizational, and legal issues etc.). Apart from articles presenting the results of empirical research, the journal includes original theoretical, overview, and discursive pieces. The separate headings contain research reports, announcements, and bulletins, reviews of academic works, information on conferences and symposia, and discussions and polemics.

***Folia Turistica*** is indexed in the ERIH Plus (European References Index for the Humanities and Social Sciences), Information Metrix for the Analysis of Journals (ICDS for 2021 = 4,5), and Index Copernicus International (ICV for 2022 = 100.00). It is also indexed on the Polish Ministry of Education and Science List of point-earning academic publications. In the parametric system of evaluating academic work, authors and the institutions they represent receive 40 points for publishing works in the journal.

