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

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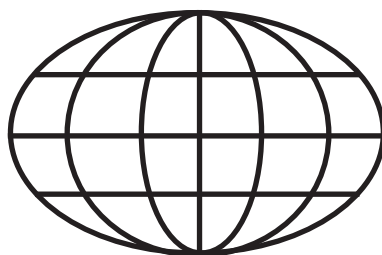
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FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers of “Folia Turistica”,

We present you with the next, 62nd issue of our journal, which has been continuously published for almost 35 years. We hope that this time, the works included in it will be of interest to you considering the problems raised in the field of broadly understood tourism. Various research approaches and perspectives have been applied in the individual articles, as well as research methods and techniques. The results of these studies, their interpretations and conclusions should be of interest - both for tourism theory and practice. The issue consists of seven scientific articles, one report from a greatly important international scientific conference, a review of an fascinating book devoted to the methodology of tourism research, as well as a commemorative article devoted to an outstanding researcher and tourism expert – Professor Valene Smith, who passed away in January this year, leaving behind an exceptionally rich scientific heritage, especially in the area of tourism anthropology¹.

The issue is *varia*, containing articles from various fields and disciplines of science. The first article was written by **Maria Zowisło**, who – from the position of a philosopher – made an attempt to analyse the tourist experiences of one of the most outstanding Italian poets, writers and thinkers – Francesco Petrarck. The author set herself the goal of creating a biographical and philosophical interpretation regarding the wandering life of Francesco Petrarck, sometimes called “the first modern tourist”, “the first modern mountaineer”. However, the author emphasizes that: “The latter term is, of course, not historical (for Petrarck was a “modern tourist” before the actual emergence of modernity and tourism itself), but purely eidetic, i.e. highlighting certain essential determinants that characterize the modern tourist *in genere*. These characteristics include cognitive intentionality, traveling for pleasure, relaxation, using local guides for better orientation in the area and access to direct knowledge of attractions, customs, lifestyles of locals” (p. 11). In the work, both Petrarck’s numerous travels and “inner journeys” reflected in his work are interpreted in an interesting manner. In both cases, the author analyses their various motives and forms, and compares her

¹ Her last book “Stereopticon: Entry to a Life of Travel and Tourism Research” was published in 2015, when Professor celebrated her 89th birthday.

observations and analyses with the behaviours and attitudes of contemporary tourists.

The author of the second article is **Piotr Mielus**, who tries to verify the scope of tourist and sport exploration of the Tatra Mountain peaks in their historical context. For this purpose, current digital maps based on LiDAR measurements were used and field research was conducted. However, historical and other data (e.g. date of the first ascent, difficulty scale of the easiest route to the peak, etc.) were based on a critical analysis of literature on the subject (especially climbing guides). The conducted research allows to largely confirm the existing opinions on the dynamics and quality of sports exploration of the Tatra Mountains, which date back to the beginnings of activities in this field just before World War I, mainly with regard to relatively easy-to-exploration peaks, and over time, to direct climbers' interest towards more difficult and located in less frequented parts of the Tatra Mountains (less prominent peaks). The author emphasizes the fact that being aware that a significant number of unclimbed peaks exist, potentially increases human pressure on nature conservation areas, which may have ecological consequences ("The awareness of significant number of unclimbed peaks may increase human pressure on natural protection areas with consequential ecological implications), and also that "The article is a first attempt focused on quantification of the pace of exploration of the Tatra mountains with objective criteria using a prominence-based approach" (p. 27).

The next article was written by researchers representing two Polish sports universities. The author's team: **Jakub Ryśnik**, **Jacek Polechoński** and **Rajmund Tomik** (representing AWF Katowice) and **Bartosz Szczechowicz** (from AWF in Kraków) undertook interesting research on the potential of using virtual reality in promoting a healthy lifestyle. They decided to investigate and define it on the example of recreational cycling, using non-immersive (nIVR) and immersive (IVR) virtual reality. The research covered 40 students of the Academy of Physical Education in Katowice (20 women and men), who were perceived in these studies as future promoters of a healthy lifestyle and physical activity. Their task was to cover specific routes by bicycle in appropriately simulated conditions and to complete a questionnaire specially designed for the research purposes. The analysis of the research material allowed to conclude that the respondents spoke positively about the potential of IVR in the context of supporting physical activity, with a much stronger declaration of willingness to use IVR and its recommendation to other users compared to nIVR technology. In the study, it was also shown that with regard to physical activity in IVR conditions, respondents indicated a wider range of benefits than in the case of nIVR. According to the authors, the research results should be an inspiration not only for planners and organisers of physical activity, but also for promoters of video games in this field (AVG).

In the following article, **Dariusz Olszewski-Strzyżowski** and **Dominik Borek** take up the topic of marginalisation and social exclusion, which – regarding various aspects of our lives – are an increasingly important issue in modern societies. In many studies, it has been indicated that exclusion may also apply to participation in tourism. The aim of the research presented in the article was to analyse selected Social Welfare Centres (OPS) in terms of educational tourism programmes and activities offered to various excluded groups. The research, which covered 341 such centres operating in Poland (it is worth adding that 2,426 centres were asked to participate in the research), allowed to note that the offer proposed by centres for various excluded groups is diverse and effectively contributes to their “inclusion” in a generally accessible trend of social life, including the field of tourism. The need for further research in this area was emphasized, in particular, covering a larger number of OPS centres, recognising that they can play a significant role in enabling excluded and marginalised individuals to fully participate in social life, also in terms of universal and unrestricted access to broadly understood physical and tourist activity.

In the next article, a very interesting example is dealt with, showing practically the entire process of creating a certain health tourism product, including the cooperation that can be undertaken by representatives of the scientific community, businesses and other social institutions. In the work by the author’s team, comprising: **Monika Kniefel**, **Karina Przybyło-Kisielewska**, **Anna Wrzochal** and **Anna Kalska**, an innovative approach to the use of therapeutic sulphide water is described, including research conducted among 150 individuals during their stay at a selected spa facility. They first underwent a 10-day educational programme on the principles of proper nutrition and a healthy lifestyle, consultations with a personal trainer, dietician and physician. Then, for the next 20 days, they carried out so-called diary tests, and finally, returned to the facility for further tests assessing the effects of the therapy. The article is a good example of combining research in the field of identifying needs and creating a health tourism product corresponding to current market trends, with innovative activities, including invention and patenting (the research effects were patented in the form of two inventions and a trademark).

The last two articles in this issue concern the health aspects of tourism and the effects and changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism market. First, **Małgorzata Gałazka** addresses this issue in her work on the impact of the pandemic regarding decisions and tourist behaviours among young Poles. The basis for these considerations were surveys conducted using the CAWI technique, which covered 230, 20-30-year-old participants, between April and October 2022. They showed that movement restrictions, border closures and other travel difficulties caused significant changes in the behaviour of young Polish tourists, with domestic and short-term trips

becoming more important and popular. More than half of the respondents did not give up on tourist trips during the pandemic and immediately after it, but adapted them to the prevailing conditions and current opportunities, primarily those financial. It also turned out that although the most significant factor taken into account by respondents when choosing a destination is still the total cost of the trip, nonetheless, during the pandemic, respondents began to pay attention to the possibility of using additional benefits, such as health insurance, the possibility of cancelling trips free-of-charge, etc.

The issue of health and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism sector (especially wellness tourism) is also the subject of the next article, written by a three-person team of authors: **Aleksandra Błotnicka**, **Ziemowit Górski** and **Dominik Jurasieński**. In the text, the authors present and analyse current trends in wellness tourism, using selected industry reports on this topic and conducting their own surveys applied to 585 respondents. As part of the online survey, attempts were made to obtain opinions on the 20 most important current trends in wellness tourism, identified using the ChatGPT-4. These trends were verified by students of one of the Polish physical education universities, in several different fields of study related to sports, health and tourism, including final-year M.A. students in a field directly related to the topic of the article, i.e. "Health Tourism". In the research, generally, high convergence of respondents' opinions was shown concerning regularities of the trends identified by AI. In the majority of them (13 out of 20), the ratings were identical. In five cases, students' scores were lower (they concerned issues related to safety and new technologies – e.g. the development of telemedicine). However, in two cases, the students' rating was higher than that of the ChatGPT-4. This included, for example, a growing interest in local health services as a factor strengthening local economies, which may suggest that people recognise the importance of new trends in the context of ongoing socio-economic changes.

The final section of the issue – "REVIEWS, SCIENTIFIC POLEMICS, REPORTS, MEMORIES" contains four texts. The first is a review of Paweł Różycki's book. The author of this review titled "Genesis and Theory of Tourism" is **Wojciech J. Cynarski**. The second text is a report from the XIII International Scientific Conference – Tourism in Social Sciences 2024, organised by the Jagiellonian University, prepared jointly by **Aleksander Panasiuk** and **Bartosz Szczechowicz**. The entire issue ends with the above-mentioned article summarising the scientific achievements, academic career and legacy left by Professor Valen Smith, which was excellently described in the memoir written by **Sabina Owsianowska**.

HAPPY READING – Wiesław Alejziak

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ON THE PATHS OF THINKING AND THE WORLD – FRANCESCO PETRARCA AS A SPIRITUAL NOMAD AND THE FIRST MODERN TOURIST


*Maria Zowisło**

Abstract

Purpose. The aim of the article is to create a biographic and a philosophical interpretation of the wandering life of Francesco Petrarca, one of the greatest poets, writers and thinkers of the Italian *trecento*, who was nicknamed “the first modern tourist” and “the first modern mountaineer”. To justify the validity of these epithets, Petrarca’s numerous journeys around Europe and their various motifs and forms, which anticipate the attitudes of modern tourists, are recalled and analysed interpretively. Petrarca’s busy life developed on two planes, which are called “internal landscape” and “external landscape” in the article. The consequence of this interpretive approach is a view of Petrarca as a “spiritual nomad” and the progenitor of modern tourism.

Method. The article is doxographic in nature, using desk research methods, interpretative method of understanding (Germ. *Verstehen*), focused on the study of existential meanings and values, as well as critical and literary analysis.

Findings. Petrarca, both in his “spiritual” (internal) wanderings and real (external) journeys, as well as in their authorial, mainly epistolary, interpretation, revealed his deeply conflicted nature. He is presented here as *homoduplex*, in accordance with analyses of “split self” proposed by American philosopher and psychologist William James. As a Franciscan Tertian, a man of faith, the poet felt he was the heir of *Christianitas*, the Christian tradition, whose main representative for him was Saint Augustine. It was in the writings of this Father of the Church that Petrarca found spiritual and religious dilemmas similar to his own. At the same time, the poet felt like a proud successor of ancient Latin culture. Philosophy and ancient literature not only provided him with lasting solace, but also marked secular, humanistic paths of development in the spirit of complete formation of the soul (Gr. *paideia* and *psychagogy*) and Ciceronian *meliorism* (the pursuit of personal excellence). In Petrarca’s experiences and writing activity, spiritual man was united with earthly man, *Christianitas* was integrated with *humanitas*, and Petrarca himself, standing at the crossroads of two eras, can be considered a proto-Renaissance thinker. The “duality” of Petrarca’s personality was evident in his numerous travels. His Christian sensibility made him a “spiritual nomad”, while his comprehensive humanistic passion for exploring the world entitles one to treat Petrarca (as many of the scholars cited in the article do) as the “first modern tourist”. The latter term is, of course, not historical (for Petrarca was a “modern tourist” before the actual emergence of modernity and tourism itself), but purely eidetic, i.e. highlighting certain essential determinants that characterise the modern tourist *in genere*. These characteristics include cognitive intentionality, travelling for pleasure, relaxation, using local guides for better orientation in the area and access to direct knowledge of attractions, customs and the lifestyles of locals. Therefore, these are issues of both motivation and travel organisation. Added to this is the motif of athletic challenge, impor-

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tant in the case of climbing Mont Ventoux, as well as contemplation of the landscape. Also, modern is the new style of reporting on the trip, full of subjective and personal confessions that predate romanticised descriptions of the journey.

Research and conclusions limitations. There are extremely rich literature items on so-called “petrarchism”, however, it was impossible to refer to the entirety of academic and literary research in the article. It was limited to selected Polish and foreign literature, which did not in any way disturb the image or understanding of the topic, and allowed for a more synthetic approach.

Practical implications. The article supplements the critical literary analysis of Petrarch’s works with travel and tourism themes, and can be used by researchers and travel historians for further humanistic studies in the field of tourism science.

Originality. In the work, analysis is concentrated on the theme of travel and wandering in Petrarch’s extremely active and creative life, creating an itinerant biography of one of Europe’s greatest writers.

Type of paper. Monographic article.

Keywords: Francesco Petrarca, *homo viator*, *homo duplex*, modern tourist, Renaissance, humanism.

Introduction

Before *Grand Tours*, educational journeys undertaken by aristocrats and intellectuals became popular in Europe in the 18th century, four centuries earlier a certain special life, as if through a lens, focused and implemented not only many threads of these journeys, but in a truly Renaissance, i.e. comprehensive, way, numerous directions and motifs for modern and contemporary journeys were established: cognitive, cultural, sightseeing, literary, spiritual and even virtual. We are talking here about the poet and writer Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374), whose life is a model example of the *topos* of *homo viator*, a man on the road, dominated by the desire to know (Lat. *cupiditas videndi*) the lands, people, natural landscapes, cities, cultures, customs, history and cultural heritage of Europe. This *curiositas cognoscendi*, cognitive curiosity, was a constant and never satisfied motive of Petrarch’s existence, as well as of his writing (mainly travel epistolography), in which he made intellectual, psychological, artistic and philosophical articulations and interpretations of his experiences, reflections and judgments. Petrarch’s creative and restless existence developed in movement and on the road, even when he withdrew for a time to his Provençal retreat in Vaucluse on the Sorgia River, where he spent his days on long wanders around the countryside, devoting his nights to the movement of his thoughts and pens. This existence is a good example of the knot of the three essential elements concerning a wandering fate: life, travelling and writing, a description of which can be found in the work of the 20th century travel writer Claudio Magris [Magris 1993, p. 61]. This knot, which Magris relates to contemporary writers and travel reporters (including Ryszard Kapuściński), can be found six centuries earlier with regard to Petrarch: his existence filled with travels was not only a sign of a single wandering life, but also a metaphor for life as a journey. At the same time, in Petrarch’s work, both life and journey were preserved,

described and reflectively processed in literary record. This significant triad of life and wandering as well as their literary transposition, were a constant thread of Petrarch's numerous peregrinations throughout his life, carried out by him on various levels: real, mental, imaginary, spiritual and literary. The motives of these journeys were numerous: knowledge and self-discovery, a cure for the dilemmas of the soul and unfulfilled love for *donna Laura*, the cult of the classical Roman heritage of Italy, of which he felt he was a native descendant, curator and continuator, intellectual and moral development and improvement, searching for manuscripts of valuable ancient works (Plato, Cicero), diplomatic missions, pleasure, relaxation, rest and recreation, taking up inspiring new challenges, including sports, despite the difficulties and dangers along the way. He wrote about himself: "So I wander and I will probably wander endlessly" [Petrarch 2009, p. 35].

Homo duplex

Petrarch has been called the first Renaissance humanist by many authors [Grauert 1904; Burckhardt 1961; Kristeller 1961, 1972; Parandowski 1956; Domański 2007], although his life, falling entirely in the period of *trecento*, is still in the Middle Ages. This proto-Renaissance humanist also became known as "the first modern tourist" [Domański 2007, p. 357; Palacz 2008, p. 43]. Polish writer Jan Parandowski explains these nicknames the following way:

"No matter what duties or interests Petrarch carried with him on these distant roads, he was able to turn this journey into one of a wanderer, a tourist craving new things, not a medieval pilgrim visiting wonderful places. No one has travelled like this before, no one's eye has rested so tenderly on the beautiful landscape or shed a tear among the historical relics. No one's pen followed a fleeting impression and floated with delight among the rocks, mountains and forests" [Parandowski 1956, p. 29].

Petrarch's wandering life was marked by the exile fate of his family, sentenced to exile from Florence in 1302 as a result of quarrels among local political parties. The poet was born two years later in the old Etruscan city of Arezzo, and in 1312, the family moved to the colony of Florentine expatriates in Avignon and settled nearby in Carpentras [Wilkins 1961; Palacz 2008]. From this place, the peak of the highest Provençal mountain, Mont Ventoux (1,900 m above sea level), was visible, which Francesco climbed at the age of 32, accompanied by his brother Gerard¹. It was this famous climb

¹ The controversy over the authenticity of the climb and its exact location in time, as well as the dating of the letter to the monk Dionigi da Borgo San Sepolcro, which is an account of

that allowed some to recognise Petrarch as “the first modern mountaineer” [Domański 2007, p. 357; Palacz 2008, p. 43; Mann 1992, p. 4], however, this feat was not the first of its kind. Before him, the Windy Mountain was conquered by philosopher Jean Buridan [Mann 1992, p. 4], and mountain climbing had already been undertaken in ancient times by both Greeks and Romans (although not so much for sightseeing or aesthetic purposes, but pragmatic ones). What *distinguishes* Petrarch’s climbing experience is its specific description, contained in a letter to the monk Dionigi, in which its author sketched two landscapes of the journey: external and internal, situating his account within the context of imitation regarding the spiritual conversion of Saint Augustine presented by this Father of the Church in *Confessions* [St. Augustine 1987]. Literary elaboration of climbing Mont Ventoux [Petrarch 2009, pp. 42-59], together with the philosophical, religious and cultural references present in it, crystallise the essence of the existential and spiritual conflicts of Petrarch, who was at the junction of two eras: the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, working through the heritage of *Christianitas* in a new perspective of *humanitas*. This is not to say that the new humanistic impulse always remained superior and that it was the one that prompted the simple victorious solutions in the life of the thinker and traveller. On the contrary, this impulse remained in permanent tension and *equilibrium* with the religious pole (Petrarch was initially ordained), a legacy not so much of medieval “dark ages” (it was Petrarch who was supposed to have coined the term [Delumeau 2015, p. 77; Ullmann 1985, pp. 151-152]), as much as a Christian spirituality that grew out of the moral philosophical culture of antiquity [Domański 2007, p. 355]. This indelible tension between *Christianitas* and *humanitas* assumed many forms in Petrarch’s life, translating into an internal struggle between terrene and celestial love, between confinement to the space of *otium* (leisure, idleness) and *negotium* (time filled with work, business), the pursuit of solitude and the temptations of worldly life, between *vita contemplativa* and *vita activa*, the “inner man” and “outer man”, sensual pleasure and moral mastery in the pursuit of the ideal of virtue.

The internally conflicted Petrarch appears to be the exemplary personification of *homoduplex*, the split man, a description of which was given by American psychologist and pragmatist philosopher William James in his *Religious Experiences* [James 2001, pp. 132-149]. James related the case of *homo duplex* to St. Augustine. Is not insignificant in the case of Petrarch who treated this writer of the Church as his mentor and interlocutor not only in his account of the Mont Ventoux expedition, but in the extensive development

the expedition, is presented in detail by Ryszard Palacz in *Francisco Petrarch’s Letter on Conquering the Peak of Mont Ventoux in Provence*, “Krakowskie Studia Małopolskie”, No. 12/2008, pp. 41 et seq.

of the anxieties outlined there, which is the work *Secretum meum*² [Petrarch 2022]? The famous mountain expedition is a good starting point for presenting and interpreting Petrarch's motives and forms of wandering.

Ascent to the Windy Mountain

Petrarch intended to conquer Mont Ventoux many times. He searched for companions for this expedition, and finally set off on it – as he writes in his epistolary account – on April 24, 1336, together with his brother Gerard. At the beginning of this account, Petrarch placed the climb within the classical context, recalling the expedition of Macedonian King Philip (described by historian Titus Livius) to the Thessalian mountain Haimos. This historiographical insert says a lot about Petrarch, a legitimate member – as Juliusz Domański writes – of *res publica litterarum* [Domański 2007, p. 355]. Petrarch travelled not only along the real landscape, but also in an imaginary area, which consisted of the accounts of ancient and early Christian writers, as well as the wandering *topos* handed down in the great epics of Homer and Virgil. The poet wished to repeat the feat of the King of Macedonia, giving himself over not only to a passion for cognition and exploration, but also to a truly athletic challenge, for climbing the mountain was not easy (as confirmed by an old shepherd boy they met on the way). Petrarch, unlike his brother, who climbed straight up the mountain, repeatedly deviated from the path, avoiding the steepes and seeking an easier approach, which lengthened the journey and multiplied the difficulty. In moments of rest, he metaphorised his wandering in his mind, extrapolating it to moral and existential struggles [Petrarch 2009, p. 49]:

Know that what you have experienced so many times today, climbing this mountain, happens to you and to many others who aspire to a happy life; however, people do not think about it, because the movements of the body are in plain sight, while those of the soul are invisible and hidden. The life we call happy lies high up, and narrow, they say, is the road that leads to it. There are many hills on it, and from virtue to virtue it is necessary to go up splendid steps, while at the top is the end of all things and the end of the road, to which our journey is directed.

Measurable body movements do not confine their meanings to the physical itself, they indicate the existential and moral challenges and struggles of every human being in a general and figurative way. This meaning resonates

² Written between 1342 and 1358 and having the alternative titles *On the Secret Struggle of My Concerns* (Lat. *De secreto conflictu curarum mearum*) and *On Contempt for the World* (Lat. *De contemptu mundi*).

even more strongly at the top of the mountain, when Petrarch, enchanted by the extraordinary view stretching before him, turned his gaze towards his beloved homeland of Italy, retrospectives of his own life, “mourning his own imperfection” [Petrarch 2007, p. 53]. The activated “inner eye of the soul” then took control of the physical view. Petrarch fell silent and, following the voice of his soul, looked randomly at the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine, the book that accompanied him on his expedition. His gaze fell on the famous sentence from the tenth chapter: “Men go to admire the heights of mountains, the great floods of the sea, the courses of rivers, the shores of the Ocean, and the orbits of the stars and neglect themselves” [St. Augustine 1987, p. 229]. St. Augustine, in just such a way, relying on chance during his stay in Milan, which became a turning point in his spiritual life, opened the Gospel and found St. Paul’s exhortation in his letter to the Romans not to care for the flesh by indulging lusts, but to follow the path laid out by Jesus [St. Augustine 1987, p. 187].

Petrarch’s reflections on the summit and during the descent seems to undermine the sense of earthly travel, when the poet stated that people seek value all around in the world, while they can only find true satisfaction within themselves [Petrarch 2007, p. 57]. *Cupiditas videnditerras* here seems to be completely defeated by the prohibition of external cognitive curiosity about the world, one of Augustine’s major sins, according to his moral appeal expressed in the dialogue *On True Faith (De vera religione)*: “Do not go out into the world, return to yourself, the truth lives inside man” [St. Augustine 1999, p. 788]. St. Augustine himself resolved his dilemmas and struggle between selfish earthly love (Lat. *amorsui*) and moral-religious conversion to love of God (Lat. *amor Dei*) by turning to spiritual values, denouncing the sins of youth, Manichean beliefs and philosophical scepticism [Kasia 1960; Jaśkiewicz S. 2012]. The subjugation of the “outer man” through the power of faith, virtue and super-mundane love of the “inner man” finally unified Augustine’s “split self” [James 2001, p. 136-137]. From that moment on, by being baptized, Augustine became a “soldier of Christ”, establishing the pattern of spiritual and moral *Christianitas* for a long time (until medieval scholasticism).

Can we reasonably say that a similar overcoming of the natural life in favour of an exclusively spiritual life, remaining in contempt of the former, took place in Petrarch’s climbing experience? It would seem at first glance that we are dealing here with pure *mimesis*, a duplication of Augustine’s path. This is how Alexander Lee [Lee 2012] interprets Petrarch’s spirituality. However, the tone of his request for prayer support to the monk Dionigi is significantly different. Petrarch seems to stand, as it were, in a straddle between the two tendencies, admitting that very few people zealously fulfil the message of the spiritual life and he himself cannot boast of the ultimate victory of virtue over the sins of a vain earthly life. At the same time, the

poet stressed that he remains on the road toward this goal, aware of his own straying and uncertainty. Similar dilemmas were expressed by Petrarch in his writing *On the Ignorance of Myself and Others*, where he fervently wrote [Petrarch 2004, p. 62]:

[...] because of the weaknesses and burdens of mortal life, which are difficult to name, let alone bear, I am unable, I admit it, to lift as high as I would like the lower parts of my soul, in which the feelings of anger and lust reside - so that they no longer cling to the earth. How often and with what effort I have tried to detach them from the earth, in sorrow and bitterness, and how I suffer that I have not succeeded - only Christ knows, [...] I do not deny that I have indulged in many vain and harmful activities. But I do not count reading Cicero among them, because I understood that it never brought me harm, on the contrary, it helped me many times.

The resonance of this confession is significant and twofold: here we have not only the struggle between “spiritual man” and “earthly man,” but also an indication of an ideological tradition other than the Christian one, the ancient Latin philosophical and moral heritage, which formed and developed the humanistic model of human improvement. It is Cicero, in his *Tusculan Discourses*, who provides the concept of *cultura animi* based on the idea of *humanitas*, the education of both intellectual and moral man. Ancient spirituality was not religious, but moral, and Cicero set the benchmarks in Roman philosophical culture for meliorism and *psychagogy*, personal improvement and formation of the soul according to Greek concepts of virtue (Gr. *arete*) [Cicero 2010; Hadot 2000; Zowislo 2020, pp. 14-15].

Perhaps the greatest achievement of Petrarch’s mountain climbing was that he opened his “inner eye” and initiated the process of self-knowledge, which enabled a certain form of therapy of conflicts through their recognition, acceptance and naming, literary and philosophical processing. Subsequent journeys undertaken by Petrarch prove that the “outer journey” was as important to him as the “inner journey”, and Petrarch himself was both a spiritual nomad as well as a modern traveller and tourist. This enduring tension is also visible at the end of *Secretum meum*, in Francesco’s imaginative dialogue with St. Augustine. Here, the poet admits to his mentor and interlocutor that he understands and respects his moral instructions about the need to overcome earthly love (the forms of which were both passionate attachment to Laura and the vain desire for laurel, the immortal fame due to poets), but he says: “However, I cannot control my desires” [Petrarch 2022, p. 339]. At the same time, Francesco announced that he would undertake new life challenges (completely secular) “with great enthusiasm”, noting that he had numerous responsibilities (travels and writing plans) waiting for him. Researchers consider *Secretum* an open work in which the conflict of the “split soul” remains in force and does not gain a clear solution [Maślanka-Soro 2022, p. 78].

European travels of the “first modern tourist”

How, then, did Petrarch’s subsequent wanderings develop, by what routes and for what purposes did the poet travel around Europe? He started them early on, the first important trip was to Bologna for studies (1320-1326), then there were numerous diplomatic, sightseeing and cultural trips, including: the Pyrenees and Toulouse (1330), on a trip to northern Europe undertaken in 1333 Paris and Cologne, the Ardennes Forest, in 1336 Mont Ventoux, and from 1337 until the end of his life numerous trips and stays in Rome, Naples, Verona, Venice, Genoa, Milan, Padua, as well as Basel and Prague. In his mature life, Petrarch constantly mainly oscillated between Provence, where he had his beloved retreat in Vacluse, and Italy, feeling himself a proud Italian and heir of the ancient Romans, expressing the superiority of Italy (unfortunately ethnocentric in spirit) over other nations [Petrarch 2009, p. 136]. He divided the last 12 years of his life between Venice, Padua and the nearby village of Arquà, where he built a small house and later died in 1374 and was buried. His nomadic lifestyle is significantly evident in the poet’s will, in which he listed as many as seven places where he wished to be buried: Padua, Arquà, Venice, Milan, Pavia, Rome and Parma [Mann 1992, p. 1; Olszaniec 2009, pp. 11-12].

Wherever Petrarch went in his wandering zeal, he primarily sought to see the most important natural and cultural attractions. A frequent phrase in his travel letters are proud words that we can relate to the aspirations and cognitive experiences of any modern tourist: *vidiloca*: “I have seen places” [Petrarch 2009, p. 117]. These places were not only “a wealth of magnificent views”, but also material monuments and ancient ruins, which he described in detail, interweaving an account of their location, current condition and appearance with historical and cultural reminiscences. The poet began his first stay in 1337 and his first steps in Rome with a reference to the death of Julius Caesar: “In Rome, on the Capitoline Hill, on the Ides of March” [Petrarch 2009, p. 75]. Touring the ancient resort of Baiae, he walked in the footsteps of Virgil [Petrarch 2009, p. 117]:

I have seen the places described by Virgil; I have seen the lakes of Avernus and Lucrinus, the still waters of Acheront and the pool of Augusta unhappy because of her son’s cruelty; the once-famous and now wave-covered road of Gaius Caligula and the dam imposed on the sea by Julius Caesar.

Visiting cities in northern Europe, the poet often used local guides. In Cologne he saw an unfinished cathedral: “In the middle of the city I saw a beautiful, though unfinished temple, deservedly called the greatest” [Petrarch 2009, p. 149]. There he watched the ritual bathing of women in the Rhine with curiosity and inquired about the magical significance of this rite

and its pagan origins. While in Paris, he “greedily absorbed “ its attractions and the life of its inhabitants, strolling like the first *flâneur* through its streets day and night [Petrarch 2009, p. 137]. His experiences were not only intellectual, but truly hedonistic: “It was a nice activity” [Petrarch 2009, p. 149]. Petrarch derived real pleasure from seeing the sights and local attractions, as he repeatedly said in his accounts. At the same time, we hear in the background of his accounts very personal confidences about the hardships and dangers of the treks he undertook, about robbers lurking on the roads, injuries, as well as the changeable and annoying vagaries of the weather. All this, however, did not stop Petrarch from taking on more challenges. Being on the road was his constant and consistent passion for exploring. At the same time, intellectual knowledge of places, their history and culture were combined in his wanderings with sensual and aesthetic sensitivity and satisfaction. In this, Petrarch turned out to be a truly modern, humanistic *homo viator*, a complete man in whom spirituality was integrated with the natural [Ullmann 1985, p. 20]. He, who chose the appeals of *Christianitas* as the most important on the Windy Mountain, was already anticipating the new man of the new Renaissance era in his European travels: “In other words – writes Walter Ullmann – the so-called *naturalia humana*, or *mundana* in the broadest sense, had acquired a positive value, and therefore, deserved to be respected and studied” [Ullmann 1985, pp. 124-125]. The attitude of *contemptus mundi* – disdain for the world – articulated by St. Augustine in his dialogue with Francesco in *Secretum meum*, was overcome in the poet’s real-life travels by the pure joy of knowing *mundana*. Augustine’s conviction of the sinfulness of external *curiositas* and his call to cultivate the virtues of the “inner man” were thus marginalised. Its residues assumed a new form of appeal in Petrarch’s experience - towards the realisation of the full potential of humanity, in which virtue is of ancient, moral and intellectual rather than medieval and scholastic, i.e. religious, pedigree.

An imaginary journey to the Holy Land

We are dealing with a similar shift in priorities in *The Journey to the Tomb of Our Lord Jesus Christ* [Petrarch 2009, pp. 194-251]. This is not so much a description of a pilgrimage as a quite secular sight-seeing guide-book, in which the ancient monuments and attractions of Italy and Alexandria turn out to be more momentous than the holy places of Christianity, and the tombs of Virgil and Alexander of Macedon are objects depicted with greater attentiveness than the Tomb of Jesus. The guide-book, incidentally, is not a record of the trip Petrarch actually made to the Holy Land. Invited by his friend Giovanni Mandella in the spring of 1358 to make a pilgrimage together, Petrarch excused himself due to his fear of the sea,

which was the poet's only travel phobia. However, in response, he sent his friend an extensive letter outlining all the most important places and objects, in his opinion, towards which he directed the eyes and attention of the future pilgrim. It should be added that Petrarch chose as the starting point of this imaginative journey not Venice, which was the traditional place from where one set out for Jerusalem in the Middle Ages, but the "mistress of the seas" – Genoa. Thus, the Baedeker leads the traveller along the western coast of Italy, and this is a true *via antiqua*, a road rich in extraordinary ancient monuments and places marked by history, legends and myths: through the coast of ancient Etruria, Naples, the Strait of Messina – Odysseus' Scylla and Charybdis, the Doric cities of Croton and Taranto, the island of Korkyra in the Adriatic, the Peloponnese, the passage between Crete and Euboea, the Cyclades and other Aegean islands, Byzantium, Syria all the way to Palestine and even further – to Pharos and Alexandria on the way back. Places outside of Italy, however, were treated rather superficially in this peculiar guide. Petrarch focused on what he himself knew well from his past expeditions and literature. The poet praised such a convenient and quick (three days of writing instead of three months of being on the road) journey in imagination, writing that "[...] we often know many things we have never seen, and we do not know many things seen" [Petrarch 2009, p. 201]. Thus, it is a truly "virtual" journey, made using personal memory, ample reading and historical and cultural erudition [Olszaniec 2009, p. 24]. This anticipates today's virtual travellers, who explore the world by immersing themselves in reading books, reports and travel blogs, surfing Google Maps and Street Views, watching videos from various places around the world on TV and Internet channels, as well as travel photos on social media. Of course, it is not possible to speak directly about the essence identity of Petrarch's "virtual wandering" with the so-called "cybernetic flaneurism" of modern VR tourists. However, the possibility of treating the writer's imaginative journeys (not only the *Itinerarium* to Jerusalem, but also the fantastic description of Ultima Thule [Petrarch 2009, pp. 182-191] can be considered in this manner) as precursory, i.e. anticipating and foreshadowing certain trends in contemporary tourist activities.

In Petrarch's travel experience, the virtual journey to the Holy Land confirms the persistence in the poet's fate of the previously mentioned triadic knot of life, travelling and writing, in which the wandering *modus vivendi* is rooted and completed in the *modus scribendi*, in literary expression. And the poet's Baedeker actually served as a practical guide, especially among the intellectual elites of Naples, but not as an *itinerarium Hierosolymitanum*, a record of tips useful on a journey to Jerusalem, but as a guide to the city at the foot of Vesuvius and Virgilian sites [Olszaniec 2009, pp. 21-24].

Solitude in Vaucluse – the *otium* of a spiritual nomad

Staying in his Provençal solitude in Vaucluse, in-between voyages, Petrarch also affirmed his membership in the *res publica litterarum*, the imagined, indestructible, universal and supra-historical homeland of literature. It was Homer and Virgil who created the archetypes of the wanderers Odysseus and Aeneas, while Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, the Stoics, Epicurus, Cicero and Seneca established the models of *arete anthropine* (Gr. human virtue) and *humanitas* (Lat. humanity): human dignity, perfection, morality and wisdom. Vaucluse, on the Sorgia River, a charming place near Avignon, was treated by the poet as a small homeland, which, thanks to his dialogue with ancient writers, became an imaginative community of thought, his own Athens and Rome: “This is how I walk carefree and safe, alone among these great companions; I am where I want, when I want, I am with myself [...]” [Petrarch 2009, p. 171]. Vaucluse was a good place to develop, realise and follow indications of the ancient model *vita contemplativa* (understood in the spirit of *meliorism*, i.e. becoming better, as moral and intellectual improvement) and *otium*, the cultivation of existential freedom during leisure from daily and worldly (including political) concerns. Following Epicurus, the poet could say: *lathe biosas*, stay hidden, enjoying the charms of unique moments [Pawłowski 2007; 2021]. This *locus amoenus*, a pleasant place of concealment, did not constitute total seclusion, however; Petrarch willingly invited friends to his home, thereby, also realising the Epicurean ideal of *philia*, i.e. friendship and community of spirit. *Vita contemplativa* in the Sorgia valley was filled with numerous activities, among which gardening and daily hikes in the countryside stood out in addition to mental work and writing [Petrarch 2009, p. 169]:

This is my life: I get up in the middle of the night, go out early in the morning, but both among the fields and at home I study, reflect, read and write, driving away – as much as possible – sleep from my eyes, sloth from my body, passions from my soul and numbness from action. All day long I go around sun-burned mountains, dew-covered valleys and caves, traversing back and forth both banks of the Sorgia, where no one disturbs me, no one accompanies me, and no one directs me [...].

Petrarch called himself *Silvanus*, a forest man (from the Roman *Silvanus*, god of forests, fields and wildlife) [Parandowski 1956, p.129]. Immersion in nature together with slow, unhurried and solitary wanderings were for him the best lesson in distancing oneself from the storms of life, passions of the body and soul or worries. Nature became the best backdrop for depicting the portrait of his beloved Laura, thus gaining poetic expression in his lyrical sonnets [Petrarch 1998; Parandowski 1956, p. 16]. The poet discovered a new dimension of human sensitivity to landscapes: he repeatedly

sketched a very subjective portrait of nature, relishing in its sights, feeling *fascinosum* and *tremendum*, the sublime full of ambivalent values [Burckardt 1961, p. 158]. Petrarch's bucolic worship of nature, sentimental and mystical fascination in experiencing its mysteries, can be understood in the spirit of Martin Heidegger's existential ontology as an example of "poetic inhabitation of the earth", making the world a "home of being" and "listening to the speech of being" [Heidegger 1999, 2002]. Petrarch admitted that, as the son of an exile, he learned to "make every place he stayed his home" [Petrarch 2009, p. 169]. Studying and reflecting among the fields, hills and forests during daily rounds of the area and transferring these experiences into writing records also brings to mind another contemporary philosophical and literary concept: the idea of geo-poetics as a poetic expression of the unity of man and nature and Kenneth White's project of intellectual nomadism [White 2009; Zowisło 2013, pp. 14-17].

Conclusion

The analogies alluded to above may seem overly distant – historically and philosophically, however, they are not entirely unjustified as many elements of Petrarch's wandering make him a geo-poet and an intellectual nomad travelling through landscapes, history and culture. He studied in the "book of the world" directly, tangibly, being on the road, but also through reading, available geographic, topographic, countryside and historiographic knowledge. He searched for traces of the great past and traced mementos of European cultural heritage, reverently visiting and describing monuments and ruins of the ancient past. He contemplated nature, in its beauty and superhuman power seeking to understand the human position in the world and longing for unity. He immersed himself like a *flâneur* in the stream of daily life of the inhabitants of the cities he visited, using the available news and tips from local guides and interpreters. He created more than one portrait of more than one place: Mont Ventoux, Rome, Naples, the Sorgia Valley, Cologne and Paris, the Mediterranean lands on the way to Jerusalem, and even the fantastic Ultima Thule. As Jan Parandowski wrote about him: "He visited more countries than anyone in his time, and in later centuries, I see no one among writers who could match him before our busy era" [Parandowski 1956, p. 153]. Petrarch was the spiritual nomad of Europe, but he can also be considered the progenitor of modern tourism. He travelled with his body, physically moving through space, surrendering to sensory experiences and viewing the world, but also with an open mind and spirit, at each of these levels striving for knowledge, self-discovery and personal growth. His travel letters were not dry, dispassionate accounts, we feel in them a man deeply moved by feelings,

desires, longings, inner dilemmas and fears. This subjective mode of reporting foreshadows modern travel literature, which highlights sentiments and individual experiences projected onto reality. What emerges from Petrarch's writings and lyric poetry is the image of an inwardly conflicted and deeply passionate man, aware of his weaknesses, seeking a solution to his metaphysical and religious concerns in reading, writing and travelling cognition. Here, we are dealing with a new type of self, not a monolithic one (dominated by supernatural values, as in the Middle Ages), but as one "cracked", aware of dissonances and accepting inner personal polarity, creatively exploiting it and making it the *spiritus movens* of life.

The individual existential conflicts of creative people such as Francesco Petrarca at that time also slowly began to externalise themselves in objective cultural trends, in the gradual transition from a civilization dominated by *Christianitas* to the world of *humanitas*. In his travels and literary works, Petrarch initiated a new type of man: *l'uomouniversale*, a man who was versatile and complete, not knowing that he was anticipating a new era that was later called the Renaissance, which was also an epoch of historically, culturally and politically unprecedented voyages of discovery.

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THE SCOPE OF SPORT AND TOURIST EXPLORATION OF THE TATRA PEAKS USING A PROMINENCE-BASED APPROACH

*Piotr Mielus**

Abstract

Purpose. This article is aimed at verifying the scope of tourist and sport exploration of the Tatra peaks in their historical context. It is also an attempt to evaluate the determinants for pace and scale of the Tatra mountains exploration.

Method. In order to assess the set of peaks and their selection or grouping, digital maps based on LiDAR measurements were developed and field surveys conducted. On this basis, prominence-based lists of peaks were created. "Prominence" is one of the important numerical criteria for a peak's significance. Historical data (e.g. date of the first ascent, scale of difficulty of the easiest route to the top) was determined based on critical analysis of the literature on the subject (especially climbing guidebooks).

Findings. The conclusions from analysis of the database broadly confirm the evaluation of a growth rate and sport quality for the exploration of the Tatra mountains. The beginning of exploration activity was observed from just before World War 1. It was a consequence of importation of alpinist ideology towards the Tatra mountains. These generic observations were supplemented by quantitative analysis. In the research, it was revealed that, over time, the interest of climbers moved to more difficult and less prominent peaks.


Research and conclusions limitations. Not all objects found on the digital maps were properly identified and described. This was due to limited information in the literature and difficulties regarding physical access to selected peaks. Some historical data are unknown or uncertain, leading to incomplete conclusions.

Practical implications. A cognitive implication is an estimation of the research gap regarding exploration of the Tatra mountains. The awareness of a significant number of unclimbed peaks may increase human pressure on natural protection areas with consequential ecological implications.

Originality. The article is a first attempt focused on quantification of the pace of exploring the Tatra mountains with objective criteria using a prominence-based approach. The added value of this paper is the preparation of an objective database, created using contemporary methods of field analysis based on digital LiDAR mapping.

Type of paper. The article presents the results of an empirical study.

Keywords: exploration of the Tatras, history of mountaineering, climbing difficulties, LiDAR maps, mountain prominence.

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Introduction

“Conquering” was the first motivation for exploration activity in the mountains [Kirchner 1950, Czyż 2010]. This activity in alpine mountains was often of sporting origin connected with overcoming the difficulties of rocky terrain. As sir Francis Younghusband wrote in 1922: “The mountains reserve the choicest gifts for those who stand upon their summits”. First ascents were particularly esteemed in all mountains in the world. As Nettleflod and Stratford noticed [1999], the history of climbing is “the first-ascent-oriented”. The first ascents were also important for increasing our knowledge on the orography of the massif. Complex mountain terrain and the changeability of weather conditions across the seasons meant that the first ascents were both of educational and sport value. The exploration activity allowed for a detailed topography of the massif to be created. It also helped by increasing climbing skills of those venturing into these mountains.

In this article, an attempt is made to quantify the exploration of peaks in the Tatra mountains, in both historical and sport dimensions. The mountain summits, as objects of tourist and climbing activity, form the basis of this quantitative analysis. The aim of the paper is to estimate the scope of exploration of the Tatra peaks and to distinguish determinants in the context described in literature.

In literature on the subject, the exploration of the Tatra mountains is described in a historical context. The history of pre-tourist activity before 1850 was provided by Szaflarski [1972]. Subsequent rapid advances in climbing development were considered by Chwaściński [1988]. The research was developed in a detailed elaboration by Roszkowska [2013] and the multi-volume work of Kiełkowski [2018-2020]. The history of exploration from the point of view of Zipser Germans was presented by Grosz [1961].

The main sources on the first ascents (their chronology and difficulties) are contained in reports of climbers published in mountaineering press. For the Tatras, the original reports are dispersed. Depending on a nationality of the mountaineer, articles were published in local climbing journals - at the beginning this was in the Polish, Hungarian and German press. The data were later collected in climbing guidebooks – a contemporary source of the historical information can be found in Witold Henryk Paryski’s guidebook (25 volumes published between 1951 and 1985) and Władysław Cywiński’s (19 volumes published in the years 1994-2014).

In this article, a time span of the first ascents is presented (in summer and winter), taking the chosen periods into account, with dividing lines related to both World Wars. An additional point of interest is the technical difficulties of the easiest routes to the summits. Research into exploration

should consider technical difficulties, as they are one of the key factors determining the sequence and pace of the process of climbing the Tatra peaks (especially the first winter ascents which are a separate category of sport achievement).

Method of research

The first principle of quantification is the preparation of a concise database of the peaks that are being analysed. The method applied to construct such an objective database was using the prominence approach as a means of peak classification.

Prominence is a mathematical measure of the geographical importance of a peak, and so it decides if a particular hill or mountain is significant from a topographic point of view [Dawson 1992; Helman 2005]. The most popular measure of prominence is a relative elevation coefficient¹ that shows a minimal denivelation to be overcome if a climber moves from higher terrain. The prominence is calculated as the difference of altitude between a mountain top and the key saddle that divides the given mountain from the higher and more prominent peak.

Prominence analysis supports classic altitude analysis. It allows one to identify a concise set of peaks located in a given area that meet a chosen prominence threshold. In such a way, significant summits can be separated from secondary tops. Using this procedure, one can create an objective set of analysed peaks.

The set of Tatra peaks, being the object of the research, was created according to the following rules:

1. The source of altitude data comprised digital LiDAR² maps for the Tatra mountains on both sides of the border.
2. The analysis of digital maps allowed to distinguish more than 1000 peaks with a pre-defined minimal threshold. All have their height above sea level and geographic coordinates recorded.
3. These peaks were identified on the basis of the above mentioned mountain guidebooks in order to assign proper oronyms.
4. The oronyms allowed to identify the dates of the first ascents, winter ascents and difficulties of the normal route to the top.

¹ In English, the coefficient is called “relative height” or “shoulder drop”, in German “*die Prominenz*” or “*die Schartenhöhe*” in Polish “*prominencja*” or “MDW” (*Minimalna Deniwelacja Względna*).

² LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) is a laser method of Earth surface measurement. Owing to this method, a so-called point cloud is created with classified layers (land, plants). The LiDAR maps allow precise analysis of the location and the height above sea level for each point of the land.

5. The land research was performed for some nameless points in order to verify the technical difficulties of the ascent.

The described method was used to identify 1344 peaks with a prominence above 10 metres³. These peaks are denoted as P10m (which means a prominence of at least 10 metres). The set of such objects encompasses summits, crags and other elevations in the Tatra mountain range⁴.

The source of altitude data are files obtained from *Główny Urząd Geodezji i Kartografii* (for the Polish Tatra National Park, TPN) and from *Geodetický a kartografický ústav* (for the Slovak Tatra National Park, TANAP).

Historical, toponomastic and sport analyses were based on information published in mountain guidebooks: Paryski [1951–1985] and Cywiński [1994–2014], supplemented with Nyka [1994] and Kunicki, Szczerba [1999] for the Western Tatras. This approach is in line with that described in the literature [Taylor 2006].

The preparation of the concise set of peaks with pre-defined criteria was focused on objective quantitative analysis. The quantitative methods were used for assessment of climbing activity at a given period of time [Chaloupsky 2014]. The analysis aimed to answer the following question: what is the extent and pace of tourist and sport exploration of the Tatra peaks from a historical perspective?

Results

At the beginning, one should note that names were identified only for 64% of the analysed peaks. Additional field study allowed for verification of the extra 11%⁵. Therefore, 75% of the analysed population was fully identified. For the remaining peaks, some estimation was conducted. The estimation was focused on the difficulties of the ascent and its probability. These activities were performed on the basis of the data visible on the digital map regarding the slope angle of the peak. A significant slope angle (rock faces) implies high technical difficulties and decreases the probability of an ascent that was not mentioned in the literature. Otherwise, a low slope angle means that a given peak was most likely visited in the past before the tourist era (for example, by shepherds, hunters or miners).

The first research refers to the distribution of difficulties regarding the easiest way the top. The difficulties are presented using the so-called WHP

³ In practice, a minimal threshold was set at 9.5 m in order to assure the completeness of the set of peaks bearing in mind a potential measurement error.

⁴ In this article, classic definition is applied of the Tatra mountains borders as formulated by Witold H. Paryski (from Huciańska Pass in the west to Zdziarska Pass in the east).

⁵ The author thanks the members of the research team: Grzegorz Fołta, Rafał Kozubek and Krzysztof Krowicki for all information regarding the nameless peaks.

scale⁶ [Paryski 1951, Vol. 1, pp. 16-17] on the basis of information obtained from the above mentioned guidebooks and the contemporary mountaineering activity of members of the research team. The distribution of difficulties is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of difficulty regarding the easiest ascent for P10 peaks in the Tatra mountains

Difficulties in WHP scale	Number of peaks	Share of peaks
V	6	0.4%
IV	13	1%
III	32	2%
II	108	8%
I	194	14%
0+	217	16%
0	146	11%
0-	394	29%
unknown	234	17%

Source: own elaboration.

It is worth mentioning that in the group of the most prominent peaks (the so-called '*Crown of the Tatra*' – the peaks with prominence of at least 100 metres, i.e. P100m), there are no peaks with difficulties of the normal route over I. Among 74 such peaks, only 6 are accessed with a route I, and 12 with a route 0+. Almost half of the P100 m peaks are accessed without difficulties (0-).

Broadening the analysed sample to all P10m summits allows for more detailed assessment concerning difficulty distribution. In general, the range of difficulties from the quantity of peaks decreases (i.e. there are more easy peaks). An exception to this dependence is seen for the relatively lower number of peaks with a difficulty grade 0 (so called 'very easy'). This probably comes from a lower transparency of easier grades (depending on the classification of hand use – for climbing or for maintaining balance). A high share of peaks with unknown difficulties is proof of the insufficient scope of terrain description in the literature. It can mean that some rocky crags located in wild areas are still unclimbed. A lower share of peaks with unknown difficulties, in comparison to nameless and unidentified peaks, comes from

⁶ A WHP scale of climbing difficulties, similar to the international UIAA scale, was, at the beginning, of descriptive nature, that later was supplemented with a digital system: 0- (without difficulties), 0 (very easy), 0+ (easy), I (a little difficult), II (quite difficult), III (difficult), IV (very difficult), V (remarkably difficult), VI (extremely difficult).

the fact that numerous P10m summits are elevations with low slope angles. This suggests that they are accessed without any technical difficulties. It is worth mentioning that a number of nameless peaks have had their difficulties defined due to the work of the author and his research team directly in the terrain.

The most difficult P10m summits are those accessed with a climbing route being at least V grade, which include: Zawieszona Skała 1404/23⁷, Kiernia 1367/12, Komin Strażyski (lower crag) 998/11, Zadnia Tomkowa Igła 2133/18, Apostoł V 2036/16 and Szalona Turnia 1548/15.

The analysis of historical data referring to the first summer and winter ascents⁸ was based on information obtained from the above mentioned sources. The dates of the first ascents were assigned to particular periods in which the dividing lines were located at the outbreak of both World Wars (war nearly always means the suspension of climbing activity). Additionally, two unclassified categories were discovered:

- uncertain ascent – a first ascent is not confirmed, however, the technical difficulties suppose that the ascent was hardly possible without leaving a reference in the literature⁹;
- unknown ascent – the date of the first ascent is not established, but a given peak was surely accessed in the past in the pre-tourist era (e.g. by shepherds) because the top is easily accessible.

The obtained results are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2. Division of P10m peaks according to date of first ascent (general)

Ascent date	Number of peaks	Share of peaks
before 1901	67	5%
1901–1914	295	22%
1915–1939	33	2%
after 1939	68	5%
uncertain	228	17%
unknown	653	49%

Source: own elaboration.

⁷ In the prominence notation, the first number indicates altitude above sea level and the second the prominence factor.

⁸ Winter ascents are defined as climbs performed in the period between December 1 and April 30, according to the classic definition of a winter season published in Paryski (Vol. I, 1951, p. 15).

⁹ It is worth noting that even difficult crags could have been climbed by local inhabitants in the pre-tourist era. The example of such an event was the first ascent of Kopa Siana in Pieniny described by Wiśniewski (1998).

Table 3. Division of P10m peaks according to date of first winter ascent

Ascent date	Number of peaks	Share of peaks
before 1901	8	0,6%
1901–1914	197	15%
1915–1939	115	9%
after 1939	137	10%
uncertain	316	24%
unknown	571	42%

Source: own elaboration.

If we take only prominent peaks into account (P100m), the analysis of the first ascents would not be interesting from a scientific point of view. Numerous prominent peaks were visited in the pre-tourist era and details of such ascents are unknown. For 78% of the 74 P100m summits in the Tatra mountains, the names of those who made the first ascent are not recorded. The remaining 16 peaks were accessed in the 1793-1906 period (the first known is Jagnięcy Szczyt, the last – Hrubą Turnia).

If we look at winter ascents, the relation of unknown and known ascents is opposite. For the majority of P100m summits, the details of the first winter climb have been published in the literature. The date of such an ascent is unknown for just 24% of the peaks belonging to the *Crown of the Tatras* (predominantly referring to low peaks located below the tree-line, but also to the highest point of the Belian Tatra – Hawrań). The remaining 56 peaks were first ascended in the winter season between 1873 and 1926 (the first recorded was Sławkowski Szczyt, the last one – identical as in the summer season – Hrubą Turnia).

A more detailed image of the exploration activity in the Tatras is possible if we extend the set of analysed peaks from 74 P100m to 1,344 P10m. The research allows to confirm conclusions noted in literature [Chwaściński 1988; Roszkowska 2013; Kielkowski 2018-2020], proving that the most intense period of exploration was at the beginning of 20th century. During this period, 22% of the summits had their first ascents and 15% of all first winter ascents were recorded. Winter climbing is generally perceived as more demanding, so these ascents are usually concluded after the first ascent performed predominantly in a summer season. We therefore observe a preponderance of winter ascents in the period between the World Wars – in general, later than the first ascents [Roszkowska 2015]. An objective risk connected with winter ascents is a lower share of unknown ascents and a higher one for uncertain ascents. The analysis of a large and homogenous set of data confirms tendencies described in the literature on the basis of fragmentary and subjective data.

In theory, the logic of a peak's classification imposes the following rule: for a summit with unknown difficulties of the ascent route, the fact of its first ascent may be uncertain. These peaks are either easily accessible (so the date of the first ascent is unknown but they were surely visited in the past), or the date of the first ascent is recorded in literature (we know names, an ascent date and a difficulty grade for the climb). However, the prepared data set reveals some exceptions.

Among unknown first ascents we see one of the most difficult peaks in the Tatras – Komin Strążyski. This situation is hardly explainable when taking the sociology of mountaineering into account. The first ascents on demanding peaks are likely to be recorded in the press. In this example, the first ascent is unknown because the crag is located very close to the popular walking trail in Dolina Strążyska near the city of Zakopane. The crag was treated as a training object by local climbers at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, and the first climber here has not been recorded. The grade of difficulty is known due to the Cywiński guidebook [Vol. I, 1994, p. 142]. The author described his ascent done with Krzysztof Żurek on May 4, 1981.

In turn, as the exception, 6 peaks with unknown difficulties are designated as unknown ascents (and not uncertain). This means that despite not having any data connected with the first ascent, we can be sure that such an ascent did take place. Similarly, we know that technical difficulties normally require rock climbing to access the top. These peaks are: Korona 1022/21, Mara 1452/14, Jasiowa Turniczka 1001/11, Palec Kasprowy 1941/13, Pusta Wanta 1955/11 and Szczecińska Turnia 1826/14. On the Korona and Pusta Wanta crags, one can see installed climbing bolts. On the Mara and Jasiowa Turniczka crags, rappel slings can be found¹⁰. Palec Kasprowy and Szczecińska Turnia had routes described in Cywiński's guidebook (respectively: Vol. XIII, p. 108 and Vol. XVI, p. 159). This does not change the fact that, according to known sources, one cannot estimate the grade of the easiest route to these tops.

The next element of the present research is the analysis of data in respective research periods. According to the information given in Tables 2 and 3, there are 4 such periods. We can check what the dependence is between the first ascent date (general and winter) to the difficulty¹¹ of the normal route, and the height and prominence of the peak, bearing the consecutive periods in mind.

The above analyses allow to draw the following conclusions:

- over time, the average difficulty of the first ascents increased because the list of unclimbed peaks was constantly getting shorter and contained more difficult peaks;

¹⁰ Author's observations from the years 2007-21.

¹¹ The average difficulty was calculated assuming the following values for each difficulty grade: "0-" = 0, "0" = 0.3, "0+" = 0.7, "I" = 1, "II" = 2, etc.).

Table 4. Characteristics of P10m peaks according to date of first ascent (general)

Ascent date	Average difficulty	Average height	Average prominence
before 1901	0.7	2,377	71
1901–1914	1.2	2,233	25
1915–1939	1.8	2,043	18
after 1939	2.3	1,714	17

Source: own elaboration.

Table 5. Characteristics of P10m peaks according to date of first winter ascent

Ascent date	Average difficulty	Average height	Average prominence
before 1901	0.3	2,408	195
1901–1914	0.6	2,237	87
1915–1939	0.9	2,213	26
after 1939	1.4	2,134	19

Source: own elaboration.

- over time, both the height and prominence of peaks with first ascents decreased – the focus of climbers was on lower and less prominent objectives that earlier may not have been noticed by the mountaineering community;
- the difficulties of winter ascents are lower than the general score given to first ascents for each research period in relation to the higher risk of winter ascents (therefore, the first ascents were usually performed when peaks were not covered in snow);
- the height and prominence of winter ascents is higher for every research period in relation to the paucity of winter ascents, in comparison to summer ascents due to their greater difficulties.

Finally, the author looked at tourist development. Despite a dense network of marked trails in the Tatra mountains, only 79 P10m peaks (less than 6%) are accessible by means of an official path. This is not strictly connected with the difficulties of the peaks because the share of P10m peaks accessible without any technical difficulties is 29% (several times higher). One can hence draw the conclusion that tourist development is concentrated in valleys and some passes and moreover, on the ridges, marked trails circumvent humps and crags. This conclusion is strengthened by the observation that in the group of P100m peaks (prominent summits belonging to the *Crown of the Tatras*), the share of marked trails is much higher and amounts to 23 summits (31% – a 5 times higher share than for the P10m ones). This is proof of the concentration regarding the contemporary tourist activity on selected target summits, leaving the majority of peaks for pure sport activi-

ty related to climbing. It is also worth noting that cases of concentration of tourist or climbing activities in the Tatra mountains were empirically verified by Czochoński [2002] and Jodłowski [2007].

Discussion

The present study was based on an objective set of peaks created via digital LiDAR maps. A prominence threshold was applied in order to select peaks for analysis. The evidence in the data confirmed conclusions formulated on subjective opinions of researchers focused on a history of exploration in the Tatra mountains. The author's research proves that the pace and quality of Tatra exploration is in line with those presented in the source literature.

The exploration and climbing activity in the Tatra mountains was a consequence of the earlier outburst of the mountaineering competition in the Alps and other mountain ranges in Western Europe [Kubiak 2009; Roszkowska 2013]. The culmination of summiting the Alpine peaks occurred in the middle of the 19th century [Felsch 2009; Thompson 2012; Hansen 2013]. The activity in the western Alps was followed by rock climbing in the Dolomites [Bainbridge 2016]. The nature of the Dolomites was close to the rocky summits in the Tatra mountains. Moreover, before 1914, both mountain ranges were located in one country (Austro-Hungarian Empire), which fostered the exploration. In the Tatra mountains, one observes two waves of exploration: for prominent peaks in the third quarter of the 19th century and for secondary peaks at the beginning of the 20th century [Chwaściński 1988; Kielkowski 2018]. The secondary peaks exhibited growing difficulties which was also observed in other mountain massifs as virgin summits were becoming more and more difficult to find (Clark, 1976). Climbing activity was concentrated in the High Tatras and it moved from first ascents on summits to the rock faces. Especially between the World Wars we observe heightened competition on the hard routes [Czyż 2015; Kielkowski 2019]. The crags located in remote areas were beyond the interest of climbers.

Numerous crags located in the Western and Belian Tatras or less visited regions of the High Tatras (Wołoszyn, Szeroka Jaworzyńska) remain unexplored to date. There is nothing odd with this position if we take the legal rules of sport activities in both Tatra national parks into account (Polish TPN and Slovak TANAP). The regulations focusing on wildlife conservation have lessened human activities in some areas since the middle of the 20th century. It is also worth noting that restricted areas are mostly covering terrain that has never been in the centre of interest of climbers. Moreover, the Belian Tatras and some regions in the Western Tatras are protected

due to the precious limestone species of plants and wildlife observed in the neighbourhood of rock faces [Balon 1983; Jodłowski 2007; Doytshev 2021]. On the other hand, social changes after World War 2 forced the decline of pastoral life (making access to some low crags more awkward due to the encroached paths and meadows) and a stronger concentration of tourist activities on the marked trails. Simultaneously, the climbing activity was focused on sport routes located on selected rock faces (and not on land exploration as at the beginning of mountaineering in the Tatra mountains). The main aim of climbing was a constant increase in tackling technical difficulties, speed and style [Beifeng, Ruizhi, Yuan 2021]. These phenomena excluded exploration of hardly accessible areas, especially those with dense vegetation.

These facts would not have been revealed without access to contemporary digital maps that, due to laser measurements, present precise land relief without plant layers. Such a view allows identification of nameless crags and elevations. The prominence factor of the discovered summits is comparable to the High Tatra crags that were popular objects of exploration at the beginning of the 20th century. The situation is different now. The newly discovered objectives are mostly located in areas where climbing activity is restricted. Moreover, numerous crags are located at a low altitude, and are also vegetated with dwarf mountain pine or are in forest, storm-damaged areas. This means that these objectives are much less accessible and may be unattractive from a climbing point of view.

Taking these circumstances into account, the significant number of relatively prominent and nameless peaks is not surprising. It is a proof of a wide scope of new discoveries, not only on wild and remote mountain ranges. This phenomenon is possible because of access to modern digital relief maps. It is against the common view that all mountains have been conquered and the only area of new exploration are caves and ocean depths [Ingold 2018]. Such views were also presented by Polish climbers already after World War I. According to Kordys [1929]: “the future of climbing is outside the Tatra mountains”. The research based on contemporary methods of field analysis proves that there is still a knowledge gap identified even in such civilized and well-described areas such as the Tatra mountains.

This conclusion causes severe ecological challenges to arise. The information about unclimbed peaks can cause an anthropo-pressure in protected areas. Therefore, the exploration of natural reserves should be strongly restricted. However, the mountaineering activities in such areas seem to be limited due to natural reasons: a disadvantageous relationship between the climbing attractiveness, strenuous access and a lack of information about precise topographic coordinates of the newly discovered objects.

Conclusions

This paper was focused on the Tatra mountains and aimed to indicate the pace and scale of its exploration over time. The empirical evidence is based on a literature review and the unique database of prominent peaks prepared on the basis of LiDAR measurements. One can establish the determinants of the current limited scope of Tatra mountain exploration. The general sequences of activities leading to the full exploration of a given mountain massive are: first ascents to prominent peaks, first ascents to less significant peaks (crags), first winter ascents to peaks, alternative routes to the summits (ridges and faces), and winter ascents of ridges and faces [Chwaściński 1988; Felsch 2009; Roszkowska 2013]. This sequence is connected with increased knowledge about a given mountain area as well as an increase of climbing capabilities of visitors.

In such an environment, remote and less attractive crags are climbed accidentally and at the later stages of the exploration process. However the range described in this paper (Tatra mountains) has its specifics. Firstly, numerous crags are located below the line of alpine meadows, therefore, they are not clearly visible. The fact of their existence was hardly possible without the analysis of LiDAR-based maps. Secondly, access to low-located crags is difficult due to dense plants (windfalls and thickets in the forest zone, dwarf-pine areas) and overgrown paths. The latter phenomenon is strictly connected with establishment of national parks after World War 2. It brought about liquidation of herding and an introduction of access restrictions (tourist movement limited to marked trails, climbing activities restricted to selected areas). In effect, access to unclimbed crags is hindered from both a physical and legal point of view. Thirdly, the low-located crags are usually built with fragile rock due to erosion and their ridges and faces are covered with grass. These features makes them unattractive for climbers.

Taking these findings into account, the risk of intense exploration on the discovered crags can be estimated as very limited. Nevertheless, the LiDAR data provide valuable information that can be verified by field analysis only.

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THE POTENTIAL OF USING VIRTUAL REALITY TECHNOLOGY IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ON THE EXAMPLE OF RECREATIONAL CYCLING

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Abstract


Purpose. The development of virtual reality (VR) offers new opportunities for users to carry out some forms of physical activity (PA) in a virtual environment. However, these solutions are not widely used and their potential is not fully explored by PA practitioners and promoters. The main objective of the study is to assess the potential for the use of non-immersive and immersive virtual reality (nIVR and IVR) technologies in PA by future healthy lifestyle promoters based on their cycling experiences in a virtual environment.


Methods. Forty students from the Academy of Physical Education (AWF) in Katowice, Poland, including 20 females (age: 22.35 ± 2.32 years) and 20 males (age: 22.95 ± 2.19 years), were surveyed and completed the authors' questionnaire in order for the potential of nIVR and IVR technologies to be assessed in PA.


Findings. The respondents were positive about the potential of IVR in the context of supporting PA, as demonstrated by quantitative analysis of the collected material, with a significantly stronger declaration of willingness to use IVR and its recommendation to other users compared to nIVR technology. Furthermore, a qualitative analysis of the respondents' open-ended statements revealed that for PA in IVR, the participants showed a broader spectrum of benefit categories than for PA in nIVR.


Research limitations and conclusions. The sampling applied in the study means that the conclusions cannot be generalised to the entire population of potential VR technology users during PA.

Practical implications. The highly rated potential of IVR in the context of supporting PA should provide inspiration for both PA planners and promoters of active video games (AVGs). Virtual training may become a mass phenomenon in the near future.

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Originality. The study regards the potential of using VR technology for PA, consisting of three components: intention to use VR in PA, perceived benefits of VR and PA, and willingness to recommend VR in PA.

Type of paper. Research study.

Keywords: virtual reality, physical activity, cycling, potential, perceived benefits, intention to use.

Introduction

The rapid development of information technology observed in recent years has been significantly changing people's leisure time options, including those in the context of physical activity (PA). On the one hand, the fascination of young people with computer games and other computer-generated content (e.g. social media) encourages sedentary behaviours during their leisure time, further limiting the amount of undertaken physical activity (PA). This is a serious problem within the context of WHO guidelines on physical activity and sedentary behaviour [World Health Organization 2020]. On the other hand, paradoxically, interest in this technology may contribute to taking up newly developed forms of PA, such as active video games (AVGs) or interactive training programmes that can be used in virtual reality (VR). Especially the use of the latter, which is found to be very attractive by users, could have the potential to turn the tide of IT driven sedentary behaviour. Therefore, research directed towards discovering this potential is needed.

Using VR in research requires a precise definition of the concept, as the terminology is not always properly defined in the literature [Fusco and Tieri, 2022]. Virtual reality is an artificially created reality using information technology that can refer to objects of both the real world (e.g. computer simulations) and the completely fictional world (e.g. computer games). Depending on the degree to which the user is isolated from the real world when interacting with the virtual environment, a distinction should be made between non-immersive virtual reality (nIVR) and immersive virtual reality (IVR) [Garay-Sánchez et al., 2021]. In the former, the virtual environment is usually displayed on a standard computer monitor, and interaction is limited to the use of a pointing device. In the latter, the user is surrounded by a three-dimensional computer-generated presentation and can use his or her own body for sensorimotor interaction with the virtual environment [Fusco and Tieri, 2022]. In such a situation, the person is cut off from the visual stimuli of the real world, instead receiving digitally produced visual, auditory and even tactile stimuli. The presentation of IVR is possible using head-mounted displays (HMDs) or room-sized systems, referred to as CAVE (C-Automatic Virtual Environment) [Pallavicini et al., 2019]. The differences between IVR and nIVR are therefore primarily related to the level of immersion. The second major difference lies in the employment of the user's body, which in IVR, is the main interface for interaction with the virtual world [Parsons and Rizzo,

2008]. In IVR, the user can interact with the virtual environment not only by using a joy-pad or keyboard but also by turning his/her head, through eye movements, or via specially-designed controllers that react to the player's position and body movements in a specific space. These features promote greater user involvement and elevate the user's emotions while eliminating distractions from the outside world [Parsons and Rizzo, 2008; Price et al., 2011].

In recent years, it has been shown that AVGs in both nIVR and IVR are rated positively by players in terms of attractiveness of PA [Baños et al., 2016; Dębska et al., 2019; Polechoński et al., 2020, 2022, 2024] and are also characterised by a relatively high intensity of physical activity, with potential health benefits of regular involvement in PA [Polechoński et al., 2019, 2020, 2023]. To date, however, the potential for using this type of application in PA has not been fully verified by users. This prospective can be considered as any positive but also negative effects of using VR technology for PA practitioners.

In this paper, the authors have focused on an attempt to identify this research gap. Therefore, the main objective of the study is to assess the potential for the use of non-immersive and immersive virtual reality (nIVR and IVR) technologies in PA by future healthy lifestyle promoters based on their experiences with cycling in a virtual environment. The opinions expressed by a group of people with above-average knowledge on the issues of practicing PA can be regarded as an expert voice, formulated by a generation that is likely to use such solutions in the near future.

Assuming that the high potential of VR technology in PA should be reflected in a positive assessment of this technology by its users, the authors sought to answer following research questions:

1. Do people interacting with VR technology during training declare the intention to use it in the future?
2. Do the individuals declare a willingness to recommend this technology to others in their immediate environment?
3. Do these individuals perceive the real benefits of using this technology during PA?
4. Are the analysed respondents' judgments differentiated by the type of VR used in training (bearing in mind that user attitudes induced by IVR may differ from those in nIVR), or other independent variables?

Methods

Test location

The research was carried out at Jerzy Kukuczka Academy of Physical Education in Katowice (AWF), at the certified Laboratory of Research on Healthy Physical Activity (PN-EN ISO 9001:2015, certificate validity: 7.12.2021-16.12.2024) in the period between June and July 2023.

Study participants

According to the inclusion criteria, the study was open to current students of AWF, who were healthy and physically fit, able to cycle and undertook this type of PA, including cycling on a cycle ergometer. Respondents declared that they cycled outdoors and performed this activity quite variably at an average of 54 days per year (52.85 ± 52.95 days). Respondents performed exercise on a cycle ergometer, on average, 31 days per year (30.62 ± 40.43 days).

Based on the exclusion criteria, the following individuals were disqualified from the study: those sensitive to flashing lights or image layouts that may appear in programmes or video games, those suffering from epilepsy, those with symptoms of motion sickness or balance disorders, and people who had previously used the app. Finally, 40 volunteers meeting the indicated conditions, i.e. AWF students (age: 22.65 ± 2.25 years), including 20 women (age: 22.35 ± 2.32 years) and 20 men (age: 22.95 ± 2.19 years) were included in the study. The authors of the trial assumed that AWF students with above-average knowledge of recreational PA could be considered an expert group with regard to the field of the problems discussed in the study. The authors are aware of that the small sample size and the specific origin of the sample make the research results not widely generalisable.

The research was conducted according to the guidelines of the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki. It was also reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Jerzy Kukuczka Academy of Physical Education in Katowice (Protocol 9/2018). All subjects took part in the study voluntarily and could discontinue their participation at any time.

Research methods

Investigating the potential of VR technologies divided into nIVR and IVR involved study participants completing a self-reported questionnaire immediately after a physical activity session (standardised cycle ergometer training) using these technologies. The questionnaire consisted of the following three diagnostic sections: (1) Frequency of undertaking PA of cycling nature, (2) past use of nIVR and IVR in general and undertaken PA, (3) perceived potential of nIVR and IVR to support PA. Individual elements of the questionnaire are described in Table 1. Two survey questions were methodologically based on the Net Promoter Score (NPS) measure of satisfaction and loyalty [Reichheld, 2006].

Table 1. Questionnaire for assessing VR technology potential in PA(Pot-VR-PA) – cycling

Part	Question No.	Question	Response coding
I. Frequency of undertaking PA	1.1.	I cycle outdoors on an average of ... days per week.	Open-ended question (natural number)
	1.2.	I cycle on a cycle ergometer on an average of .. days per week.	
	2.1.	How often have you used nIVR technology before?	1. I have never used it 2. I have used it very rarely 3. I have rarely used it 4. I have often used it 5. I have used it very often
	2.2.	How often have you used IVR technology before?	
	2.3.	How often have you used nIVR technology for any physical activity before?	
II. Use of nIVR and IVR	2.4.	How often have you used IVR technology for any physical activity before?	
	2.5.	How often have you used nIVR technology before for cycling?	
		How often have you used IVR technology before for cycling?	
	3.1.	With the right equipment, would you use nIVR technology for cycling?	
	3.2.	With the right equipment, would you use IVR technology for cycling?	
III. Perceived potential of nIVR and IVR in PA	3.7.	Do you think practicing cycling in VR could be a supplement to leisure-time physical activity?	1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Somewhat disagree 4. Neither agree nor disagree 5. Somewhat agree 6. Agree 7. Strongly agree
	3.8.	Do you think practicing cycling in VR could substitute for leisure-time physical activity?	
	3.3.	Can the use of nIVR technology benefit individuals undertaking physical activity?	
	3.5.	Can the use of IVR technology benefit individuals undertaking physical activity?	
	3.9.	Do you think the VZfit app used in the study could be a useful training tool?	
	3.1.1.	Do you think apps like VZfit should be promoted?	
	3.4.	Extension of question 3.3. to include an open category: "If you see such benefits, please indicate them below:."	
	3.6.	Extension of question 3.5. to include an open category: "If you see such benefits, please indicate them below:."	
	3.10.	Extension of question 3.9. to include an open category: "Justify your answer above."	
	3.12.	How likely would it be for you to recommend the use of nIVR technology for performing physical activity to friends or acquaintances?	An 11-grade scale from 0 to 10 points, where: 0 means "I would definitely not recommend" and 10 means "I would definitely recommend"
	3.13.	How likely would it be for you to recommend the use of IVR technology for performing physical activity to friends or acquaintances?	

Source: own research.

The purpose of the PA session using nIVR and IVR was to familiarise participants with these technologies. It was considered that these technologies are not widely known and used to practice PA so that the participant can only assess their potential after using them in PA settings. Such a session was, at the same time, conducive to ensuring the comparability of results by having each participant in the study rely on the same VR experience. It was decided to choose cycling as the type of PA performed during the session due to the popularity of this form of recreation and the possibility of using it relatively easily in a laboratory setting.

The PA session was carried out on a specially designed test stand consisting of a cycle ergometer (Kettler – Ergo C10) and VR-enabled equipment. The PA session comprised two, 10-minute cycle ergometer parts: one with nIVR technology and the other using IVR. While cycling with nIVR, the artificially generated reality was displayed using a multimedia projector on a screen located at a distance of 250 cm with a diagonal image of 200 cm in front of the tested person (Figure 1a). On the cycle ergometer, the participant “cycled” along a virtual route while watching its changing virtual surroundings and, simultaneously received visual as well as auditory stimuli from the real environment (test stand and its surroundings). As part of the IVR session, the participant was immersed in an artificially generated reality wearing the VR Oculus Quest 2 headset (Figure 1b). The research participant was thus cut off from the visual and auditory stimuli of the real world, allowing him or her to focus more on the activity and the virtual environment.

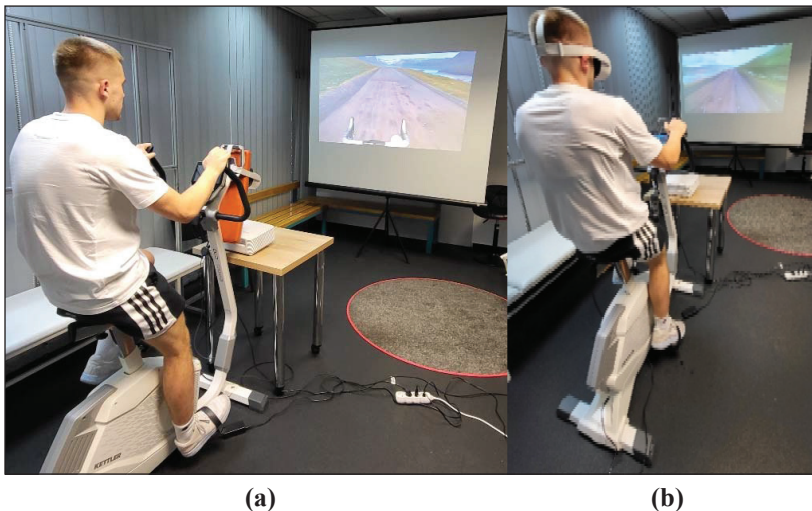


Figure 1. Research stand: (a) “Session 1”: cycling on a cycle ergometer in nIVR; (b) “Session 2”: cycling on a cycle ergometer in IVR.

Source: authors’ materials.

The characteristics of the PA session were standardised for each participant. Participants performed PA at a moderate exercise intensity, i.e. at a heart rate (HR) between 64-77% HR_{max} [Riebe et al., 2018]. The automatically changing load of the cycle ergometer connected with the chest heart rate monitor (Polar H10) was used to maintain the heart rate within this range.

The VR experienced by the participants performing PA was also standardised. Both cycling sessions used the same virtual route generated by the VZfit app (<https://www.vzfit.com/>). The app allows users to create virtual routes and ‘cycle’ along them, based on images available from Google Street View. The application processes the images so that the VR dynamically created from them simulates the changing image that a cyclist riding along a given route might see. VZfit allows the user to move around locations and assigned routes thanks to the app’s interaction with the cadence sensor (Wahoo Cadence), located on the crank mechanism of the cycle ergometer.

After the tests and test cycling, it was decided to use a route in the study that offered the possibility of at least 10 minutes of riding and was located in an area without buildings (the processing of images of buildings in VZfit was less natural than the processing and display of images of open spaces) and in which there were no large hills and slopes (the application did not affect the load to which a person exercising on a cycle ergometer was subjected depending on the slope of the route, which was considered unnatural). The chosen route was 14.8 km long and followed the coast of Iceland along Route 625, passing the Gljufurarfoss waterfall. It was created in the VZfit app by user KenOhBee and is available under the name Iceland Sunset Ride (Fig. 2 and 3).

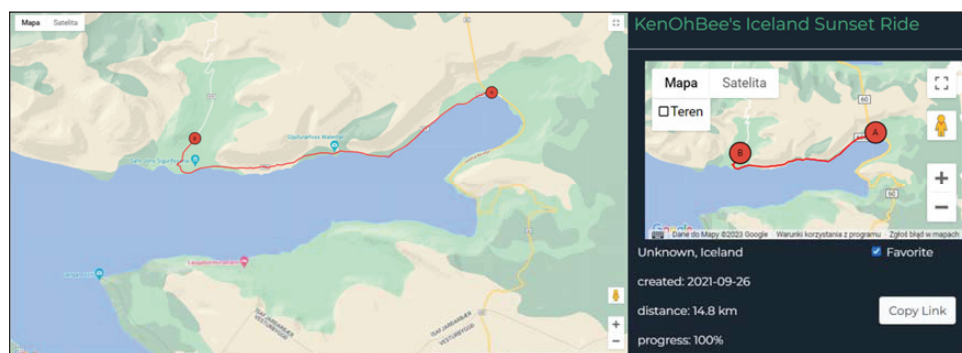


Figure 2. Map of route “travelled” by research participants.

Source: Screenshot from the VZfit app user account (<https://www.vzfit.com/>) (accessed: 23 Feb. 2024).

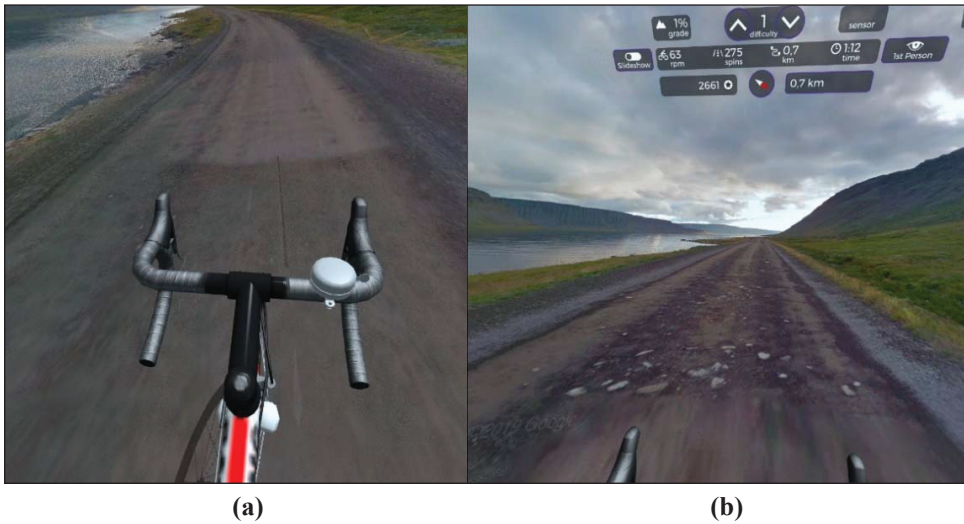


Figure 3. View of route “travelled” by research participants: (a) standard view - when looking ‘forward’ in the VR headset; (b) view when looking ‘up’ in the VR headset (route parameters).

Source: Snapshot of the Oculus Quest 2 headset view from VZfit app.

In terms of configuring the VZfit application, the authors’ aim was to maximise the similarity of the simulated reality to outdoor conditions. A standard control method was chosen in the VZfit app to automatically change direction according to a set route. Gamification elements, such as the companionship of a trainer in the form of a bot or other app-user cyclists, or the collection of virtual coins, were excluded. However, environmental effects were included, which were considered to enhance authenticity (rain, birds flying).

The described study procedure was divided into three stages, which are summarised in Figure 4. Participants performed the PA sessions in a different order, i.e. every other participant first undertook cycling in nIVR and then in IVR, while other participants first cycled in IVR and then in nIVR. This was supposed to eliminate the possible effect of the order in which the differ-

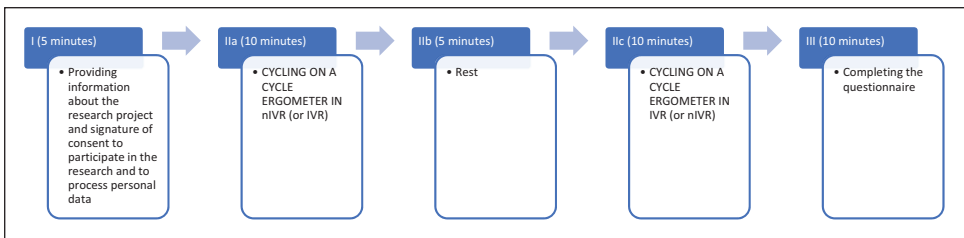


Figure 4. Research procedure.

Source: authors’ own elaboration.

ent types of VR technology were used on the results of the study. Each of the two cycling rides lasted 10 minutes. There was a interval of several minutes between rides, allowing heart rate to stabilise at resting level. The estimated experiment completion time for one person was approximately 40 minutes.

Methods of data analysis

Statistical calculations were performed using Statistica and SPSS software. Measurement data were analysed using basic descriptive statistics. The Shapiro-Wilk test was applied to examine normality of distribution. For within-group comparisons, Wilcoxon's matched-pairs test was implemented, with the effect size index and biserial correlation coefficient for matched pairs [Rosenthal et al., 1999 in: Prajzner, 2023]. The correlation of questionnaire scores was estimated using Spearman's correlation coefficient. The level of test probability indicating significance was set at 0.05. Analysis of responses to the open-ended questions concerned the number of category occurrences, which was performed by the authors of the study, however, due to the small sample size, this was done without the use of dedicated IT systems to support such analysis.

Results

The previous experience of respondents with nIVR and IVR varied, but they most often declared that they had either not used this type of technology at all or had done so very rarely. In the case of IVR, respondents' lack of experience with this technology was particularly evident in the context of using it during PA or cycling (Table 2).

Table 2. The use of nIVR and IVR technology by respondents

Question No.	Question	1. I have never used it		2. I have used it very rarely		3. I have rarely used it		4. I have often used it		5. I have used it very often		Missing data	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
2.1.	Usage of nIVR	14	35.0%	12	30.0%	10	25.0%	2	5.0%	1	2.5%	1	2.5%
2.2.	Usage of IVR	18	45.0%	14	35.0%	4	10.0%	3	7.5%	1	2.5%	0	0.0%
2.3.	Usage of nIVR during PA	18	45.0%	10	25.0%	7	17.5%	3	7.5%	2	5.0%	0	0.0%
2.4.	Usage of IVR during PA	29	72.5%	4	10.0%	3	7.5%	2	5.0%	2	5.0%	0	0.0%
2.5.	Usage of nIVR during cycling	23	57.5%	10	25.0%	4	10.0%	2	5.0%	1	2.5%	0	0.0%
2.6.	Usage of IVR during cycling	38	95.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	5.0%	0	0.0%

Source: own research.

Table 3. Survey participants' opinions on their willingness to practice PA in a virtual environment and perceived benefits of nIVR and IVR in PA

Question No.	Question	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Some-what disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Some-what agree		Agree		Strongly agree		N	M	Med	Mode	Multiplicity of mode	Lower quartile	Upper quartile	SD
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%								
3.1.	With the right equipment, would you use nIVR technology for cycling?	2	5	7	17.5	15	37.5	1	2.5	10	25	4	10	1	2.5	40	3.65	3.00	3	15	3	5.0	1.53
3.2.	With the right equipment, would you use IVR technology for cycling?	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	11	27.5	19	47.9	8	20	40	5.83	6.00	6	19	5	6.0	0.81
3.3.	Can the use of nIVR technology benefit individuals undertaking physical activity?	0	0	0	0	5	12.5	7	17.5	15	37.5	10	25	3	7.5	40	4.98	5.00	5	15	4	6.0	1.12
3.5.	Can the use of IVR technology benefit individuals undertaking physical activity?	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2.5	4	10	21	52.5	14	35	39	6.21	6.00	6	20	6	7.0	0.73
3.7.	Do you think practicing cycling in VR could be a supplement to leisure-time physical activity?	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	7	17.5	12	30	19	47.5	40	6.20	6.00	7	19	6	7.0	0.91
3.8.	Do you think practicing cycling in VR could substitute leisure-time physical activity?	1	2.5	2	5	5	15	4	10	13	32.5	9	22.5	5	12.5	40	4.83	5.00	5	13	4	6.0	1.52
3.9.	Do you think the VZfit app used in the study could be a useful training tool?	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	40	16	40	8	20	39	5.79	6.00	5	16	5	6.0	0.77
3.11.	Do you think apps like VZfit should be promoted?	0	0	0	0	1	2.5	3	7.5	10	25	16	40	10	25	40	5.78	6.00	6	16	5	6.5	1.00

Legend: N - sample size; M - mean; Med - median; SD - standard deviation, **Source:** own research.

Participants' views on their willingness to use nIVR and IVR to support PA are provided in Table 3. The answers to the question "With the right equipment, would you use nIVR technology for cycling?" were quite varied. The majority of respondents (60%) had a negative opinion, one person (2.5%) had no opinion on this issue, while the answers of the remaining participants (37.5%) were affirmative. The prospect of regular cycling using the IVR was much more positive among study participants. When asked the question: "With the right equipment, would you use IVR technology for cycling?" almost all respondents (95%) provided an affirmative response, with only two people (5%) having no opinion on the matter. According to almost all respondents (95%), cycling in VR can be a supplement to leisure-time PA. Only two people (5%) did not have a definite opinion on this issue. The majority of respondents (67.5%) was also convinced that cycling in VR could be a substitute for leisure-time PA, with 22.5% of survey participants assuming an opposite view, while the remainder (10%) were not clear on this issue.

Analysis of the declared willingness to use VR (questions 3.1. and 3.2.) under the condition of having the appropriate equipment revealed that the respondents reported significantly (Table 4) greater potential of IVR (5.83 ± 0.81) than nIVR technology (3.65 ± 1.53).

Table 4. Comparison of IVR and nIVR in terms of willingness to use

Dependent variable	Question 3.1. (nIVR)		Question 3.2. (IVR)		Z	p	rc
	Med	IQR	Med	IQR			
Value of statistics	3	2	6	1	4.86	0.000001	0.77

Med – median

IQR – lower quartile

Z – value of test statistic

p – probability of no significant difference between the two study groups

rc – biserial correlation coefficient for matched pairs ($rc = z / \text{element } (n)$)

This difference can be described as strong ($rc = 0.77$). Responding to the questions about nIVR technology, the participants, on average, did not exceed the neutral value (4) on the scale in their responses, with the majority (60%) referring to the technology negatively. In contrast, for IVR, with a median of 6 and a small interquartile range of 1, almost all respondents (95%) indicated values on the scale higher than the neutral point and positively indicative of IVR technology.

Respondents were more likely to declare that cycling in VR can be a supplement (addition/complement) to leisure-time physical activity than to declare that cycling could be its substitute. The distribution of responses

to these questions showed that, according to almost all respondents (95%), cycling in VR can be a supplement to leisure-time PA. Only two people (5%) did not have a definite opinion on this issue. The majority of respondents (67.5%) were even convinced that cycling in VR could be a substitute for leisure-time PA, with 22.5% of survey participants assuming the opposite view, while the remainder (10%) were not clear on this issue.

IVR was also assessed more positively than nIVR in terms of possible benefits for those undertaking PA. When asked the question: “Can the use of nIVR technology benefit individuals undertaking PA?”, 12.5% of respondents answered “rather not”, 17.5% had no opinion and the remainder (70%) answered affirmatively. To the same question about the IVR, almost all (97.5%), except for one person (2.5%), provided an affirmative response.

Regarding the VZFit app, according to all respondents, it can be a useful training tool (see Table 3; response distribution 3.9.), and almost all respondents (97.5%) were also convinced that it should be promoted (Table 3; response distribution 3.11.).

In terms of possible benefits for those undertaking PA (questions 3.3. and 3.5.), IVR (6.21 ± 0.73) was rated significantly higher than nIVR (4.98 ± 1.12) (Table 5).

Table 5. Comparison of IVR and nIVR in terms of perceived benefits

Dependent variable	Question 3.3. (nIVR)		Question 3.5. (IVR)		Z	p	rc
	Med	IQR	Med	IQR			
Value of statistics	5	2	6	1	4.70	0.000003	0.74

Med – median

IQR – lower quartile

Z – value of test statistic

p – probability of no significant difference between the two study groups

rc – biserial correlation coefficient for matched pairs ($rc = z / \sqrt{z^2 + n}$)

Statistically, this effect can be assessed as strong ($rc = 0.74$). The distributions show an advantage of those who assessed the benefits positively: for nIVR, this it was 70% and for IVR, its level totalled 97.5%, also giving a clear advantage to IVR technology. In the case of IVR technology, respondents were more likely to declare that this technology could benefit those undertaking PA.

A qualitative analysis of the respondents’ answers to open-ended questions (3.4., 3.6., 3.10.) made it possible to first extract the benefit categories and then check the number of their occurrence. Analysis of the responses to the questions on the benefits of nIVR-enabled PA and IVR-enabled PA (questions 3.4. and 3.6., respectively) yielded the results presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Benefits of using IVR and nIVR to perform PA according to number of category occurrences in the question on benefits of using IVR

Category symbol	Category meaning	Number of category occurrences regarding benefits of PA in IVR		Number of category occurrences regarding benefits of PA in nIVR	
		n	%	n	%
C1	Possibility of pursuing cognitive motives (cognitive tourism/ sightseeing)	14	35%	4	10%
C2	Enhancing PA in home/artificial settings by adding new attractive stimuli	10	25%	11	28%
C3	Increasing feelings of pleasure/satisfaction/ stimulation from performing PA	10	25%	5	13%
C4	Increased willingness/motivation to perform PA	9	23%	7	18%
C5	No dependence of performing PA on good weather conditions	7	18%	5	13%
C6	Opportunity to experience and perform PA in outdoor/realistic settings without leaving home	5	13%	7	18%
C7	Distraction from strenuous training (fatigue, tiredness, boredom)	5	13%	6	15%
C8	Distraction from stimuli of the real world (immersion/involvement in virtual world)	5	13%	0*	-
C9	Lower cost of practicing PA (less expenditure on additional equipment)	2	5%	3	8%
C10	Positive health impact of PA (fitness; weight loss, rehabilitation)	2	5%	3	8%
C11	Saving time while practicing PA	2	5%	2	5%
C12	Possibility to practice PA and sports by people who, for health reasons, cannot perform them in a real environment but can in artificial/ stationary environment surroundings	2	5%	2	5%
C13	Possibility of monitoring/viewing body parameters in real time during PA	2	5%	0*	-
C14	Higher level of sensations during PA than outdoors	2	5%	0*	-
C15	Encouraging PA in the real world	1	3%	0*	-
C16	Opportunity to try out destination/tourist attraction before going to given place	1	3%	0*	-
C17	Improved training outcomes in IVR	1	3%	0*	-
C18	No fear of being judged	1	3%	0*	-
C19	Possibility of sports competition with potentially everyone	1	3%	0*	-
C20	Ability to use VR in the absence of IVR	0*	-	1	3%

* category absent from answers to questions.

(grey boxes: categories considered important indicated by at least 10% of respondents when asked about the benefits of IVR technology)

Source: own research.

Just by comparing the number of benefit categories discovered in the respondents' statements, it is possible to conclude that PA using IVR shows greater beneficial potential for respondents than PA in nIVR. Furthermore, the arbitrary assumption was applied that the indication of a given category by at least 10 percent of respondents demonstrates its particular importance (grey boxes in Table 6).

Since all respondents positively evaluated usefulness of the VZfit app as a training tool (see Table 3), qualitative analysis of the responses to the question on the rationale for this assessment (question 3.9.) revealed benefit categories that can be interpreted as advantages of using the VZfit app (Table 7).

Table 7. Benefit categories provided by respondents appearing in support of the positive claim that the VZfit app used in the study can be a useful training tool

Category symbol	Category meaning	n	%
U_1	Possibility of continuously monitoring body parameters and training outcomes, and adjusting workout intensity on their basis	16	40%
U2	Enhanced feeling of excitement during training	12	30%
U3	Forgetting about fatigue	6	15%
U4	Independence of PA in IVR from weather conditions	5	13%
U5	Simulation of reality	3	8%
U6	Elimination of the risk of real-world accidents/injuries (rough terrain, traffic, congestion) during PA in IVR	3	8%
U7	Possibility to perform PA in IVR at any time	2	5%
U8	Ability to perform PA in IVR anywhere in the world.	2	5%
U9	Attractiveness of PA in IVR motivates outdoor PA	1	3%
U10	Good tool for recovery after training outdoors	1	3%
U11	Everyone can perform PA in IVR	1	3%
U12	Opportunity to familiarise oneself with terrain/trail prior to sporting event	1	3%

(grey boxes: categories considered important, indicated by at least 10% of respondents when asked about the benefits of IVR technology)

Source: own research.

Respondents' opinions on the potential of nIVRs and IVRs to support physical activity were also assessed according to the likelihood of recommending these technologies, expressed on a scale of 0-10 (Table 8).

Table 8. Recommended use of PA in nIVR and IVR

Question	N	M	Med	Mode	Multiplicity of mode	Lower quartile	Upper quartile	SD	Response coding
3.12	40	5.40	5.50	5	9	4	7.0	1.96	Scale 0-10 0 Definitely will not recommend 10 Definitely will recommend
3.13	40	8.98	9.00	9	17	9	10.0	1.07	

N – sample size; M – mean; Med – median; SD – standard deviation

Source: own research.

Using this measure, respondents rated the likelihood of being an IVR technology promoter significantly higher ($M=8.98\pm 1.07$) than being an nIVR promoter ($M=5.40\pm 1.96$) (Table 9). The effect size of this difference should be considered very strong ($rc=0.83$).

Table 9. Comparison of IVR and nIVR recommendation degree

Dependent variable	Question 3.12. (nIVR)		Question 3.13. (IVR)		Z	p	rc
	Med	IQR	Med	IQR			
Value of statistics	5.5	3	9	1	5.37	<0.000001	0.83

N – sample size; M – mean; Med – median; SD – standard deviation

The NPS index was also calculated, showing the predominance of ‘promoters’ (answering 9 or 10) over ‘detractors’ (answering 0 to 6) in the study group, calculated according to the formula: $NPS = \text{percentage of promoters}$

Table 10. Distribution of NPS responses

	Response category count											n	NPS
	“0”	“1”	“2”	“3”	“4”	“5”	“6”	“7”	“8”	“9”	“10”		
nIVR question 3.12	2	0	1	1	7	9	8	6	6	0	0	40	-0,7
IVR question 3.13	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	5	17	14	40	0,73
	detractors						passive		promoters				

N – sample size; NPS – Net Promoter Score measure (grey boxes: categories on a scale of 0 to 10 for which responses were revealed by respondents).

Source: own research.

– percentage of detractors (Reinheld, 2006). The values are 0.73 for IVR and -0.70 for nIVR. This allows to indicate that IVR elicited a strong willingness to recommend IVR technology (high prevalence of promoters) among respondents, which was opposite to nIVR, generating a high prevalence of detractors (Table 10).

The research material further revealed several correlations (Table 11). Moderate relationships can be found between the number of days spent cycling and some measures regarding the potential of this technology as perceived by the respondents. Those cycling more frequently outdoors found more benefits for undertaking PA with IVR (question 3.5.; $r=0.400$), and were more likely to perceive VR as a supplement to PA (question 3.7.; $r=0.347$), considered the VZfit app to be more useful (question 3.9.; $r=0.416$), the promotion of VZfit as more legitimate (question 3.11.; $r=0.501$) and were more likely to recommend VZfit apps to friends (question 3.13.; $r=0.458$). Interestingly, the number of days spent on a cycle ergometer showed no correlations within the studied dataset.

Table 11. Spearman's correlation coefficient matrix for potential of IVR/nIVR technologies

Variable	3.1.	3.2.	3.3.	3.5.	3.7.	3.8.	3.9.	3.11.	3.12	3.13	1.2.	1.1.
3.1.	1.000	-0.021	0.363*	-0.143	0.046	-0.007	-0.015	-0.087	0.471*	0.027	-0.018	0.096
3.2.		1.000	0.055	0.456*	0.397*	0.251	0.450*	0.375*	-0.082	0.499*	0.213	0.287
3.3.			1.000	0.345*	0.224	0.216	0.359*	0.438*	0.506*	0.239	-0.069	0.293
3.5.				1.000	0.362*	0.429*	0.512*	0.539*	0.114	0.519*	0.072	0.400*
3.7.					1.000	0.409*	0.508*	0.558*	-0.002	0.299	0.053	0.347*
3.8.						1.000	0.334*	0.321*	-0.093	0.187	-0.151	0.153
3.9.							1.000	0.720*	0.234	0.361*	0.129	0.416*
3.11.								1.000	0.197	0.364*	0.175	0.501*
3.12.									1.000	0.269	-0.009	0.224
3.13.										1.000	0.093	0.459*
1.2.											1.000	0.082
1.1.												1.000

*Correlation coefficients significant at $p < .05$

Respondents' positive feelings about the potential of IVR, externalised by their willingness to recommend this technology to friends (question 3.13.), were positively correlated with willingness to use IVR technology (question 3.2.; $r=0.498$), perceived benefits of using IVR in PA (question 3.5.; $r=0.519$), perceptions viewing the VZfit app as useful (question 3.9.; $r=0.361$) and belief in the need to promote VZfit (question 3.11.; $r=0.364$).

Respondents' positive feelings about the potential of nIVR, as revealed by their willingness to recommend the use of this technology to friends (question 3.12.) was correlated with willingness to use nIVR technology (question 3.1.; $r=0.471$) and perceived benefits of using nIVR in PA (question 3.3.; $r=0.506$). Interestingly, the perceived usefulness of VZfit and the belief that this app needs to be promoted did not inspire the willingness to recommend the nIVR technology, despite the fact that respondents also had the opportunity to use the VZfit in an nIVR setting. Being familiarised with the the VZfit application in an nIVR situation does not translate into positive perception of nIVR.

Discussion

The results of the present study showed that IVR technology inspires a desire to use it for PA significantly more than nIVR, which was approached by the respondents with less enthusiasm. Willingness to use VR technology and the perceived usefulness of practicing PA were also confirmed in previous research [Syed-Abdul et al., 2019] conducted on a sample of older adults who were exposed to various exergames in VR. Similar intentions were declared by office workers after training in IVR [Touloudi et al., 2022]. Positive intentions on its use were also documented in athletes (1,162 French athletes) in a study on the acceptance of VR technology [Mascret et al., 2022]. The same result was obtained in a group of obese children aged 8-12 years who declared that they wanted to exercise in IVR after testing this technology [Polechoński et al., 2020]. The stronger intention to use IVR solutions compared to nIVR technology is supported by research on the decision-making process among users of a virtual cycling training application [Seong and Hong, 2022], where one of the reasons for using VR solutions in training is the perceived interactivity of virtual reality. Similarly, in a study on the able-bodied geriatric population [Loggia et al., 2021], the majority of participants would rather repeat cycling sessions with VR than without it. The authors' results showing that willingness to use AVG was positively correlated with participation in daily PA is consistent with another study [Mascret et al., 2020].

The results indicated a high level of awareness regarding the benefits of PA among respondents, both in IVR and nIVR. However, awareness was higher for IVR. Qualitative analysis of questions about the benefits of using nIVR and IVR technologies allowed to identify several important categories of benefits occurring at a similar frequency for both PA in IVR and PA in nIVR. These include (see Table 6):

- C2. Enhancing PA in home/artificial settings by adding new attractive stimuli (IVR 25% vs. nIVR 28%);
- C4. Increased willingness/motivation to perform PA (IVR 23% vs. nIVR 18%);

- C5. No dependence of performing PA on good weather conditions (IVR 18% vs. nIVR 13%);
- C6. Opportunity to experience and perform PA in outdoor/realistic settings without leaving home (IVR 13% vs nIVR 18%);
- C7. Distraction from strenuous training (fatigue, tiredness, boredom) (IVR 13% vs. nIVR 15%).

Secondly, three categories of benefits, identified as important, occurred clearly more frequently in the set of responses concerning the benefits of IVR compared to the set of responses concerning the benefits of using nIVR. It can be considered that these three categories of benefits are revealed to a greater extent for PA inIVR than nIVR. These are as follows:

- C1. Possibility of pursuing cognitive motives (cognitive tourism/ sight-seeing) (IVR 35% vs. nIVR 10%);
- C3. Increasing feelings of pleasure/satisfaction/stimulation from performing PA (IVR 25% vs. nIVR 13%);
- C8. Distraction from stimuli of the real world (immersion/involvement in virtual world) (IVR 13% vs. nIVR 0%).

These three categories indicate the main reasons why students taking part in the research directed their attention towards IVR as preferred technology used during PA. Participants could perceive these three categories as differentiating nIVR from IVR and as the field in which IVR outperforms nIVR. Students perceive these three categories as a positive added value of IVR. The authors of the current article speculate that these three (cognitive motives, pleasure, distraction from stimuli of the real world) could be the basis for future research on factors of IVR usage.

Furthermore, the most frequent categories in the question about the benefits of using the VZfit app (indicated by at least 10% of respondents in their responses) were (see Table 7):

- U1. Possibility of continuously monitoring body parameters and training outcomes, and adjusting workout intensity on their basis (40%);
- U2. Enhanced feeling of excitement during training (30%);
- U3. Forgetting about fatigue (15%);
- U4. Independence from weather conditions (13%).

Results from another studies [Evans et al., 2021; Liu, 2021] allow to suggest that active IVR games can elicit varying degrees of physical activity intensity levels in young healthy adults. Similar findings were presented in a systematic literature review (20 studies published between 2009 and 2023) – Enhancing Physical Activity with Immersive Virtual Reality [Mocco et al., 2024], where reviewed studies indicated that, compared to traditional physical activity, nIVR-PA and IVR-PA were associated with an increase in enjoyment of physical activity, a reduction in perceived exertion, and increased rates of self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation as well as exercise intention. A review of eight research studies on the use of IVR [Giakoni-Ramírez

et al., 2023] also suggests effects on participants' motivation. Furthermore, in studies using innovative training devices (omni-directional Omni treadmill and Icaros Pro flight simulator), in the opinion of the majority of participants, AVGs in IVR performed on the tested devices constitute a sufficiently useful form of PA [Dębska et al., 2019]. In research on the acceptance of VR technology, participants (1,162 French athletes) also spoke positively about its usefulness [Mascret et al., 2022], although in the same study, groups of athletes (e.g. triathletes, swimmers, cyclists) were identified who did not find the VR-HMD significantly useful or did not have significant intention to use it to increase their performance. According to Zeng et al. [Zeng et al., 2022], a commercially available VR exercise bike could trigger greater overall PA as compared to exergaming and traditional cycling, while being perceived as less intense.

The declared willingness to recommend VR among family and friends, particularly strong for IVR as measured on the NPS scale, is new within the context of VR research in PA. The authors found only one study in which this scale was used to measure the effect of a virtual reality exergame on mood [Kim, 2023]. This measure, correlating strongly with other behaviours of the respondents (intention to use, perceived usefulness), seems to confirm the positive potential of this technology. According to the authors, NPS measurement could be successfully applied to explore the potential of VR technology in PA.

The present research has its limitations, which indicate the need for future research on the subject. The sample used in the research is small. To some extent, the problem of small sample size could be addressed with regard to its quality, as authors assume that the competency of physical education students could improve the quality of answers. However, the results of this study cannot be directly generalised directly to the entire population of potential VR technology users during PA. To increase the generalisation potential of the reasoning from the article, the authors recommend performing further research among significantly larger and/or representative samples.

Other directions of studies in the area of VR potential should be aimed at investigated the disadvantages of this technology in the context of PA. The authors admit that in the article, the benefits of the VR technology are addressed, causing bias in the statements.

Conclusions

The survey presented in this study demonstrated that the respondents saw more opportunities to use IVR than nIVR for PA and, given the right equipment, would be more likely to use IVR than nIVR for cycling. They were significantly more positive about the prospect of regular cycling in IVR com-

pared to the alternative in nIVR. IVR was also rated better than nIVR in terms of possible benefits for those undertaking PA in a virtual environment. In the opinion of the participants, the superiority of IVR over nIVR as a technology to support PA is also evidenced by the NPS measure. Furthermore, participants would be more likely to recommend practicing PA in IVR than in nIVR to their friends or acquaintances.

The great potential of VR technology to support PA is also supported by the participants' views on practicing cycling in a virtual environment. According to them, cycling in VR could be either a supplement or even an alternative to leisure-time PA. It should also be emphasized that all students stated that the VZfit app used in the study could be a useful training tool, and almost all agreed that it should be promoted as a form of exercise. Given that these positive statements about VR were expressed by future promoters of health and PA, it is to be expected that they will use virtual environments in their future work. Also, contrary to expectations, it was shown in the research that those who approach PA with more commitment and professionalism are more aware of the positive potential regarding the use of IVR for training.

This allows to indicate that training programmes in IVR should be taken seriously, as they may become not only a PA supplement but an alternative to conventional forms of PA in the near future. It is important to bear in mind that IVR technology is constantly and rapidly developing and improving which, combined with appropriately selected ergometers, should result in improved convenience and positive user experience when utilising this application.

The existing scientific evidence on the potential of using VR during exercise is limited and heterogeneous. However, most of the research to date has concerned nIVR, indicating a significant gap in the current literature [Mouatt et al., 2020]. The present research adds to the existing evidence based on the potential of IVR. Due to the continuous and rapid development of VR and training apps interacting with VR headsets, further research is warranted on the experiences and perceptions of people engaged in PA using this modern technology in order to identify factors affecting enjoyment of this form of exercise. Identification of users' preferences for forms of PA in VR can make it easier for manufacturers to create attractive training apps and AVGs, which should translate into future, positive behaviours of people using modern technology during exercise, increasing the likelihood of regular PA practice.

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EDUCATIONAL TOURISM IN THE ACTIVITIES OF SOCIAL WELFARE CENTRES IN POLAND (OŚRODKI POMOCY SPOŁECZNEJ – OPS) AS AN OFFER FOR VARIOUS GROUPS OF THE EXCLUDED – LEGAL AND ORGANISATIONAL ASPECTS

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Abstract

Purpose. The aim of this article is to analyse the activities carried out by selected Social Welfare Centres (Ośrodki Pomocy Społecznej – OPS)¹ in Poland, in terms of programmes and educational tourism activities offered to different groups of the excluded. The phenomenon of exclusion is increasingly permeating various aspects of our lives. Today, we already speak of “rejection”, “exclusion from life”, “marginalisation”, “exclusion from life”, “alienation from life”, “outcasting from society”, “exclusion”, etc. The term is used to describe a situation in which individuals or, increasingly, entire social groups are unable to normally participate in social life, in civic, political, economic, cultural or professional activities; to have access to services, offers, consumption, to pursue their interests, hobbies, desires and thus, to fulfil their basic social roles and needs. Yet, these groups have the right to be treated like other citizens, without any restrictions. In addition to the above-mentioned aspects of life, there are also situations of inaccessibility by certain communities to, for example, freely undertake physical, sporting, recreational or tourist activities. The task of entities and organisations responsible for pro-social policy in our country (not only the government level, but especially the local level – i.e. Social Welfare Centres) is to enable hitherto excluded and marginalised persons to fully participate in social life, also in terms of universal and unhindered access to physical activities in the broad sense. According to the United Nations, for many marginalised groups, tourism is a tool for integration and social empowerment [CSO NET UN 2023].

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¹ In the remainder of this article, the authors will use a single term for social welfare centres: Social Welfare Centres (Ośrodki Pomocy Społecznej – OPS). Pursuant to the Act of 12 March 2004 on Social Assistance (Journal of Laws, Item 1876. Annex to the announcement of the Speaker of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland from 17 September 2020), there are: Gminne Ośrodki Pomocy Społecznej (GOPS) – municipal, Miejsko-Gminne Ośrodki Pomocy Społecznej (M-GOPS) – urban-municipal, Miejskie Ośrodki Pomocy Rodzinie (MOPR) – urban-family, Miejskie Ośrodki Pomocy Społecznej (MOPS) – urban and Ośrodki Pomocy Społecznej (OPS) – centres.

Method. The activities of 341 centres operating in Poland (a total of 2,426 centres were approached and responses were received from 341) and the responses received from staff responsible for educational tourism programmes and projects, and from participants engaging in the activities, were analysed. The authors treat the notion of educational tourism within the framework of activities undertaken by the OPS in relation to excluded groups, in two ways, namely as: a) social educational activities, excluding “into tourism” (enabling universal access for the excluded to participate in tourist activities, to tourist services and to tourist destinations, etc.) and b) social educational activities (including institutional), excluding “through tourism” (enabling universal access for the excluded to undertake work in tourism). Accordingly, analysis of the activities of the above-mentioned centres has been conducted taking this division into account.

Findings. The results of the research showed that the offer of the selected centres in the field of this type of tourism proposed for various excluded groups is diverse, and successfully contributes to their “inclusion” in the generally accessible mainstream of social life.

Research and conclusions limitations. It would be necessary to carry out more research on the centres in order to learn more about the full participation of their wards in educational tourism activities.

Practical implications. Achieving greater mutual understanding will help increase sustainability for both sectors.

Originality. The authors is not aware of any similar endeavour or publications.

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Keywords: social exclusion, edutourism, Social Welfare Centres.

Introduction

If we are aiming to increase the participation of various excluded groups in full participation in society, the argument of their full integration into society, in particular, must be taken into account. Such a task is faced by various organisations, associations and entities set up for this purpose, especially Social Welfare Centres operating in municipalities (implementing social policies). Various activities and programmes implemented by them, targeted at excluded groups, should not, however, be limited only to, *inter alia*, public, social and material support; payment of benefits and cash benefits; vocational training (counselling, training, education or return to the labour market, or psychological support), but should also include those enabling clients of the centres full access to broadly understood physical culture, i.e. various physical activities (sport, recreation, tourism, but also culture as cultural tourism and recreation).

Participation of excluded groups in the above mentioned activities should be, as Olszewski-Strzyżowski writes, a kind of “lever”, hitherto lifting excluded people to the level of full and complete participation in social life, also giving them the possibility to ensure life well-being, understood as improvement of their physical, mental and spiritual health [Olszewski-Strzyżowski 2017]. The need for excluded people to participate in physical activities was pointed out by the Danish Minister of Social Affairs,

among others, who noted that: “it is important that socially disadvantaged people, through sports, recreation and tourism, become part of society on an equal footing with everyone else. We know that these activities have positive impact on people and can help break negative patterns and lay the foundation for a new life for many people” [sm.dk 2023].

It should be assumed that excluded people can find, through undertaking physical activity, conditions for, among others, personal self-fulfilment. Improving their physical fitness and condition, increasing their self-confidence and strength, as well as strengthening their sense of belonging, etc. Unfortunately, there are barriers to the participation of these people in activities, and these include difficult living and working conditions, health state, the hardships of everyday life, psychological barriers (e.g. lack of confidence in their own abilities and strengths, shame, fear of acceptance by others, lack of activity habits, lack of knowledge, etc.) and very often limited financial resources. As noted by Strøbæk et al., “socially disadvantaged people do not commonly participate in physical activities, thus, confirming the existence of social inequalities in this regard” [Strøbæk, Davidsen, Pedersen 2017]. At the same time, participation of excluded groups in activities is not a remedy for all their life problems, pains or failures. This, however, is a very important component and element that facilitates their exit from the “life area” of exclusion and marginalisation.

Legal definitions and regulatory basis of social assistance

With regard to the theories of distributive justice proposed by John Rawls, it is indicated that the state must rationally distribute the resources needed among members of society. All inequalities – social and economic – should be eliminated in such a way as to compensate those most disadvantaged. In the present case, we are talking about legal regulations that support excluded people [Jacórzynski 1995].

The Act of March 12, 2004 on social assistance (Journal of Laws of 2023, item 901, 1693, 1938.), defines the organisational units of social assistance, which include:

- 1) regional centres of social policy,
- 2) county centres for family assistance,
- 3) social welfare centres,
- 4) social service centres – in the case of transformation of a social welfare centre into a social service centre under the provisions of the Act of July 19, 2019 on the implementation of social services by a social service centre (Journal of Laws, item 1818),
- 5) social welfare homes,
- 6) facilities for specialised counselling, including family counselling,

- 7) support centres,
- 8) crisis intervention centres.

Within the framework of this article, the authors' attention is focused on the activities of social welfare centres and not analysis of the activities of social service centres, which increasingly, under the provisions of the Act of July 19, 2019 on the implementation of social services by a social service centre, became social welfare centres.

Among a number of tasks and competencies, a social welfare centre is predominantly responsible for the implementation of care services, determining their scope, period and place of provision. The municipal council, in turn, each time determines, by way of a resolution, detailed conditions for granting and payment for care services as well as specialised care services, excluding specialised care services for persons with mental disorders, and detailed conditions for partial or full exemption from payment, as well as the procedure for collecting them. A social welfare centre, in order to verify data on persons applying for social welfare benefits, persons receiving such benefits and members of their families, has the right to access and process personal data. When granting care services, the social welfare centre determines their scope, period and place of provision. Care services should, in accordance with the Social Welfare Act of March 12, 2004, provide:

- Assistance with activities of daily living, dressing, eating, washing and bathing, as needed.;

This is especially important for people with dysfunctions, including people with disabilities, but also people in crisis of homelessness.

- Organisation of leisure time;

Activities concerning this area may include those related to tourism and sightseeing. This is an important legal basis arising directly from Article 68(3)(2) of the Social Assistance Act from March 12, 2004. It is imperative to remember that the organisation of leisure time must also comply with holistic regulations concerning even such an important issue as the organisation of package travel [Borek, Zawistowska 2020]. The latter, as tourist products [Borek, Zawistowska 2021], must be implemented in accordance with the Act of November 24, 2017 on package travel and linked travel arrangements (Journal of Laws of 2023, item 2211) [Borek 2022].

- Assistance in the purchase of clothing and footwear;

The regulation indicated in item 3 is limited to assistance in purchasing the most basic goods for the operation of an individual, in terms of clothing. The regulation in question does not apply to assistance in the purchase of food, or in the acquisition of various types of benefits, including travel services.

- Care in illness and assistance in the use of health services;

The last range of care services is based on health benefits, with which the social welfare centre is supposed to provide assistance. It should be borne in mind that these types of benefits can be an element of, for example, hospital-

ity services, which will position them as an element of so-called health tourism. Having carried out a preliminary determination as to the key meanings of the terms used within the framework of this article, we can move on to clarify expressions not legally defined. The first area to be dealt with is the issue of social exclusion and social reintegration.

The concept of social exclusion and social reintegration activities undertaken by Social Welfare Centres (OPS) in Poland

In recent years, particularly, we have observed, and not only in Poland, the phenomenon of social inequality persistence and pushing certain social groups to the margins of life. Marginalisation and social exclusion occur in practically all countries: they may affect various social groups as well as individuals situated on different levels of the social ladder. Most often, these phenomena are associated with poverty, deprivation, the creation of persistent social inequalities resulting from unequal access to opportunities to meet needs and from inequality of opportunity. Despite the fact that all aspects of social life should be accessible to everyone without exception, there are many factors that make it impossible or very difficult for people to fully participate in society and its various domains. This, among others, prevents them from fulfilling their needs, developing hobbies and interests or achieving their life goals. Therefore, these problems are also increasingly noted in access to tourism activities.

Burchard et al. identified four areas (aspects) in which an individual may be subject to social exclusion due to [Olszewski-Strzyżowski 2021]:

- consumption: insufficient income;
- production: being unemployed and not being able to upgrade one's skills to get a job;
- political involvement: restriction of passive or active electoral rights;
- social integration: not interacting with other members of society.

According to Olszewski-Strzyżowski, the people most at risk of social exclusion are: individuals with disabilities, single mothers, victims of family life pathologies, people with low professional qualifications, the elderly, the lonely, the homeless, the unemployed, children and youth from pathological environments, immigrants and national minorities, LGBT representatives, people in or leaving penal and correctional institutions, alcohol and/or drug addicts [Burchardt, Le Grand, Piachaud 1999].

For the above-mentioned groups, all activities (in the form of social policy) should be carried out to "exclude" them from the social mainstream of life, by ensuring their universal accessibility to various activities. Differentiated activities should be considered as a cause for perma-

nent change in the personal and social identity of the excluded. These tasks are faced by many state entities such as social and educational institutions (e.g. associations, organisations and entities such as social integration centres, social integration clubs, unemployment activation offices, social companies, self-help groups, social cooperatives and especially social welfare centres).

As Winiarski notes, “social integration is the process of forming a compact community, linked by a bond of non-antagonistic relations, in a specific social group. This process takes place, among others, through the establishment of appropriate institutions” [Winiarski 1999]. Radziewicz-Winnicki and Roster also point out that “institutional measures of the educational system and educational activity may, to some extent, protect against the consequences of social marginality, provided that they consist of rational and reasonably effectively stimulated prevention and social compensation” [Radziewicz-Winnicki, Roster 2004].

According to the Ministry of Regional Development of the Republic of Poland, “measures related to social inclusion assume particular importance in the field of human capital. Measures will primarily concern the permanently unemployed, families with many children, persons with disabilities and the elderly. Above all, social inclusion programmes aimed at eliminating the deficits of individuals and supporting their potentials are indicated. Programmes should take into account first of all the needs of hitherto excluded persons (not only material, but also spiritual, cognitive, activation, etc.). It is necessary to strengthen this kind of action at all national levels (state, regional and especially local) on the part of public institutions of social assistance and social integration” [Programowanie perspektywy finansowej 2014–2020].

In Poland, comprehensive measures are taken by specially appointed entities and organisations (including Social Welfare Centres) implementing programmes and projects counteracting the causes of social exclusion (social policy) and are of programmatic, regulatory, financial, organisational and benefit nature. As indicated above, important tasks in the field of social reintegration of excluded persons are carried out by Social Welfare Centres. They are independent units of municipalities and cities, functioning in accordance with the Social Assistance Act of 2016. According to the Central Economic Information Centre, in Poland, there were 2,426 OPS in 2023 [coig.com.pl 2024].

Their main tasks include: labour market policy, implementation of family and maintenance benefits, counteracting domestic violence, social rehabilitation of people with disabilities, providing training in professional activation, undertaking activities enabling integration of various social groups and promoting alternative forms of leisure activities among the excluded in terms of physical activities (sports, recreation and tourism).

Tourism and educational tourism as essential elements of social reintegration of excluded people

Today, the phenomenon of tourism exclusions is affecting an increasing number of citizens worldwide, including those in the European Union. Alejziak points to the problem of accessibility to tourism trips in EU countries within the context of social exclusion [Alejziak 2011].

According to D'Ambrosio and Gradin, who study the phenomenon of social exclusion in the European Union, an important indicator of it is the lack of access to tourism services which are considered one of the 'basic social needs'. According to the authors, socially excluded people are those who cannot afford, among other things, to spend even a week's holiday away from home [D'Ambrosio, Gradin 2003]. Exclusions from accessibility to tourism activities occur for all types of tourism trips and services (referred to as 'barriers' or 'tourism restrictions'). According to Olszewski-Strzyżowski, it is when an individual who is a member of society cannot normally participate in civic activities, fully realise their needs, interests or engage in physical activities, including tourism activities [Olszewski-Strzyżowski 2017].

Goeldner and Ritchie include among the main constraints to travel: costs (material situation of the tourist), lack of free time, state of health, access to tourism (especially people with disabilities and seniors), family situation, fear for one's own safety and lack of interest in tourist trips [Goeldner, Ritchie 2003].

Gracz and Sankowski point to other barriers limiting access to tourism: a) external barriers (lack of free time, organisational problems and weather conditions); b) personality barriers (limited human mobility or lack of health-promoting habits) [Gracz, Sankowski 2001].

In the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, there are clear provisions affirming the fact that each of us has a right to tourism and to tourism services, namely: everyone's right to tourism and freedom of movement for tourism purposes is affirmed. People all over the world have an equal right to directly and personally discover and enjoy the riches of our planet. Tourism is promoted as part of the universal right to leisure and travel, respecting the choices of societies of all nations in this regard, recognising the equality of women and men and protecting vulnerable groups (children, young people, seniors, people with disabilities). The inclusion of content on tourism-related values in educational programmes is promoted. Travel for purposes such as, *inter alia*, health, educational, cultural travel are particularly beneficial forms of tourism [Global Code of Ethics For Tourism 1999].

The UNWTO also reaffirms everyone's right to rest and to travel freely for educational purposes [Hague Declaration on Tourism, 1989]. It should be assumed that one of the elements necessary for universal access to tourism services and for the development of tourism is the educational value.

Cohen believes that the motivation to travel is increasingly understood in terms of its relationship with long-term psychological needs, developmental and life plans of an individual [Cohen 1984]. As Falk et al. note, the acquisition of knowledge and skills often occurs through the practice of various forms of tourism [Falk, Ballantyne, Packer, Benckendor 2012].

Educational tourism, often also referred to as edutourism, consists of travellers combining education with the use of basic tourism services and, in their leisure time, tourism infrastructure as well as satisfying cognitive, cultural, recreational, entertainment or fun needs [Research Project “Attractiveness of Kraków...” 2016]. According to Sie et al. these are trips during which tourists participate in both leisure and learning activities, and the acquisition of knowledge and experience occurs through the tourist’s interaction with other travellers, tour operators and local communities, etc. [Sie, Patterson, Pegg 2016].

Pitman et al. consider it to be “a form of tourism designed to provide participants with opportunities to learn, gain knowledge and experience, subject to their active participation” [Pitman, Broomhall, Majocha 2011]. McGladdery and Lubbe highlight that educational tourism is a complex process that combines different perspectives of tourist learning (e.g. practising different forms of tourism during their trip), based on the accumulation of experiences, competencies and skills that can produce tangible results in the form of new behaviours and knowledge acquired by the tourist [McGladdery, Lubbe 2017]. Marciszewska presented the motives that guide the participants of educational trips: learning, education, cognition, knowledge and gaining new skills. The author notes that the educational function of trips plays an important role in shaping social attitudes among tourists [Marciszewska 2013]. Ritchie et al. believe that this type of tourism is preferred by people for whom education and learning during travel are primary activities [Ritchie, Carr, Cooper 2003]. Educational tourists, according to Gibson, are those tourists who gain new experiences and improve their skills during trips [Gibson 1998].

As Mikos von Rohrscheidt notes, educational tourism is the type of travel that is mainly geared towards gaining or expanding knowledge in a chosen field or subject [Mikos von Rohrscheidt 2010]. According to Ratih et al., the aim of this type of tourism is to provide tourists with cognitive elements at the destination [Ratih, Suryokusumo, Sujudwijono 2013]. Similarly, Normelani and Kumalawati note that an important aspect of this type of tourism is the tourists gaining experience and obtaining opportunities during their trips [Normelani, R. Kumalawati 2019]. In its actions, the UN WTO places emphasis on education as a necessary element for the proper development of world tourism (general access to a variety of tourism forms and activities). It also draws attention to other features of this tourism, namely those related to the provision of appropriate tourism education to the pub-

lic and the education as well as training of tourism professionals, and the preparation of new tourism cadres, pointing to the need for, *inter alia*: the inclusion of tourism in school and university curricula, raising the status of tourism professions and encouraging young people, in particular, to embark on a career in tourism [UN WTO – Hague Declaration on Tourism 1989].

The UN WTO promotes the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals – SDGs, pointing, among others, to tourism education goals, namely:

- SDG 4 – Quality Education: tourism has the potential to promote social inclusion. A skilled workforce is key to tourism development. The tourism sector provides opportunities for direct and indirect employment of youth, women and people with special needs who should benefit from educational measures. Inclusive and equitable quality education and the promotion of lifelong learning for all should be ensured, through which tourism has the potential to promote the excluded. Proposed actions include, in particular: professional development and training for tourism;
- SDG 8 – Decent work and economic growth: opportunities for decent work in tourism, particularly for young people and women, and policies to foster better diversification through tourism value chains can enhance the positive socio-economic impacts of tourism. Proposed actions include, but are not limited to: professional development training, diversity management, responsible investment and local purchasing, involvement of local communities in the provision of tourism services [UNWTO 4SDGS 2023].

The European Union also highlights the need to develop tourism as a priority task, indicating that in order to increase the competitiveness of European tourism, the focus should be on, among other things, a) *Smart growth*: development based on knowledge and innovation, b) *Inclusive growth*: promoting tourism and an economy with high levels of employment and ensuring economic, social and territorial cohesion [EUROPA 2020, 3.3.2010 KOM(2010) 2020]. Policies are also being pursued to create more and better jobs through the sustainable growth of tourism, projects are being promoted and funded (through EU funds) targeting education and training programmes in the tourism sector (including educational tourism) and promoting measures to facilitate access to tourism services for excluded groups ("tourism for all") [Odnowiona polityka turystyczna UE 2006].

According to Tomasi et al., all tourist destinations, using the institutions that organise or manage its tourist potential, should promote its capacities and potential for educational purposes [Tomasi, Paviotti, Cavicchi 2020].

The authors of this article propose considering the phenomenon of educational tourism in relation to excluded groups in two ways, namely as:

- a) social learning activities, excluding “into tourism” – enabling universal access for the excluded to participate in tourism activities, to tourism services and to tourism destinations (these activities are also part of the concept of “social tourism”);
- b) social educational activities (including institutional), excluding “through tourism”. – enabling universal access for the excluded to take up work in tourism, as well as to acquire new professional and social skills.

Details are shown in the chart below.

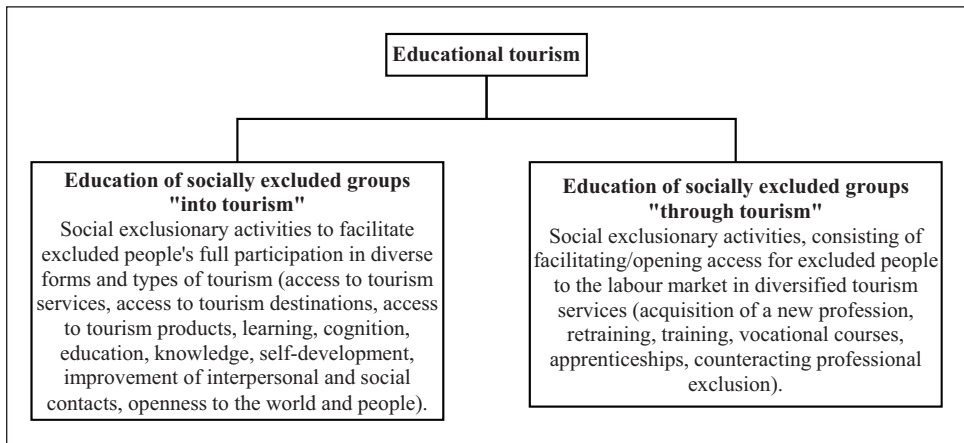


Figure 1. Tasks of educational tourism in the context of social exclusion

Source: own elaboration, 2024.

Activities of selected Social Welfare Centres in Poland in the field of educational tourism – results of own research

The aim of this article is to analyse the activities carried out by selected OPS in Poland, in terms of activities offered to various groups of excluded people, projects, programmes and activities in the field of tourism, including educational tourism (the Centres' initiatives also fit into the concept of 'social tourism'). The research was conducted in October this year (2023) by means of a diagnostic survey, and the research tool was an original questionnaire (online survey) posted on the 'Forms Office' platform. A total of 2,426 centres operating in Poland were approached and responses were received from 341 centres.

The largest number of responses were received from Gminne Ośrodki Pomocy Społecznej (158), from Ośrodki Pomocy Społecznej – 78 responses, from Miejskie Ośrodki Pomocy Społecznej – 62 responses, and the least from Miejskie Ośrodki Pomocy Rodzinie (only 7). In Figure 2, the programmes and projects implemented in the centres are presented, which are addressed to diverse groups of excluded persons.

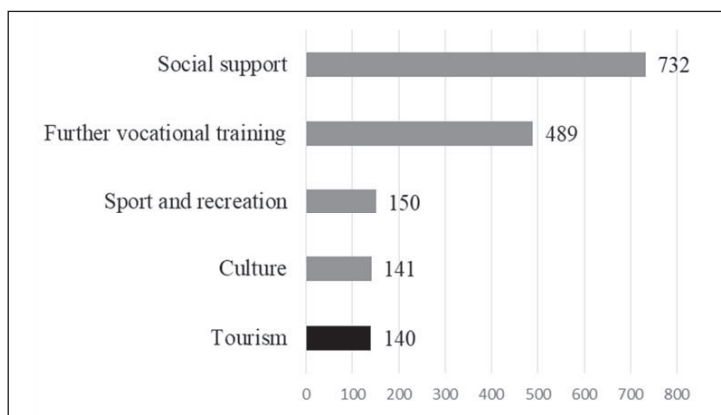


Figure 2. Summary of programmes and projects implemented by OPS
Source: own survey, 2024.

As can be seen, the surveyed OPS implemented a total of 1,652 programmes and projects, mostly in the field of social support (732), further vocational training (489), sport and recreation (150) and tourism (140), also educational.

The activities undertaken by the centres in the field of educational tourism were then analysed within the context of changes “to tourism” and “through tourism”.

A) Analysis of selected examples of educational measures implemented by Social Welfare Centres (OPS) which exclude their beneficiaries “into tourism”.

In this section, examples are presented of activities implemented by OPS that enable their charges to have universal access to participation in tourism activities, to tourism services and to tourism destinations. These are summarised in detail in the Figure given below.

The activities indicated (in the form of ongoing projects, programmes and activities aimed at wards) are listed in the centres’ documents as ‘tourism activities’, including educational tourism. The most common activities (projects and programmes) in the field of educational tourism carried out by the surveyed OPS include, in particular: “participation in cultural events (philharmonic, cinema, theatre, opera, etc.)” (60%) and “participation in other cultural events” (41%), while the least popular ones are “cultural education” (10%) and “offers to visit art galleries” (6%). A summary of selected activities (number of activities) in the field of educational tourism carried out at the centres, according to participant, is shown in the table below.

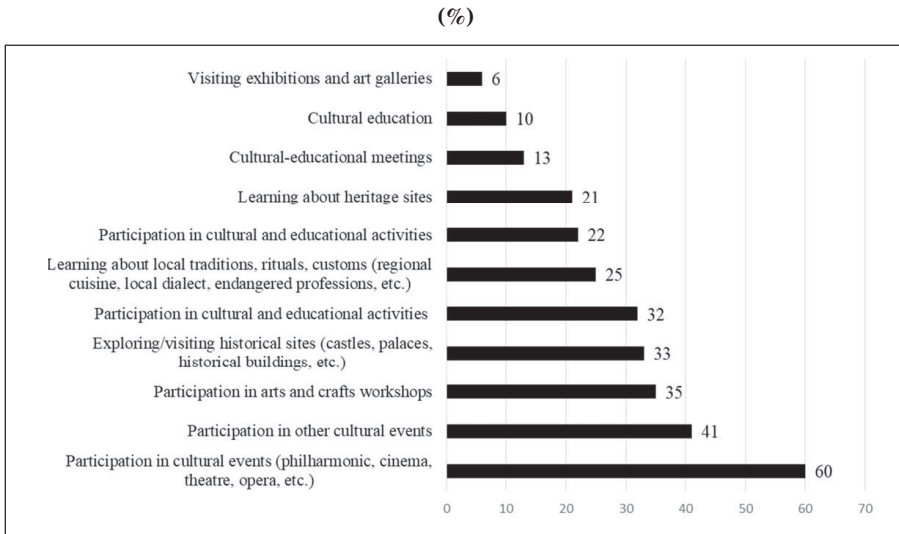


Figure 3. Educational tourism activities implemented by Social Welfare Centres

Source: own survey, 2024.

Table 1. Summary of selected educational tourism activities carried out at centres, per participant

Type of activity	Homeless	Unemployed	Children and youth	Residents	Persons with disabilities	Families with children	Seniors	Total
Educational tourism (e.g. farm visits)		1	1	1				3
Bus tours, field trips, educational, educational-natural, educational-informational tours		25	8	1	9	15	35	93
Sightseeing tours		7	3	3		3		16
City tours, city tours, visits to tourist attractions, learning about the history and culture of the visited destinations, visits to historical and cultural sites, visits to museums, visits to theatres	1	6	2	2	3	11	38	63
Integration and educational trips	2	53	6	23	11	22	1	118
Participation in other cultural events		2	3	3	5	5	6	24
Total	3	94	23	33	28	56	80	317

Source: own survey, 2024.

The surveyed OPS offered a total of 317 educational tourism activities. Clients of the centres most often participated in “integration and educational trips” (118) and “coach tours, field trips, educational, educational and nature tours and educational and informational trips” (93). The least popular trips were “educational tourism (e.g. farm visits)” (3). The most numerous groups of participants in the above-mentioned activities were those unem-

Table 2. Examples of educational package travel

Centre	Range of events offered
MOPS Bartoszyce	Sightseeing trips (visiting the castle in Lidzbark Warmiński), integrational trips for families to Olsztyn combined with a visit to the Planetarium, organisation of therapeutic workshops (classes in wickerwork, pottery, macramé and painting).
OPS Libiąż	Trips to the Miniature Park and Dinolandia in Inwałd (the aim was to broaden knowledge of history and art and promote positive patterns of spending leisure time); trip to Tarnowskie Góry (visiting the Historic Silver Mine, the Mining Museum and the Open-Air Museum of Steam Machines, visiting an aquapark); trip to the ZOO, trips to Szczawnica (broadening the knowledge of the Pieniny region); trips to Ustron (introducing the participants to the advantages of the Silesian Beskid); trips to Kraków (visiting the Multimedia Museum “Podziemia Rynku” – the Marketplace Underground; trip to Ogródzieniec Castle (learning about the advantages of the Krakow-Częstochowa Jurassic Highlands).
MOPS Przemyśl	Excursions (with children and families); participation in a performance by the Fredreum Theatre, trip to the 3D cinema in Rzeszów, trip to the Łańcut Castle Museum, trip to the Folk Building Museum Skansen in Sanok. Organising integration and sports activities for parents with children (strengthening bonds and showing various forms of leisure activities with the child). Organising trips to the swimming pool complex in Ustrzyki Dolne and the zoo in Zamość. Organising educational and recreational activities (trips to lessons in ecology to the Promotional Forest Complex in Bircza, educational meetings “Śladami historii w Przemyślu” – In the Footsteps of the History of Przemyśl).
M-GOPS Węgorzewo	Organisation of educational activities: trips to a swimming pool, theatre club, cooking classes, cycling trips in the area (getting to know the region and meeting interesting people (presentation of local workplaces and dying professions), educational and recreational trips.
OPS Krasnystaw	Organisation of educational, cultural and tourist trips; organisation of study visits to Bałtów; organisation of leisure activities for children and parents.
OPS Łysomice	Organisation of integrational trips for the unemployed, economically inactive people and people at risk of social exclusion (visits to facilities, attractions) and integration-educational events (family picnics, integration games and plays, competitions with prizes, bonfires) and promotion of leisure activities; support and promotion of pro-social attitudes and growth of social awareness.

Source: own survey, 2024.

ployed (94 people) and senior citizens (80), and the least numerous group comprised the homeless. Below is a summary of examples of events organised in selected centres targeting the excluded.

In the following table, the statements are shown of individuals taking part in educational tourism activities (within the framework of programmes and projects) organised at selected centres. The responses in the table were received from participants taking part in activities and programmes who gave permission for their statements to be made public (October 2023).

Table 3. Statements of individuals taking part in activities

Centre and participant	Statement
MOPS Bartoszyce (Zbigniew)	<i>I went on a trip to Olsztyn, to Lidzbark Warmiński, there was a bonfire and a trip to the cinema, and there were also sports and recreational activities.</i>
OPS Świętochłowice (Wioletta)	<i>There was a trip to Częstochowa, a very nice trip. I immediately said that I would go on that trip. We did a lot of sightseeing and there was a nice hotel, an exclusive one, and it was a three-day trip. I am very keen on trips. And it's nice that you can visit other places, because you can meet nice people and see how they live, because everyone lives differently, not just sit at home but learn something interesting.</i>
OPS w Trzebini (Katarzyna)	<i>We had a trip to Wisła and I was happy to go on it with the kids, it was very cool because we could visit something, we were at the cinema, then at McDonald's and the kids were happy. I don't normally go on trips like that, I'd love to just never had the funds and I want to do everything for the children.</i>
MOPS Jelenia Góra (Jacek)	<i>I was on a trip to Wałbrzych, it was a one-day trip. We saw the Książ Castle, the palm house, we had a guided tour, we had a nice time at leisure. As for the trip, I didn't have any reluctance. I thought it would be fun to spend my free time, meet new people and explore this part of Poland. This trip gave me the feeling that I would go on such trips more often and more willingly, to different places, and I would spend my free time in such a way. It gave me the feeling that it's not just about sitting at home, but you can go to other places. I think that after this project, I caught the travel bug.</i>
MOPS Łódź (Jarosław)	<i>I took part in trips to the Cinematography here in Łódź and around Księży Młyn. Those tours were great because I didn't go to those museums or those strange places you only hear about or see on TV. And after that trip, I became interested in sightseeing in general, to see new things, because there are also places where I would like to go, although I didn't have such a need to go before. This project and the tour showed me that it's worth seeing some new places. At the moment, there are problems with its implementation, because it is connected with finances, as such a trip with a family of four is already quite an expense. If there were no financial problems, I would be happy to travel with my whole family.</i>

MOPS Przemyśl (Janusz)	<i>There were trips, outings, competitions, a visit to the zoo, there was a team-building picnic on Tatar Mound. I catered more to the needs of the children, because I put my own needs aside, because I want the children to see as much as possible, to get to know this life, and not just school and home, that there are also other forms of active leisure, but, as you know, everything costs money. And now we're organising bike trips ourselves. We didn't use bikes before, but they were just sitting in the basement, unused, for three years. And it's largely thanks to this project that things have changed.</i>
MGOPS Krotoszyn (Iwona)	<i>There were a lot of activities, the trip was very well-organised. And people opened up more on the trip and broke down those barriers. The swimming pool was in the Gołębiowski Hotel, we had a lot of attractions that we, people from this environment, wouldn't normally have, and especially for the children, it was a lot of fun. This trip gave me, above all, a mental break from home, from this running around and such relaxation. If only I could afford such trips and activities, I would do this more often and I would definitely want to do so again. I enjoyed it, for the kids, because I knew I would never be able to give them a trip like that. I hadn't gone anywhere before because times are as they are, so I send my kids on every single school trip we can afford, because I tell them "listen, you'll grow up, you'll be in a situation like me and you won't go anywhere again".</i>
GOPS Łysomice (Marta)	<i>We went on a trip to Skłudzew and there were walks, we were at the seaside and in Szymbark, where that crooked house stands, but I didn't go in there because I was scared. And we also went to the pool once with the kids and it was fun. I was glad that there were trips, because I don't going anywhere with the kids, we just don't have money, that's the truth, finances don't allow. After these activities and these trips, I thought to myself that I could continue these activities with my children.</i>

Source: own survey, 2024.

As can be seen from the above selected answers of the centres' residents, they indicated significant changes in their lives as a result of their participation in tourist activities that the centres offered them. As they themselves indicated, they had not undertaken such activities before ("I am very keen on trips. And it's nice that you can visit other places, because you can meet nice people and see how they live, because everyone lives differently and not sit at home but learn something interesting"; "After these activities and these trips I thought to myself that I could continue such activities with my children"; "This trip gave me the feeling that I would go on such trips more often and more willingly, to different places and I would spend my free time in such a way"; "This trip gave me, above all, a mental rest from home, from this running around and such relaxation"). In this respect, significant changes can be seen among the excluded.

B) Analysis of selected examples of educational activities carried out by the OPS that exclude their clients “through tourism”.

The following are selected examples of measures implemented by the OPS that enable their charges to gain universal access to employment in tourism.

Table 4. Examples of selected programmes and projects in the field of acquiring and improving professional qualifications in tourism services and addressed to excluded persons

Centre	Year	Activity
G-MOPS Bolkowo	2014-2020	The course entitled, “Small catering chef” for participants in the project “Active integration – a step into the future” was realised during 80 hours of classes.
MOPS Brzozów	2014	The course “Cook of small gastronomy” was organised within the system project “Time for activity in commune Brzozów”. It was attended by 6 women, who learned the secrets of the culinary art. Under the supervision of a chef, the participants learned how to prepare basic dishes, both meat and vegetarian, soups, snacks, as well as cakes and desserts.
GOPS Brzyska	2014	Training in starting agritourism activity The training was organised in cooperation with LGD “LIWOCZ”.
MOPS Dukla	2009	Implementation of vocational courses under the System Project “Time for Activity in Dukla Commune” in the field of catering. The course concerned learning how to organise special events, which prepared the students to organise and serve various forms of special events. The course was completed by 10 women.
GOPS Gidle	2015	Course entitled “Running an agritourism farm with a study visit” – as part of which a trip to an agritourism farm was organised.
MGOPS Drohiczyń	2013-2014	Courses and training within the framework of Priority VII Promotion of Social Integration – “Now Youth - Active Youth Integration Programme”. The courses were: 1) “Course of a camp educator”, 2) “Course of a waiter – bartender”, 3) “Course of a chef”, 4) Training in the creation and promotion of a local product, 5) Organisation of workshops and training including the ability to conduct classes in health prevention, 6) Training in the field of an organiser – local animator.
GOPS Kleszczewo	2013	Training in the “ABC of Agro-tourism” for participants of the project “Kleszczów Integration Club as a way to activate people at risk of social exclusion and support GOPS”, co-financed by the EU from ESF funds. The aim of the training (30 hours of classes) was to acquire practical skills in running agritourism farms by the wards.
GOPS Medyka	2010	Project – training “Time for activity in the municipality of Medyka”, implemented as part of the Human Capital Operational Programme. “Salesperson with support of small catering” and “Cook with support of small catering”.

OPS Sułoszowa	2014	The course and training “Return to the labour market is your chance for a better tomorrow” implemented under Priority VII, Measure 7.1 Development and dissemination of active integration. It was attended by 9 participants who took part in classes on setting up and running an agritourism farm.
MOPS Radomsko	2018- 2019	A course within the project “KIS Radomsko – “Towards change – a cookery course” (vocational reintegration of 7 participants). The aim of the training was for participants to acquire knowledge and skills related to production planning, catering raw materials and catering machinery and equipment. A total of 120 training hours were completed.

Source: own survey, 2024.

As can be seen from the list above, the selected centres most often offered their wards (as part of their projects and programmes), among others: social and professional activation; training and courses to improve their professional qualifications: motivation to take up work and change their way of life.

Summary

Recently, the growing phenomenon of social exclusion and inequality is affecting not only individuals, but unfortunately also whole communities and state systems that were not formerly exposed to these problems. Faced with this, a comprehensive social policy is required, which includes the process of creating and implementing measures to counteract social exclusion while promoting social inclusion. Being confronted with situations such as exclusion, marginalisation, discrimination or social isolation of many individuals, we are challenged by a complex problem that permeates various spheres of life. It is necessary to take action at governmental, regional and local levels, within the framework of social policy. These actions should guarantee equality of opportunity, material support, promote self-reliance and professional reintegration for marginalised groups. One way to reintegrate these groups into society is to give them access to recreational, physical and tourist activities, including social and educational tourism. While these activities can counteract further social marginalisation, they do not provide a solution to all the problems experienced by excluded people. OPS are key actors in pro-social policy in Poland. Their mission is to provide assistance to socially excluded people through a variety of tools and activities. The Social Welfare Centres offer includes social and material support programmes, as well as those enabling full access to physical culture, including a variety of sport, recreational and tourism activities. The authors of the article undertook research to analyse the educational tourism activities carried out by the OPS aimed at the excluded groups, covering: a) social educational activities that exclude “into tourism” (enabling universal access to participation in tour-

ism activities, tourism services and tourism destinations, etc.) and b) social educational activities (including institutional ones) that exclude “through tourism” (enabling universal access to undertake work in tourism).

The mission of Social Welfare Centres is to help socially excluded people using a variety of tools and activities. The offer includes programmes and projects in the field of, *inter alia*, social and material support, but also those enabling full access to widely understood physical culture, including a variety of physical activities (sport, recreation, tourism

The final range of care services is based on health benefits, which with the social welfare centre is supposed to provide assistance. It should be remembered that these types of benefits can be an element of, for example, hospitality services, which will position them as an element of so-called health tourism.

The collected data authorize the following conclusions:

- the surveyed OPS (341) implemented a total of 1,652 programmes, mostly in the field of social support (732), vocational further training (489), sports and recreation (150) and tourism (140), including educational tourism;
- among the most popular projects and programmes implemented by the OPS in the field of educational tourism and offered to the excluded are especially those within the framework of “cultural events (philharmonic, cinema, theatre, opera, etc.)” (60%), and among the least popular, “cultural education” (10%) and “art gallery tour offers” (6%).
- The most important educational activities that exclude “to tourism” were, in particular, “integrational-educational trips” (118) and “bus tours, field trips, educational, educational-natural and educational-informational trips” (93). The least popular were trips in the field of “educational tourism (e.g. farm tours)” (3).

The most numerous groups of participants in the above-mentioned activities were: the unemployed (94 people) and senior citizens (80), and the least numerous group comprised the homeless.

The most important educational exclusion activities “through tourism” were especially offers (within the framework of ongoing projects and programmes) in the field of, among others: social and vocational activation, training and courses to improve professional skills, and motivating the excluded to take up work and change their way of life.

The results of the research allowed to deduce that the activities undertaken by Social Welfare Centres targeting excluded people show great variety. The proposed tourism as well as educational tourism projects and programmes can contribute to the social inclusion of marginalised groups, integrating them into mainstream society.

De lege lata – it should be borne in mind that the activity of social welfare centres is regulated by the Social Welfare Act of March 12, 2004,

but this does not exempt the directors of the centres from applying strictly thematic regulations - depending on the activity undertaken. The provisions of the Act from October 25, 1991 on the organisation and conduct of cultural activities (Journal of Laws from 2020, item 194, of 2023, item 1662), the Act of November 24, 2017 on tourist package and linked travel arrangements (Journal of Laws from 2023, item 2211) or the Act of August 29, 1997 on hotel services and the services of tour guides and tour operators (Journal of Laws from 2023, item 2211) may be applied in practice². This could be one of the elements of the implementation of John Rawls's concept, which were earlier mentioned in our legal considerations [Borek, Migdal 2023].

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SDR – SULFIDE REDUCTION DIET FROM IDEA TO IMPLEMENTATION – THE PROCESS OF CARRYING OUT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT WORK AND IMPLEMENTATION OF AN INNOVATIVE HEALTH TOURISM PRODUCT

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Abstract

Purpose. The purpose of the article is to present the course of the research and development process, from the creation of the concept of a new method of using therapeutic sulfide water and determining a new direction of treatment, through the various stages of research and commercial implementation of the health tourism product.

Method. The study was carried out using the comparative method, on 150 people, the research hypotheses were formulated and verified.

Findings: The results of the study formed the basis for a therapeutic program implemented on the market.

Research and conclusions limitations. Limitations in research and inference stemmed from project implementation guidelines, time constraints, and EU funding regulations.


Practical implications. The results of the research were implemented in market as SDR - Sulfide Reduction Diet


Originality. The results of the research have been patented as two inventions and a trademark. The article focuses on aspects of creating a health tourism product, the cooperation of the scientific community, business environment institutions and entrepreneurs. The process of identifying needs and creating a health tourism product corresponding to current market trends. The issues are presented in the context of marketing activities, branding and promotion of healthy lifestyles.

Type of paper. This publication is part of the research and development project No. RPSW.01.02.00-26-0014/18 titled: 'Research and development work on the use of sulfide water in weight reduction therapy'¹ implemented under the Regional Operational Program of the Świętokrzyskie Province for

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2014-2020, co-financed by the European Union from the European Regional Development Fund and was conducted at Hotel BRISTOL**** ART & Medical SPA in Busko-Zdrój.

Keywords: research and development, sulfide waters, crenotherapy, weight loss, body mineralization, innovation implementation, patent, smart specialization, health tourism, Busko-Zdrój, Świętokrzyskie province.

Introduction

The article presents the successive stages of creating a new health tourism product from the development of the concept based on a needs analysis and an idea for a new therapy, through the process of carrying out research and development work and the various stages of conducting research, as well as the commercial implementation of a health tourism product.

Health tourism, characterized by its utilization of unique natural resources for therapeutic purposes, represents a strategic specialization of the Świętokrzyskie region, holding significant potential for growth. To fully harness the developmental opportunities, it is crucial to explore innovative approaches to utilizing valuable medicinal resources and pioneering new treatment methodologies, integrating these findings into practical business strategies. The introduction of new and innovative health tourism products on the market by individual entities affects the growth of innovation and competitiveness of the entire industry in the region [Kachniewska 2009, 113].

Fontia, a company based in Busko-Zdrój, spearheaded innovative development efforts by establishing a Research Team in 2018, whose research problem concerned the development of an innovative health tourism product. The execution of research and development activities, as well as the subsequent market implementation of research findings, became feasible through the acquisition of funding under contract No. RPSW.01.02.00-26-0014/18 entitled: 'Research and development work on the use of sulfide water in weight reduction therapy'. This project was carried out under the Regional Operational Program of the Świętokrzyskie Province for 2014-2020, with co-financing provided by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund.

Creating innovation and new health tourism products

The exploration of innovation within the tourism sector, particularly in health tourism, has become an increasingly prevalent topic in both domestic and international literature [Hjalager 2010, 1-2; Łażniewska 2012, 16;

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Szymańska 2009, 2013; Dziedzic et al. 2016, 16]. Researchers have examined various sources and drivers of innovation within the industry, leading to the development of numerous conceptual frameworks and models aimed at elucidating these phenomena. Examples include the ‘Concept of the Health Tourism Innovation System Model’ [Panfiluk, Szymanska 2017, 220] or the ‘SPA&Wellness Innovation Creation System Model’ [Szymanska, Rutkowski, Panfiluk 2016, 64].

In the domain of health tourism, innovation stems from advancements in treatment methodologies, pharmaceuticals, and medical technology. Furthermore, the interdisciplinary character of health tourism facilitates industry development through the diffusion of innovations and research and development (R&D) outcomes from other sectors [Nawrot and Bak-Filipek 2017, p. 27; Hjalager 2009, p. 596; Prochorowicz 2008, p. 133]. This serves as a significant driving force for the introduction of novel solutions and continued exploration in the development of innovative health tourism products.

The creation of new health tourism products also reflects evolving consumer demands. Shifting lifestyles entail altering requirements in tourism, encompassing the realm of health tourism as well [Niezgoda 2019, 293]. Megatrends related to healthy lifestyles [Alejziak 2021, 513], and the increasing awareness regarding health have led to heightened interest in maintaining physical fitness [Lubowiecki-Vikuk 2018, 20] including maintaining proper body weight and adopting healthy dietary habits.

Numerous publications in the field of literature deal with the issues of promotion, cooperation and creation of a coherent and compatible tourist reception offer [Rab-Przybylowicz 2010, 698-699], focusing mostly on the demand side. An integral facet of health tourism advancement lies in innovating within the realm of health sciences, encompassing both novel technologies and organizational systems [Demkow 2019, 279]. Heightened competition and the aspiration to meet consumer expectations are amplifying the significance of supply-side factors in innovation creation [Alejziak 2021, 519], thereby paving the way for the development of a new standard in the health tourism market [Panasiuk 2019, 54].

The research findings presented herein delineate the process of developing a novel health tourism product, guided by the ‘descriptive model of creating innovative solutions, illustrated through health and health tourism’ [Knefel 2018, 216]. This model draws upon the theory of innovation formation at the intersection of diverse spheres and environments, including business, expertise, academia, governance, and end-users of innovations. Moreover, it is influenced by the concept of multi-helix [Leydesdorff 2012, 4], the regional innovation system [Freeman 2002, 196], and smart specialization [Foray and Ark 2007, pp. 1-4].

The model for generating innovative solutions commences with identifying needs and existing solutions, followed by pinpointing challenges.

Through an exhaustive analysis of these identified issues, an interdisciplinary expert team is assembled, leveraging specialized knowledge to generate creative ideas and solutions. The proposed solutions undergo industrial research and development work. The implementation of the experimental process allows the identification of barriers, the ‘bypassing’ of which allows to improve the created solution and increases the level of innovation leading to its final form, as shown in Figure 1.

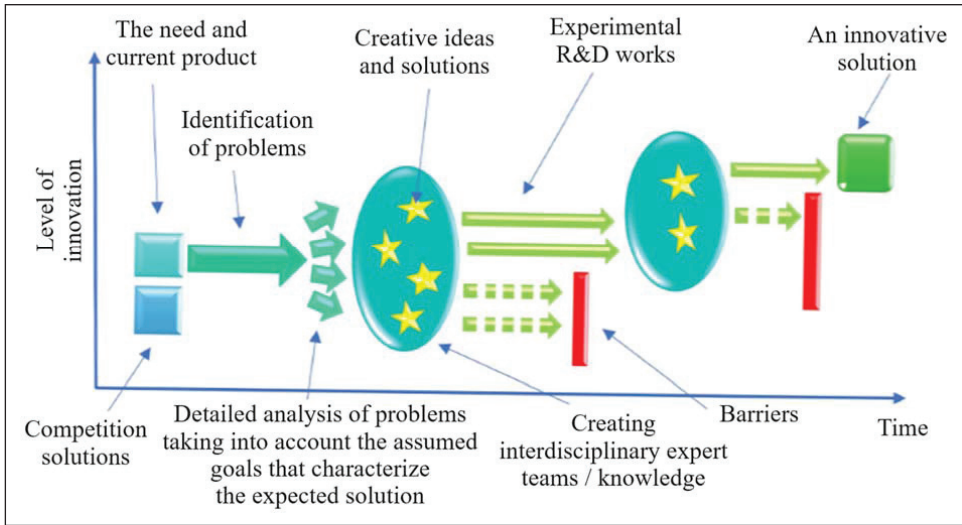


Fig. 1. Descriptive model for creating innovative solutions on the example of health and wellness tourism

Source: Knefel, M., (2018), *Smart specialization in tourism as a tool for regional development*, Doctoral dissertation, p. 216, <https://www.wbc.poznan.pl/publication/540635> (25 Jan 2024).

Simultaneously, the evolving innovative solution progresses through successive stages of technology readiness, commonly referred to as *Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs)* [Straub 2015, 312]. Initially developed by NASA in 1974 to streamline the process of innovation, these levels have evolved over time, culminating in a division into nine distinct stages, delineating three overarching phases:

- basic research (level I);
- industrial research (levels II-VI);
- development work (levels VII-IX).

Depending on the progress of work on a particular solution and its application, stages of implementation are delineated to organize the process and synchronize further actions. This entails researching the idea, conceptualizing, conducting trials, carrying out research, and analyzing results, often iterating these steps to optimize outcomes.

The article illustrates the implementation of research and development work conducted internally by the Research Team, funded by the Grantee up to level VI of industrial research. Subsequently, upon securing funding for further research, the project progressed from stage VI through subsequent stages until achieving market readiness and eventual implementation.

The subsequent section delves into the adopted research methodology.

Research method

The implementation of the research and development work in line with research principles aimed to verify research hypotheses, which were formulated based on studies of previous scientific reports and publications, as well as the current state of knowledge. The research was conducted using the comparative method, comparing different research materials depending on the stage of the research.

During the initial phase of industrial research, efforts were directed towards identifying optimal methods for masking the odor and taste of sulfide waters. Organoleptic evaluations were conducted on samples of vegetable-fruit juice blends, wherein the level of odor and taste coverage, as well as the aesthetic impression – represented by the color of the blend – were assessed individually. Blends receiving the highest scores underwent further investigation, leading to the development of formulations that successfully validated the H1 hypothesis: '*Natural odor and taste compounds contained in plants (fruits, vegetables, herbs) allow to completely cover the smell and taste of sulfide water*', met predetermined milestones, and resulted in the filing of an invention.

In the subsequent phase of industrial research, with approval from the Bioethics Committee, a study was conducted on patients. Participants were divided into two groups: a research sample and a control sample, differing only in the component of the mix they consumed. The research sample ingested blends containing sulfide water, while the control sample consumed plain water. Furthermore, within each group, participants were classified according to BMI (*Body Mass Index*) level²:

- a) Underweight – less than 18.5 kg/m²;
- b) Normal body weight – 18.5–24.9 kg/m²;
- c) Overweight – 25–29.9 kg/m²;
- d) Obesity – over 30 kg/m².

Upon the positive validation of the H2 hypotheses: '*Sulfide water crenotherapy promotes weight reduction*', further milestones were reached, leading to

² <https://www.who.int/europe/news-room/fact-sheets/item/a-healthy-lifestyle---who-recommendations> (26 Jan 2024)

the inception of a second invention. Consequently, Level VII of technological readiness was attained, enabling the company to progress to the developmental work implementation phase.

In the third stage of the research, developmental efforts aimed to amalgamate findings from industrial research with existing knowledge to craft a novel therapeutic program, envisioned as a health tourism product. This phase also encompassed the verification of the H3 research hypothesis: *'Sulfide water positively affects the regulation of the metabolic process and the work of the digestive system, which reduces the so-called yo-yo effect'*, attainment of additional milestones, and the formulation of a name and label for the new therapy.

The concluding phase involved the commercial rollout of the innovative health tourism product conceived during the research endeavor.

Description of the research conducted and the results obtained

The research commenced with a comprehensive analysis of identified needs and underlying issues to be addressed. From the researcher's perspective, the primary concern was the facility's weekend-oriented occupancy rate, prompting exploration into methods to prolong stays. Concurrently, positive market experiences within the American Polish community prompted a targeted investigation into this demographic. Market analysis revealed issues related to inadequate nutrition and obesity within this segment.

An important aspect was the therapeutic resources around which the sought-after solution was to be concentrated. In the process of creating a new health tourism product, the location of the facility in Busko-Zdrój and its therapeutic resources were taken into account [Kachniewska 2014, 28-28]. The spa is renowned for its therapeutic sulfur and hydrogen sulfide waters, exceptionally valued therapeutic material, referred to as the gold of the Świętokrzyskie region. Due to the limited resource quantity and the costly process of water disposal after balneotherapy, efforts were focused on exploring new ways of water utilization, applying principles of sustainable tourism development [Nieżgoda 2008, 84]. It was recognized that the optimal solution to the search problem, combining increased efficiency and utilization optimization, would be hydrotherapy. This was not a commonly used method for medicinal water due to its high hydrogen sulfide (H_2S) mineralization, a gas imparting a specific odor reminiscent of 'rotten eggs,' posing an insurmountable barrier for many spa guests. Moreover, the high content of mineral salts resulted in a very salty taste of the water. Resolving the above problem marked the first milestone of the conducted research in the first stage of industrial research.

The literature study conducted allowed the following hypothesis:

H.1 Natural odor and taste compounds contained in plants (fruits, vegetables, herbs) allow to completely cover the smell and taste of sulfide water.

A selection of food products (vegetables, fruits, and herbs) was chosen to effectively mask the taste and odor of sulfide water, followed by further organoleptic testing of the blends. Potential adverse interactions between sulfur and food ingredients, as well as medications and dietary supplements, were also identified. The research team focused on devising an optimal method to mask the aroma and taste of the medicinal water by incorporating freshly squeezed vegetable and fruit juices, along with herbs. Through experimental trials, it was determined that herbs were less effective compared to fruits and vegetables. Moreover, an obstacle was noted in the form of an unpleasant eructation effect on olfactory senses following the consumption of certain blends. Further analysis revealed that citrus juices, particularly lemon, were successful in mitigating the eructation effect. Consequently, blend recipes were formulated to include lemon juice. The optimal blend composition comprised 50 ml of sulfide water, approximately 150 ml of vegetable juices, and around 50 ml of fruit juices, with an additional 10 ml of lemon juice.

The positive outcomes of the organoleptic evaluation led to the validation of the research hypothesis, prompting the filing of a patent application for a method to mask the smell and taste of sulfide water. Subsequent milestones were achieved with the approval from the Bioethics Committee to proceed with patient research. Necessary research tools, equipment, and software were procured in preparation for the study.

During the second phase of industrial research, a study was conducted involving patients who participated in ten-day stays as part of a pre-designed therapeutic program. The program included crenotherapy with blends administered twice a day as the second and fourth meals, along with individually tailored diets, physical activities, and spa treatments.

Before entering the study, patients underwent pre-qualification assessments to identify contraindications to crenotherapy, in accordance with medical experiment protocols and Bioethics Committee recommendations. Following qualification, patients underwent comprehensive medical and dietary evaluations, including blood and urine tests, anthropometric measurements, abdominal ultrasounds, ECGs, spirometry, and blood pressure assessments.

A total of 150 individuals were enrolled in the study, with the sample structure designed to mirror the prevalence of eating disorders in the population and to assess therapy reactions concerning body weight and gender.

Table 1. Structure of the surveyed groups

Gender/ Average age/BMI category.	Research sample				Total
	obesity	overweight	correct weight	underweight	
Women	23	49	12	11	95
Men	10	6	1	0	17
Total	33	55	13	11	112
average age	52.5	51.1	44.5	46.4	50.3
	Control sample				
Women	5	16	3	3	27
Men	8	1	2	0	11
Total	13	17	5	3	38
average age	52.1	55.2	53.8	39.0	52.7
	Total research and control samples				
Women	28	65	15	14	122
Men	18	7	3	0	28
Total	46	72	18	14	150
average age	52.4	52.1	47.1	44.8	50.9

Source: own elaboration.

The average age of study participants was approximately 51 years, reflecting the age distribution of guests at the sanatorium facility. This demographic composition allowed for a comprehensive examination of potential interactions and identification of contraindications related to medications, prior illnesses, or medical procedures.

During their stay at the facility, participants received education on proper nutrition principles and healthy lifestyles, along with consultations with a personal trainer, nutritionist, and physician to discuss diagnostic test results. Notably, some patients were diagnosed with previously unknown conditions such as diabetes, hyperthyroidism, or insulin resistance, prompting referrals for specialized consultations.

Throughout the study, participants maintained a patient diary documenting daily meals, fluid intake, medications, physical activity, and well-being assessments. They also provided detailed descriptions and evaluations of the blends they consumed, a crucial aspect particularly for the study sample. Following the 10-day program, participants continued to adhere to the recom-

mendations, including crenotherapy for another 20 days at home, while also maintaining a diary. Thus, participation in the therapy regimen extended for a month, after which participants returned to the facility for further tests to evaluate the therapy's effects. Participants also had the option of donating blood and urine samples at other diagnostic laboratory facilities nationwide, selected through a competitive process, as well as undergoing dietary measurements at designated facilities with the same measuring equipment. However, only a few people took advantage of this option; the vast majority preferred revisiting the facility, receiving additional treatments, and engaging with the group, which proved to be supportive for many.

Subsequently, the results obtained, in accordance with the research methodology, were subjected to comparative analysis to verify the research hypothesis:

H.2. Sulfide water crenotherapy promotes weight reduction.

The following excerpt highlights key findings by comparing average values before and after therapy.

The analysis presents data from both control and study samples, categorized by BMI and gender. Notably, participant motivation varied, particularly among underweight and normal weight groups. While the overarching aim was to attain normal parameters in terms of weight, the focus extended to body composition, including the ratio of body fat to muscle, and enhancing blood and urine test indicators. During the treatment trial, 20% of overweight patients achieved a normal weight post-therapy. In contrast, none of the overweight patients in the control trial attained normal weight, indicating positive validation of hypothesis H2.

It is crucial to analyze each BMI group separately. In the weight loss process, achieving the correct balance of body fat and muscle mass is essential to sustain the effects of weight loss. This aspect formed the basis of the subsequent study phase.

Table 2. Selected results of the results of the study therapy after 30 days

Explanation: K- female, M- male

Group/sample/ gender	Quantity [person].	Average age []	Body weight [kg].	Muscle mass [kg].	Adipose tissue [kg].	BMI [kg/m] ²	Water volume [L].	Waist [cm].	Hips [cm].	Thigh [cm].	Calf [cm].	Arm [cm].
Underweight												
Research K	11	46.4	-0.3	0.26	-0.8	-0.2	0.4	-2.2	-1.6	-1.2	-0.1	-0.3
Control K	3	39.0	0.1	1.03	-1.6	-0.1	1.2	-2.0	-0.2	-1.2	0.0	-0.5

Proper body weight												
Research K	12	45.1	-1.9	0.28	-2.3	-0.7	0.2	-4.1	-2.0	-2.1	-0.8	-0.8
Research M	1	37.0	-2.5	-0.10	-2.3	-0.8	0.0	-5.5	-1.0	-1	0.0	-0.5
Total Research	13	44.5	-2.0	0.25	-2.3	-0.7	0.2	-4.2	-2.0	-2.0	-0.7	-0.8
Control K	3	48.3	-2.8	-0.57	-1.8	-1.1	-0.6	-3.5	-3.8	-2.7	-0.2	-1.7
Control M	2	62.0	0.2	-0.80	1.5	0.1	-1.0	0.0	0.0	-1.0	-0.5	-0.5
Total Control	5	53.8	-1.6	-0.66	-0.5	-0.6	-0.8	-2.1	-2.3	-2.0	-0.3	-1.2
Overweight												
Research K	49	50.9	-3.1	0.01	-3.0	-1.1	-0.2	-5.3	-3.8	-2.9	-1.0	-1.5
Research M	6	52.7	-4.8	-0.78	-3.5	-1.6	-1.0	-7.3	-2.8	-1.8	-0.5	-1.4
Total Research	55	51.1	-3.3	-0.07	-3.1	-1.2	-0.3	-5.5	-3.6	-2.8	-1.0	-1.5
Control K	16	54.6	-2.5	0.13	-2.8	-1.0	0.2	-5.2	-3.9	-2.4	-0.6	-1.3
Control M	1	65.0	0.0	-0.50	0.5	0.0	-0.6	-2.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
Total Control	17	55.2	-2.4	0.09	-2.6	-0.9	0.1	-5.0	-3.6	-2.2	-0.6	-1.2
Obesity												
Research K	23	51.9	-3.3	-0.44	-2.5	-1.2	-0.6	-6.0	-4.0	-3.1	-0.8	-1.6
Research M	10	53.9	-4.4	-0.65	-3.1	-1.3	-1.0	-7.2	-4.4	-2.7	-1.8	-2.1
Total Research	33	52.5	-3.6	-0.51	-2.7	-1.3	-0.7	-6.3	-4.1	-2.9	-1.1	-1.8
Control K	5	54.0	-4.0	-0.56	-3.0	-1.5	-0.9	-4.2	-4.1	-2.6	-1.3	-1.5
Control M	8	50.9	-5.8	-1.18	-3.7	-1.8	-1.6	-7.1	-3.4	-3.1	-1.3	-1.4
Total Control	13	52.1	-5.1	-0.94	-3.4	-1.7	-1.3	-6.0	-3.7	-2.9	-1.3	-1.5

Source: own elaboration.

It's important to acknowledge that the data depicted in Table 2 represent averages and may not be entirely representative due to variations in sample sizes and the influence of additional disease factors. A thorough examination across different weight categories, considering comorbidities such as hypothyroidism, type 2 diabetes mellitus, and hypercholesterolemia, further corroborated the efficacy of the sulfide reduction diet:

- In the group of overweight participants suffering from hypothyroidism, there was a weight reduction of 3.1 kg in the research group and 2.5 kg in the control group. At the same time, a twofold greater reduction in body fat was noted in the study group (3.2% vs. 1.5%).
- Among overweight and obese patients (BMI > 25 kg/m²) and concomitant hypothyroidism, there was also a significant difference in fat loss between the sulfide water drinking group (2.7%) and the non-sulfide water drinking group (1.8%).
- A significant difference in body fat reduction was also observed in diabetic patients with BMI > 25 kg/m². The amount of body fat in the study group decreased by 1.6%, while in the control group it decreased by 0.1%.

- Participants in the study with hypercholesterolemia reduced their body weight by an average of 2.5 kg, of which 2.2 kg was a reduction in body fat. At the same time, these patients improved their test results – a decrease in total cholesterol by 10 mg/dl, LDL fraction cholesterol by 6 mg/dl and triglycerides by 12 mg/dl.

Additionally, the analysis of other body parameters supports the superior effectiveness of sulfide water crenotherapy over lifestyle modifications alone (Tab. 3).

Table 3. Selected results after 30 days of therapy

Selected parameters:	Research sample	Control sample
Leptin [ng/dl].	-3.36	-3.15
Pressure [mmHg].	-16	-11

Source: own elaboration.

The obtained results allowed for the positive verification of the research hypothesis and served as the basis for filing application for a second invention related to the influence of crenotherapy on the process of weight reduction. This milestone marks another significant advancement, enabling progression to the stage of developmental work.

The objective of the third stage of the investigation was to integrate findings from industrial research with existing secondary research resources and knowledge to formulate a weight reduction therapy. Recognizing the risk of the yo-yo effect, characterized by weight regain, often surpassing initial values, particularly with excessive loss of muscle mass, the following research hypothesis was thus formulated:

H.3. Sulfide water positively affects the regulation of the metabolic process and the work of the digestive system, which reduces the so-called yo-yo effect.

When examining the outcomes of participant monitoring after three months, it's important to recognize that weight loss is commonly used to gauge the effectiveness of the weight loss process. However, considering the potential ineffectiveness of this measure, particularly in light of the yo-yo effect, a more meaningful metric is the reduction of body fat and its partial replacement by muscle mass. Achieving this necessitates careful selection of meal energy and nutritional value, alongside physical activity. Upon analyzing the treatment outcomes presented in Table 2, it becomes apparent that the obese group in the control sample experienced greater weight loss and a decrease in BMI compared to the research sample. However, this was accompanied by a reduction in muscle mass, resulting in a more significant decrease in certain circumferences and hydration levels, potentially exac-

erminating the yo-yo effect in this group. After a three-month period, the research sample exhibited a lower incidence of weight regain, with nearly 80% maintaining or continuing weight reduction, compared to nearly 12% less in the control sample.

Table 4. Results of the incidence of the yo-yo effect.

Occurrence of yo-yo effect	Research sample	Control sample
The yo-yo effect	20.5%	31.6%
No yo-yo effect	79.5%	68.4%

Source: own elaboration.

Analysis of the survey results after three months also indicates a strong effect of the nutrition education received on improving eating behavior. More than half of the respondents say they are continuing their diets or following a healthy diet. The remaining individuals do not continue the diet, but have maintained regularity of meal intake, increased the proportion of vegetables and fruits in the diet, dietary fiber intake, improved hydration, and increased the level of physical activity compared to activity before participation. These behaviors influence further weight reduction in a significant proportion of the subjects.

At the same time, the approval obtained from the Managing Authority to manage the savings allowed to perform additional diagnostic tests for half of the study participants. As a result, the long-term effects of drinking therapeutic water and the effects of therapy were evaluated and compared. A summary of the results of the study made it possible to observe an improvement in carbohydrate and hormone metabolism, as well as a reduction in hypertension. The patients' blood pressure values were significantly reduced, which resulted in a reduction in the doses of hypotensive drugs or their discontinuation. The mean value of leptin (satiety hormone) levels in subjects in the study group was 10.5 ng/dl, while in the control group it was 13.4 ng/dl.

In addition, as part of the task, a third application was filed to The Patent Office of the Republic of Poland for registration of a trademark – the therapy logo as a word and figurative mark for the developed therapy: SDR – Sulfide Reduction Diet. Based on observations and conclusions, guidelines were developed for the optimal use of weight reduction therapy, using crenotherapy with medicinal waters to improve metabolism and the work of the digestive system, constituting a product innovation – a new product in health tourism.

Task four included the implementation phase of the developed therapeutic program, as well as a series of promotional and marketing activities.

Summary of the results of the conducted research

The primary outcome of the conducted research is the creation and commercial launch of a health tourism product known as SDR – Sulfide Reduction Diet, which has garnered significant popularity among patients for its efficacy in weight reduction. The research findings obtained facilitated the affirmative validation of the research hypotheses:

- *H.1 Natural odor and taste compounds contained in plants (fruits, vegetables, herbs) allow to completely cover the smell and taste of sulfide water.*
- *H.2. Sulfide water crenotherapy promotes weight reduction.*
- *H.3. Sulfide water positively affects the regulation of the metabolic process and the work of the digestive system, which reduces the so-called yo-yo effect.*

As the most important therapeutic conclusions, it should be pointed out that:

- SDR's therapeutic program promotes weight loss processes, mainly by regulating leptin levels, improving the ratio of body fat and muscle mass, and regenerating the body;
- Sulfide water crenotherapy strengthens the body, improves immunity, improves the results of laboratory tests determining the body's health status (blood and urine) and accelerates metabolism.
- For better results in improving body composition and measurements, it is very important to be systematic at meal times, drink plenty of fluids throughout the day and maintain daily physical activity;
- Sulfide water has a positive effect on the regulation of the metabolic process and the work of the digestive system, which reduces the so-called yo-yo effect;
- A reduction in the use of dietary supplements was observed in those following the Sulfide Reduction Diet, as well as a reduction in polypharmacotherapy, that is, taking more than a few medications at the same time;
- Reduced doses of drugs used to treat chronic cardiovascular diseases (hypertension, hypercholesterolemia, dyslipidemic disorders-hypertriglyceridemia) and diabetes were observed.

All of the project's planned milestones related to the purchase of research equipment and the approval of the Bioethics Committee to conduct research have also been achieved. In addition, a process innovation has been developed for the process of masking the scent and taste of medicinal water and juice mixes, as well as an organizational innovation related to serving patients.

3 applications were filed with the The Patent Office of the Republic of Poland, including 2 inventions:

1. Invention P.430598 – ‘Method of masking the salty taste and odor of hydrogen sulfide of therapeutic sulfide water as well as its use in crenotherapy’.
2. Invention P.438317 ‘Application of crenotherapy to regulate the metabolic process and work of the digestive system’.
3. Trademark Z.530954 ‘SDR – Sulfur Reduction Diet’.



Figure 1: Graphic sign of the developed therapy

Source: own elaboration.

The obtained research results were submitted to the national competition ‘Od pomysłu do przemysłu – Student Inventor’. In the 11th edition³ they received the Special Prize of the Rector of the Kielce University of Technology for the Invention P.430598 – ‘Method of masking the salty taste and odor of hydrogen sulfide of therapeutic sulfide water as well as its use in crenotherapy’. Meanwhile, in the next, XII edition of⁴ the competition, the Research Team received a Honorable Mention Award for a series of two inventions and a trademark. At the same time, the solutions were presented at the International Exhibition of Inventions IWIS⁵ 2021, where they received the Silver Medal and Bronze Medal in 2022.

Market implementation and promotion of health tourism product

The market deployment and promotion of health tourism products predominantly rely on diverse marketing strategies. These strategies encompass a comprehensive array of activities undertaken by healthcare providers aiming to understand and align with market demands. Simultaneously, they endeavor to meet these needs among prospective patients while cultivating

³ <https://tu.kielce.pl/xi-edycja-ksw/> (26 Jan.2024)

⁴ <https://tu.kielce.pl/xii-edycja-ksw/> (26.Jan 2024)

⁵ <https://iwis.polskiewynalazki.pl/#/pl/> (26 Jan .2024)

a positive organizational image and attaining profitability. This approach is commonly employed by commercial medical establishments, particularly in an era marked by escalating competition, necessitating strategic measures to secure a favorable market position. [Czerw 2010, p. 25].

Within the framework of the Bristol Art & Medical Spa Hotel's initiatives, aligned with the introduction of the new product, a decision was made to initiate comprehensive information and promotional campaigns. These efforts entailed organizing conferences geared towards promoting the project, with an emphasis on educational content and promotional materials highlighting the significance of healthy lifestyles and the importance of maintaining optimal body weight. Furthermore, the message was amplified through coverage by local media outlets and online channels, particularly during the pandemic period when restrictions on gatherings were enforced.

Currently, health tourism, including medical tourism, plays a very important role in dynamizing Poland's economy, especially after the recessionary period associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. This conclusion comes from the government document titled: *Strategy for Responsible Development to 2020 (with an outlook to 2030)*. In addition, the document, 'Improving the health of citizens and the efficiency of the health care system,' broadly describes the directions of health tourism development in the perspective to 2030. The important role of striving for an increase in the efficiency of the system based on modern forms of medical and health care delivery is indicated. Particular attention is paid to the need to combine elements of telecommunications, information technology and medicine (telemedicine) [Strategy ...2017, 212]. The effect of such cumulative activities is primarily to build a competitive advantage, which is done in two ways. First, relying on medical innovation, and second, while using available resources and the existing health care delivery system to develop health tourism [Framework ... 2021, 159]. The activities described in the above documents are intended to support better organization and coordination of the market and programs to promote Polish health care providers abroad and to build the image of Poland as a health tourism destination.

Intense socio-cultural and economic changes in the 21st century make it possible to observe the dynamic variation of tourist behavior resulting from a wide range of leisure activities. The decisions made to choose and purchase a particular product, including a health tourism product, are determined by direct and indirect factors. This is particularly evident among the elderly, whose retirement salaries are much higher than those of the previous generation. There is also an increased awareness among people in the 30-50 age range of preventive health-promoting behavior [Rab-Przybyłowicz 2014, pp. 32-33]. For companies operating in spa communities, customer diversification allows, firstly, to debunk the commonly accepted myth that spas are only for the elderly, who already have a variety of medical con-

ditions. Secondly, it allows for a change from the long-accepted pattern of spa stays of 21 or 28 days, to shorter ones. For this reason, the inclusion of shorter stays in the spa offer provides the opportunity for active people to come to spas, which translates into a lower average age of tourists. Diversification opens up opportunities to attract spa guests, with whom the process of 'building health awareness' and the role of prevention in spa treatment can be initiated at a relatively early stage of life. Thanks to the undertaken actions, it can be demonstrated that SDR is a health tourism product that also contributes to educating spa guests about the role and significance of natural medicinal resources of spas. An important element of the analyzed health tourism product is group dietary education. Observations made during the implementation of research and development activities and the completed stays so far confirm that despite being adults, as a society, we have insufficient knowledge about nutritious meals and the role that a balanced diet plays in our bodies and health.

In the advancement of a resort destination's tourism offerings, the comprehensive delineation of the Area of Tourist Reception (ORT) stands as a pivotal aspect. It represents a cohesive entity comprising both tangible and intangible components, forming the bedrock of tourists' expectations for their sojourn in a specific locale [Dziedzic 1998, 23]. Many scholars point out the importance of various important characteristics of a tourist reception area. First, the area may refer to a municipality, region or country [Cieslikowski, Zemla 2002, 20-21]. Secondly, it may have physical, historical and ethnographic features that distinguish it from others and that are attractive to tourists, allowing it to develop one or more forms of tourism [Gonclaves, Aguas 1997, 24]. In addition, ORTs understood by tourists themselves can have their own recognizable brand, and create their own management system and procedures [Middleton, Hawkins 1998, 82]. However, such tourist choices are laden with a significant sense of subjectivity because they are dependent on their socio-economic conditions, origin, chosen route, and past experiences [Buhalis 2000, 16].

As long as selected elements of the tourist supply, i.e. the tourist potentials of the reception area, are subordinated to one coherent concept, responding to the needs of a specific type of recipient, we are dealing with a tourist product. A tourist reception area may have a package of products that are consistently, in accordance with certain overall ideas, developed. In this sense, this package becomes a composite product of the tourist reception area. One of the important aspects of managing the area's potential is the choice of assortment, i.e. the group of customers and the products they expect [Dziedzic 1998, 23]. Attracting the younger tourist also has a very important social and economic context for the destination. The younger tourist often travels with their family, such as children. Children need to fill their free time during such a stay. Providing an additional impetus to the

activities of sports facilities (sports fields, tennis courts, swimming pools), museums, theme parks that are, or in the future may be, created in the resort area. New infrastructure being built alongside the treatment facilities means new jobs and additional taxes. New jobs can help stem the alarming phenomenon of the exodus of young people from spa towns.

Conclusion

The health tourism sector, regarded as a smart specialization of the Świętokrzyskie region, holds the potential for dynamic growth through research into novel applications of therapeutic waters. The ongoing exploration of new treatment modalities fosters increased influx of health tourists, particularly from younger demographics, thereby stimulating market expansion and job creation. Furthermore, it spurs other establishments and investors to engage in industry development initiatives, such as the expansion and enhancement of facilities and services. Another important aspect is sustainable development, which allows for the reduction of the amount of medicinal waters consumed and addresses issues related to their disposal after balneological treatments.

An imperative aspect in the realm of tourism research is the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, coinciding with the research timeframe. Despite the challenges posed, the research could persist with adherence to stringent sanitary protocols, given the medical nature of the site. Nonetheless, leveraging interdisciplinary expertise is expected to yield significant advancements in tourism research [Alejziak 2022, 198]. The process of creating new solutions implemented in the course of ongoing research is most often the result of cooperation between the scientific and business communities. An example of such cooperation is the activity of an innovation broker, who initiates the search for innovations and the process of carrying out research and development work to create new health tourism products and market implementation [Knefel 2018, 137].

Supporting this type of initiative is the right direction for the outlay of EU funds, as they not only provide an impetus for innovative development, but also stimulate economic development and increase the competitiveness of the health tourism industry and the Świętokrzyskie region.

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IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON TRAVEL DECISIONS OF YOUNG POLISH TOURISTS

*Małgorzata Gałązka**

Abstract

Purpose. The aim of the study is to examine how the SARS-CoV-2 virus pandemic, which lasted for more than two years, affected the travel decisions of young Polish tourists.

Method. A survey research was conducted using online questionnaires (CAWI technique), in which young adults aged 20-30 were surveyed. The research was conducted between April and October 2022, and the study group comprised 230 participants.

Findings. It is clear that as a result of the introducing, among others, restrictions on movement, closure of borders, facilities, etc. during the pandemic period, the decisions and forms of activity undertaken by tourists had to change. Domestic trips, mostly of short duration, gained in popularity, which primarily offered respondents the opportunity to change their surroundings, to leave the home where they lived and worked on a daily basis. The most important factor respondents took and continue to take into account when choosing a tourist destination is its total cost. During the pandemic, respondents began to pay attention to and take advantage of additional benefits, such as health insurance, the ability to cancel or resign from a trip at no cost. More than half of the respondents during the pandemic, as well as immediately after it, did not give up taking tourist trips, but adapted them to the prevailing conditions and their current possibilities, primarily financial.

Research and conclusions limitations. The study was conducted among a group of 230 people, which is not a representative sample and does not allow for general conclusions.

Practical implications. The study, in part, allows to identify elements worth paying attention to in the process of planning travel offers aimed at young adults.


Originality. The subject matter discussed touches upon the changes that have occurred and continue to occur in the post-pandemic era, both in tourism and among tourists themselves.

Type of paper. Article presenting the results of empirical research.

Keywords: tourism, tourist activity, travel decisions, COVID-19 pandemic.

Introduction

The tourism sector has been one of the best growing sectors of the economy over the past few decades. In 2019, all tourist regions of the world saw an increase in foreign tourist arrivals, with the largest recorded in: Middle Eastern (8%), Asian Pacific (4%) and European (4%) regions [UNWTO 2020,

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p. 17]. No one expected that in 2020, the world would have to face a pandemic and learn to function in a completely different way and in new conditions. The tourism sector has already faced many crises in the 21st century (Figure 1), including those caused by epidemics of various diseases (e.g. the A/H1N1 flu epidemic), but never before has its scale been as large as that of the COVID-19 pandemic. The losses the tourism industry has suffered to date, due to the scale and scope of the virus, are among the largest in the history of tourism [Stojczew 2021, p. 158].

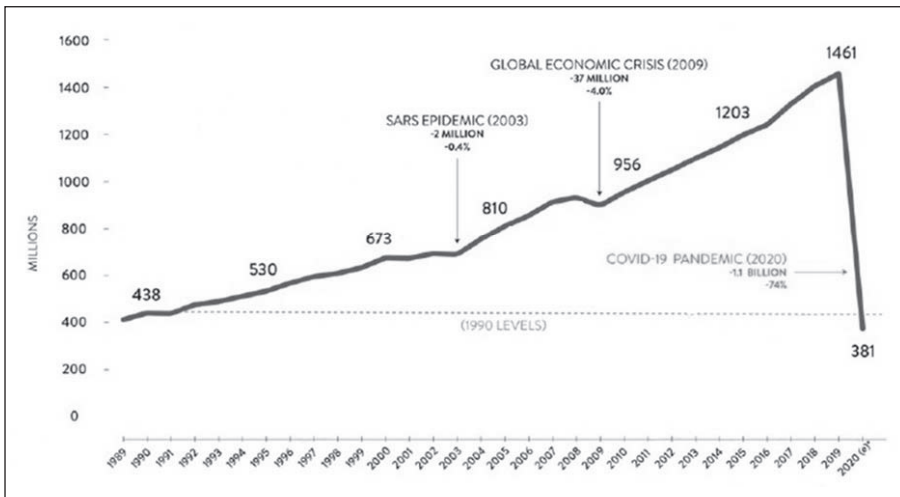


Figure 1. Impact of crises on international tourism between 1989 and 2020

Source: [UNWTO 2021, p. 7].

Government decisions, attempts to stop the spread of the virus and its mutations, and people's fear of contracting the disease, caused the tourism industry to freeze. According to a study conducted in March 2020 in Poland, the first month of the pandemic, the number of people using tourist accommodations fell by 65% compared to the same period one year earlier. Globally, international tourist traffic in the first year of the pandemic fell by as much as 74% relative to 2019, totalling only 400 million travellers [UNWTO 2022, p.1].

Countries, after the World Health Organization declared a pandemic state, began to impose numerous restrictions and limitations. Due to the initial restrictions on movement and the suspension of entertainment activities, these events hit the service sector, and tourism in particular, hard [Widomski 2020, p. 771]. The key events for the tourism industry were closure of national borders, temporary restriction of movement and suspension of hotels and other accommodations. Additional factors that limited tourists' willingness to use tourist services were the lack of access (total

or partial) to tourist attractions, cultural facilities as well as food and recreation areas. The tourism sector was also affected domestic entry restrictions in other countries. Regulations, such as the restrictions themselves, changed very rapidly, so some tourists resigned from their trips. According to the World Tourism Organization, 2020 brought a 74% drop in international tourism, a return to the level from 1960 [UNWTO, 2021].

Impact of pandemic on tourism

The steady increase in international tourism (as we have seen in recent decades), as well as the process of globalisation, on the one hand, positively affect the economy by driving it, while on the other, they cause an increase in factors inhibiting the development of tourism. These factors mainly relate to the tourist participant's sense of security and are divided into environmental, political, economic, socio-cultural and health factors [Wawoczny 2021, p. 178]. In a pandemic situation, where the whole world is fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, increased population migration is not advisable, as it supports the spread of the virus and the formation of new mutations. Looking back at past outbreaks of Ebola, SARS and Zika, for example, one can see that they demonstrated the importance of the lack of risks to human health and life in the tourism industry. Wawoczny [2021], in confirmation of these words, gives the example of Africa, affected by the Ebola epidemic – regardless of what area of Africa was actually in the epidemiological zone, the entire continent was classified as a threat, which affected the tourism sector of the whole continent.

According to the World Tourism Organization, 2020 saw a 74% decline in international tourism. An estimated loss was noted of more than \$2 billion in global GDP and the loss of some 62 million tourism-related jobs [UNWTO, 2021]. No previous crisis of the 21st century has ever led to such severe losses for the tourism sector.

The second year of the COVID-19 pandemic – 2021, began with mass vaccinations for the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, with which the tourism industry held great hope as an opportunity to rebuild tourism. Some countries, in an effort to meet the tourism industry, introduced so-called COVID passports, or certificates certifying acceptance of one of the available vaccines for COVID-19. Travellers with such a passport were able to visit other countries in a much simpler way. These measures helped record a 9% increase in international tourist traffic in 2021, but this was still a 71% decrease compared to 2019. The largest increase in tourist traffic in 2021 (Figure 3) was recorded in the regions: Europe (24.6%) and the Middle East (24%). The worst situation was in the Asian-Pacific region, where arrivals fell by more than 64% relative to 2020 [UNWTO 2022, p. 4].

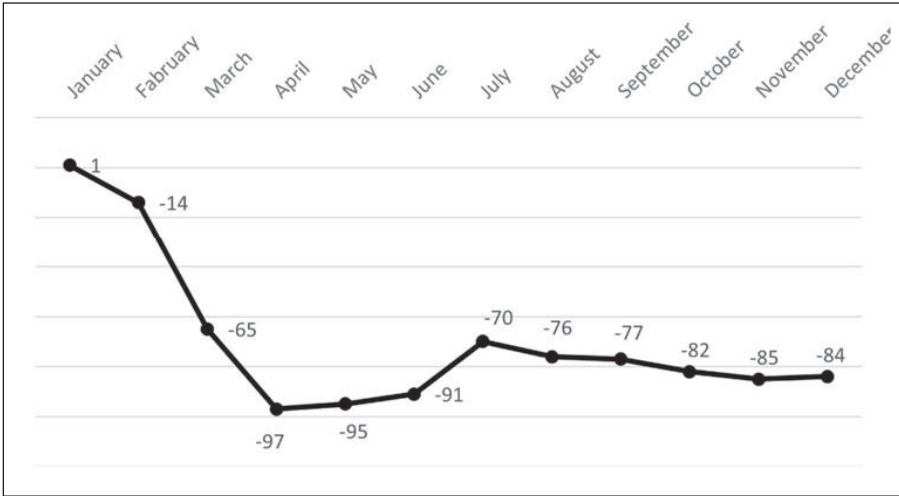


Figure 2. Decline in international tourism in 2020 due to pandemic
Source: [Own elaboration based on: [UNWTO 2021, p. 8].

The year 2022 was very promising and important for tourism – according to current data, international tourist traffic worldwide recorded more than a 101% growth compared to 2021, with 917 billion trips recorded. For the first time since 2019, there was also an increase of international tourist arrivals in all tourist regions, including the largest in the Asian-Pacific re-

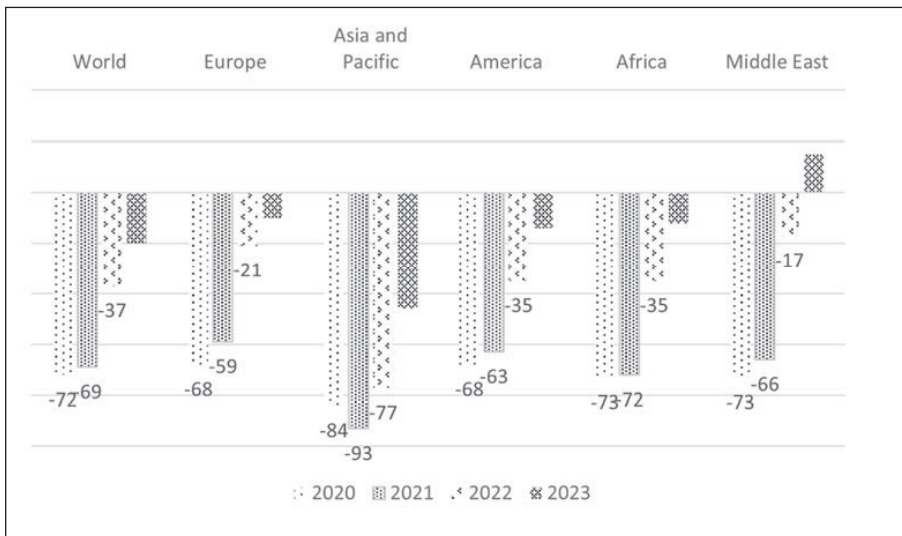


Figure 3. International tourist traffic in 2020, 2021 and 2022 relative to 2019 (in %)
Source: Own elaboration based on: [UNWTO 2023, p. 1]

gion, which was visited by as much as 241% more tourists than in 2021. This was followed by the Middle Eastern region (144% growth), Africa (132%), Europe (92%) and the Americas (75%) [UNWTO 2023a, p. 5].

UNWTO experts are predicting a further recovery in international tourism arrivals in 2023, especially in the Asian-Pacific region, forecasting that they will reach 80% to 95% of pre-pandemic levels [UNWTO 2023a, p. 5]. International tourist arrivals have already reached 80% of pre-pandemic levels in the first quarter of 2023 alone, and the Middle East is the first tourism region in the world to reach pre-pandemic levels in a full quarter [UNWTO 2023b, p. 3].

In Poland, the situation was no better than in other countries around the world. In the first month of the pandemic (in March 2020), the number of tourists using accommodation - compared to the same period of 2019 - fell by 65%. Due to a number of restrictions, limits on places at tourist facilities or the temporary complete suspension of their activities, tourist facilities were used by 18.8 million tourists in 2020, 49% less than in the previous year [GUS 2021, p. 23].

Table 1. Travel of Polish residents in 2019-2022 (in thousands)

Year	Domestic trips		Trips abroad		Total
	Short-term (2-4 days)	Long-term (5 days or longer)	Short-term (2-4 days)	Long-term (5 days or longer)	
2019	29,987.4	20,030.9	2,679.4	10,865.2	63,562.9
2020	26,121.9	20,048.1	1,316.3	5,523.3	53,009.6
2021	30,900.0	24,200.0	1,400.0	6,000.0	62,600.0
2022	34,800.0	26,400.0	2,400.0	10,800.0	74,400.0

Source: Own elaboration based on: [GUS 2020, p. 64; GUS 2021, p. 64; GUS 2022, p. 66; GUS 2023, p. 64].

Based on the data in Table 1, it can be seen that the number of foreign trips in 2020 almost halved compared to 2019, the number of domestic short-term trips decreased and long-term trips increased slightly. The total number of trips by Polish residents in 2020 was 53 million, which was 29.4% fewer trips than in the year before the pandemic [GUS 2021, p. 63]. However, as the data show, in 2021, all of the above types of tourist trips experienced an increase by 18%. The final year - 2022, also shows an upward trend, with Poles making a total of 74.4 million trips (more than 18% than in 2021), including 61.2 million domestic trips (up almost 11% from the previous year) and 13.2 million trips abroad, increased by more compared 77% from 2021 [GUS 2023, p. 64].

On a monthly basis, domestic and international travel in 2020 primarily depended on government actions with regard to tourist traffic. In the months when the activities of tourist facilities were completely suspended

or severely restricted, there were noticeable declines (especially in the months from March to June) compared to 2019, prior to the pandemic. Similarly, during the holiday season, when the Government loosened restrictions, the percentage of travel increased sharply. The development of outbound travel was comparable to that domestic – the exception was the period between April and May, when domestic travel was already starting to increase in May, outbound travel remained at virtually the same level. The persistence of foreign travel close to 0% in 2020 was due to tighter restrictions around the world. In 2020, all travel by Polish residents fell by 42%. Compared to the overall 74% decline in international travel worldwide, this is a good result, however, still heavily causing huge losses for the tourism sector [GUS 2021, p. 66].

In 2020, Polish residents spent 48.3 billion PLN on tourist trips, 39.3% less than in 2019. Of this, domestic trips accounted for 24.8 billion PLN, down 19.6% year-over-year, and Poles spent 14.9 billion PLN on foreign trips, a decrease by 56.5% [GUS 2021, p. 74]. In 2021, there was a slow recovery on the tourism market and Poles' spending on travel trips increased by 19.5% compared to 2020 (amounting to 57.7 billion PLN) [GUS 2022, p. 74]. However, in 2022, Polish residents already spent 86.6 billion PLN, which was above 50% more than in 2021 [GUS 2023, p. 74].

The negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Polish tourism sector is also evidenced by the decline in the number of accommodation facilities in Poland. Data released by the Central Statistical Office (GUS) indicate that as many as 960 lodging facilities ceased operations in 2020, with the largest number in the provinces of Lesser Poland (184), West Pomerania (120) and Pomerania (103) [GUS 2021, p. 45].

Table 2. Motives of Poles' tourist trips in 2019–2021

Main motive	Domestic trips (%)				Trips abroad (%)			
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
Leisure, recreation	42.3	45.9	45.4	46.5	56.7	50.4	51.7	57.5
Visiting relatives, friends	48.1	46.5	47.1	45.1	30.1	34.0	31.6	28.3
Health	3.0	1.9	2.3	2.8	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.4
Religious	1.2	0.6	0.5	0.6	1.2	0.4	0.5	0.7
Educational	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.6	1.8	0.5	0.8	0.5
Shopping	0.1	0.1	0	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.3
Business/professional	3.5	3.4	2.0	3.4	8.9	11.3	12.6	10.5
Other	1.2	1.0	0.6	0.9	1.0	2.7	2.0	1.7

Source: Own elaboration based on: [GUS 2019, p. 70; GUS 2021, p. 70; GUS 2022, p. 71; GUS 2023, p. 68].

In a study conducted by the Central Statistical Office on the structure of Poles' tourist trips according to the main motive of their travels, it was demonstrated that 56.7% of respondents went abroad for leisure purposes in the year prior to the pandemic outbreak (2019), while the following year, already during the pandemic, 50.4% of such trips were recorded (Table 2).

The opposite was true for domestic travel, where more than 3% more respondents went on vacation in 2020. The reason for the increased interest in domestic travel was, of course, the restrictions that were being introduced, but also people's fear of sudden changes in entry regulations to particular countries [GUS 2020, p. 68; GUS 2021, p. 70].

It can be noted that all other motives for domestic trips other than leisure declined in 2020, while the share of business trips and trips to visit relatives increased for foreign trips due to reductions in leisure and other non-essential trips. In 2021, domestic trips for leisure purposes lost little ground, while foreign trips gained (up 1.1%). In 2021, foreign trips also saw a recovery and a slight increase in educational, business, shopping and religious purposes of trips – i.e. those that were temporarily suspended for the duration of the pandemic.

The increased interest in domestic tourism during the pandemic was also indicated in other studies conducted, not only in Poland [e.g. Widomski 2021; Kugiejko, Kociszewski 2021; www.statista.com/statistics/1120377/coronavirus-impact-on-summer-travel-plans-in-finland, accessed: 1 Feb. 2023]. Very often, respondents stated that they were forced to change their travel plans or cancel them altogether due to restrictions on freedom of movement and lack of leisure peace, resulting from limitations established by individual countries (including the need for quarantine).

Interesting studies on changes in travel decisions and traveller behaviour during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic were also conducted by the World Tourism Organization [2021]. Among others, they proved that travellers preferred taking trips closer to their homes, which had very positive and noticeable impact on domestic tourism. The results also demonstrated that tourists' biggest concerns were health and safety measures as well as trip cancellation policies. Due to the unstable situation in the world and the rapidly changing rules on travel, it has become very popular to book trips at the last minute. At the same time, a very important factor, due to the accompanying pandemic, worsening economic crisis, was to support the local community in the visited region by taking advantage of the goods and services it offered. It was also noted that in the first year of the pandemic, the vast majority of those undertaking tourist activities were young people who make bolder travel decisions, and who did not have as much concern about the possibility of contracting the disease as those representing other age groups [UNWTO 2022b].

The results of other studies [including UNWTO 2021; Balińska, Olejniczak 2022; Sztuk 2021; Roman, Grudzień 2021; Zawadka et al. 2021; Mitrica et al. 2022; Zheng, Luo, Ritchie 2021] show that due to the introduction of many restrictions and limitations on freedom of movement, tourists definitely more frequently chose forms of recreation organised individually, outdoors, surrounded by nature, as well as practicing active forms of tourism and recreation. Leisure in suburban second homes or Family Allotment Gardens (ROD) operating in cities, which guaranteed the least possible contact with other people and the opportunity to spend time actively in the fresh air, greatly gained in popularity. In addition, there has been an increased interest in agritourism and other offerings that provide recreation in the countryside, away from cities and thus, in larger urban concentrations. Therefore, cultural and urban tourism found themselves in a serious crisis, as they were associated with phenomena they began to avoid: human concentrations, small areas and dense infrastructure.

Generation Z

Young adults aged 20-30 today are those born between 1993 and 2003, and thus, they represent the beginning of Generation Z (otherwise known as Baby Boomers, Generation 9/11, Generation C, among others), which includes those born between 1994 and 2012 (some sources also cite 1995 or even 1990 as the beginning of Generation Z) [WASKO 2016; Zajadacz 2014; Świerkosz-Hołyśz 2016]. In 2023, Generation Z in Poland numbered more than 7.4 million people, compared to more than 8 million of the three previous generations (Baby boomers, X, Y) (Table 3). At the same time, more than half of Generation Z were only people aged 20-30, with more than 4.4 million of them.

Table 3. The number of selected generations in Poland

Generation	Year of birth	Number of people in Poland in 2023
Baby boomers	1946-1964	8,318,705
Generation X	1965-1980	8,288,065
Generation Y	1981-1994	8,038,155
Generation Z	1994-2012	7,482,480
Generation Alpha	2010-2025	5,316,739

Source: Own elaboration based on: [GUS 2023, p. 23].

One of the characteristics that sets Generation Z people apart from others is that they were born into a world where widespread access to the Internet, computers, other technological innovations and devices is nothing

surprising or new, it is just their ordinary everyday life, another they do not know. Generation Z is connected to the network around-the-clock, living in a virtual world, so they treat direct contacts with other people as well as those online, using various communicators, as the same, not seeing much difference in them [Waśko 2016]. Without access to the Internet, the ability to check the news, social networks, etc., they feel lost. It should additionally be noted at the same time that generation Z has a very strong need to belong to and be accepted by a group – lifestyles, views and attitudes very often depend on perspectives, opinions and positions in the group [Zajadacz 2014].

Another important point is that Generation Z is a global generation – territorial barriers pose no problem in establishing contacts and exchanging information, since most of it is done via the Internet anyway. This is also a generation that is exposed to foreign languages from an early age, which they learn quickly so language barriers, when it comes to travel, are also not a problem for this group, as are cultural barriers [Waśko 2016]. This is a group that values security is ready to fulfil a mission, characterised by high self-confidence and optimism, and believes it can influence events and changes on a global scale. Generation Z, due to its numerous online contacts, uses mainly shortcuts, quick forms of communication (chatspeak), thus, manifesting problems with building longer, correct statements, both in writing and in speech [Zajadacz 2014].

What is important from the point of view of tourism is that Generation Z is entrepreneurial and cares about their financial situation - most college students have jobs, which they take up not only to develop professionally and gain experience, but also to become self-sufficient and financially independent from their parents [Gajda 2017]. Hence, travel trips are often seen by them as an element that can be realised without much difficulty - whether from a job (even an occasional one), savings made or pocket money (from parents, grandparents). They also often take advantage of promotional offers that allow them to purchase at a higher standard [Niemczyk 2019].

Material and methods

The purpose of the research was to verify the hypothesis that the COVID-19 pandemic influenced and continues to influence decisions made by young Polish tourists, changing their travel preferences. Ancillary research questions were also identified: What are the main motives of young respondents' trips during the pandemic period, and how have they changed relative to trips made before the pandemic began? Do the restrictions introduced during the pandemic, as well as a reduced sense of security, affect respondents'

travel decisions? What were the main destinations of tourist trips during the pandemic versus before its outbreak? What was the length of trips were undertaken by respondents during and before the pandemic?

For the purposes of the study, a diagnostic survey method was used using the CAWI technique. The survey questionnaire was addressed to respondents between the ages of 20 and 30, i.e. young adults¹, who comprise a group of bold decision-makers, focused on exploring the world, for whom organising trips is not a problem, even in times of crisis. At the same time, as noted by Szymańska [2022], studying the market behaviour of young adults aged 18-29, this is the group of innovators mostly predisposed to take up alternative forms of behaviour. These are individuals characterised by openness, a love of adventure and a strong need for social relationships. Simultaneously, young people are a very important segment in the tourism market, whose significance grows each year [Dębski et al. 2019].

The purpose of the questionnaire was to investigate how the pandemic has affected the respondents' travel decisions, whether and how they have changed. The survey was conducted from April to October 2022, distributing a link to the questionnaire on Facebook – the link was posted in student and university, neighbourhood and thematic groups (tourist or gathering lovers of various countries, regions, forms of tourism and recreation but also other thematic groups e.g. dedicated to books, culture, etc.). The questionnaire was divided into two parts in order to obtain answers about respondents' travel decisions and choices before the pandemic, during and just after the pandemic. It consisted of 30 questions, including matrix questions with a scale, single-choice and multiple-choice questions – for the purposes of this study, only a few questions from the entire questionnaire were used.

A total of 230 respondents took part in the survey, of which 54% were women and the remaining 46% were men. As already mentioned, the survey group comprised respondents between the age of 20 and 30, of which more than half were 23-24 (55.5%). This was followed by respondents aged 25-27 (20%), 20-22 (14%) and the oldest group included participants between the age 28 and 30 (10.5%). The majority of respondents were those with higher education (71%), followed by secondary education (25%), and the smallest percentage was respondents with vocational education (4%). The participants were, for the most part, residents of large cities with a population of over 100,000 (76%). The remainder were residents of smaller cities: between 25,000 and 100,000 residents (10%), 10,000-25,000 (4%), 2,500-10,000 (4%), and villages and small towns with less than 2,500 residents (6%). In terms of occupation, the vast majority of respondents (76%) were employed, with

¹ The age ranges of developmental stages reported in the literature according to Erik Erikson (Erikson, Erikson, 2011) are conventional [Jankowska 2017]. Available research assumes that the term “young adults” refers to people aged around 18-35 [Romm et al. 2021; Baran, Hamer 2021].

42% working students. The remaining 22% were pupils or students, and 2% were unemployed. At the same time, respondents rated their current financial situation at a good (40%) and average (39%) level, and 19% even considered it very good.

Results

Analysis of the results concerning the first part of the questionnaire showed that respondents were more likely to choose foreign destinations than domestic ones before the pandemic, with 33% equally likely to go abroad and travel domestically (Figure 4). In contrast, during and just after the pandemic, the tourist destinations chosen by respondents changed, for domestic trips became more popular (17% more respondents chose a domestic destination during the pandemic than before its outbreak) than foreign ones, but a roughly similar percentage as in pre-pandemic times, about 30%, chose both domestic and foreign destinations.

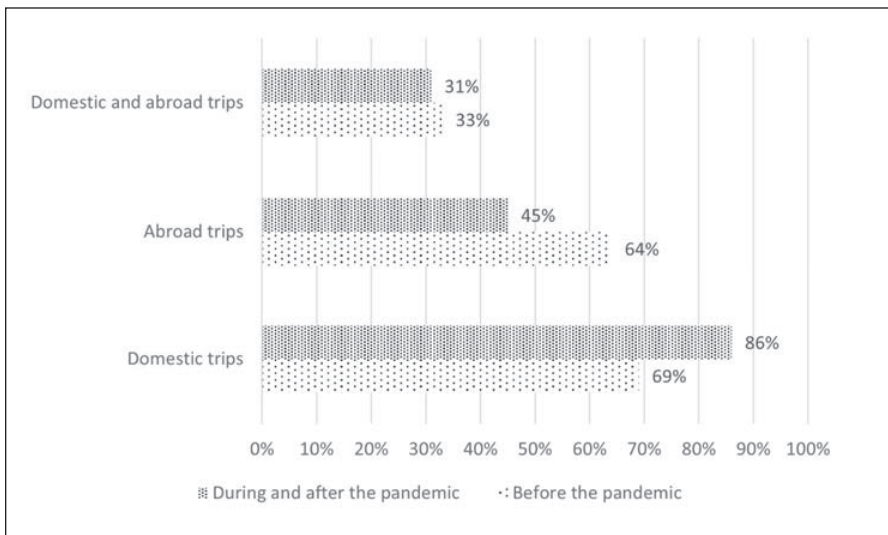


Figure 4. Respondents' preferred tourist destinations

Source: Own elaboration based on survey.

Of the domestic destinations by the pandemic, the most popular were the standard vacation and holiday destinations, including the Baltic Sea coast (77.5%), Masuria (59%), the Tatra Mountains (44%) and Bieszczady (20%). At foreign destinations, the sub-region of Southern Europe (77%), Western Europe (74%) and Northern Europe (20%) were mainly popular among re-

spondents, while from other tourist regions, Asia (14%), Africa (13%) and North America (9%) were mentioned (Table 4).

During and just after the pandemic, the Baltic coast (73%), Masuria (48%) and the Tatra Mountains (40%) were among the most popular tourism destinations. On the other hand, of foreign destinations, the most popular were still the countries of Southern (72%) and Western Europe (62%). As a result of, among others, closed borders, strict entry regulations during and after the pandemic, respondents did not choose destinations such as countries in the Asian-Pacific tourist region or America.

Table 4: Respondents' chosen tourist destinations

	Before the pandemic	During and after the pandemic
	% of respondents	
Domestic travel directions:		
Baltic Sea coast	77	74
Masuria	59	48
Tatra Mountains	44	40
Bieszczady Mountains	20	15
Sudetes	13	7
Larger cities	48	44
Foreign travel directions:		
Northern Europe	20	17
Southern Europe	77	72
Western Europe	74	62
Eastern and Central Europe	16	13
Middle East	8	7
Africa	13	2
Asia and Pacific	14	-
North America	9	-
South America	5	-

Source: Own elaboration based on survey.

The most popular forms of respondents' travel trips were self-organised, both before and during the pandemic (Figure 5). Prior to the pandemic, 63% of respondents indicated that they organised trips on their own, while 26% used trips that were organised by a travel companion. In contrast, young tourists were least likely to purchase a full travel package from a travel agency (11%).

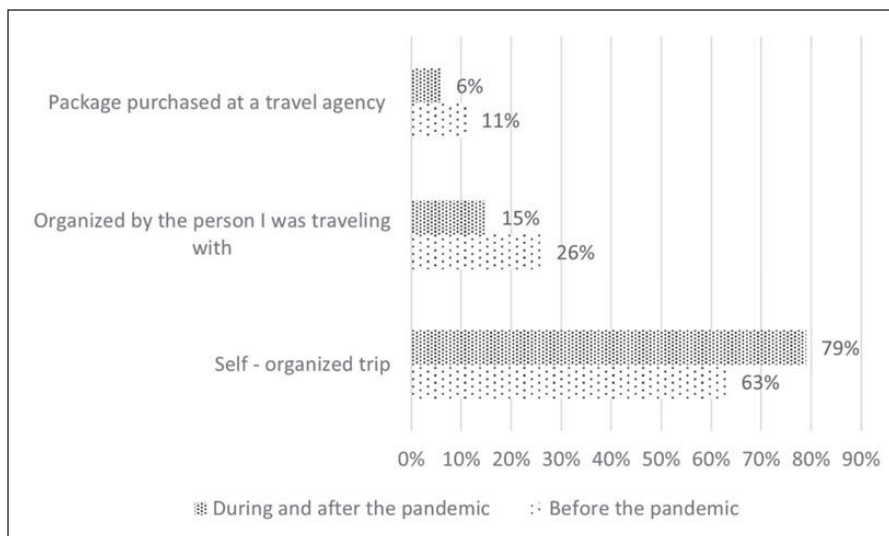


Figure 5. Forms of travel arrangements made by respondents

Source: Own elaboration based on survey.

In contrast, during the pandemic, 79% of respondents chose to organise trips on their own, while 15% took advantage of a trip organised by a fellow traveller. Only 6% of respondents were those who took advantage of a travel package offered by travel agencies.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, respondents were an active tourist group, as up to 64% indicated that they travelled for tourist reasons 2-3 times a year, and 22% of respondents made at least 4 trips per year. The

Table 5. Frequency and length of tourist trips undertaken by respondents

	Before the pandemic	During and after the pandemic
% of respondents		
Number of trips:		
Once a year	14%	25%
2-3 times a year	64%	63%
More than 4 times a year	22%	12%
Length of stay:		
1-3 days	6%	20%
4-7 days	69%	64%
8-14 days	22%	13%
Over 14 days	3%	3%

Source: Own elaboration based on survey.

smallest group, however, were those who travelled once a year (14%). The majority (69%) were week-long tourist trips lasting 4 to 7 days, with less frequent respondents opting for 8-14-day trips (22%). The least popular were weekend trips (6%) and those lasting more than 2 weeks (3%).

The frequency of young Poles' tourist trips changed during the pandemic (Table 5). Still, the largest percentage, as many as 63%, declared taking 2-3 trips per year, but the number of people who allowed themselves 1 tourist trip practically doubled (25%), while at the same time, the number of those who travelled more than four times a year halved (12%). The situation regarding the length of tourist trips is analogous: the largest group (64%) travelled for 4-7 days, practically triple the number of people opting for typical weekend trips lasting 1-3 days (20%), and half the number of longer trips, from 8 to 14 days (13%).

One can also notice changes in the respondents' main motives for undertaking tourist trips during before and during the pandemic (Figure 6). Both pre- and post-pandemic, the respondents mainly travelled to change their daily environment, lifestyle.

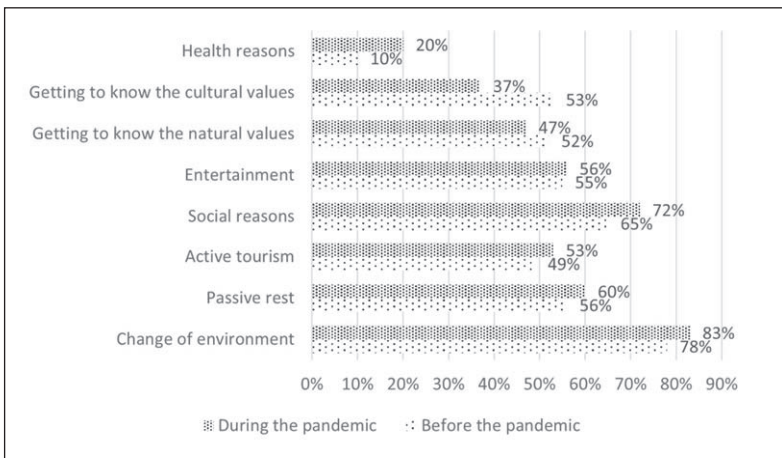


Figure 6. Respondents' main motives for undertaking tourist trips

Source: Own elaboration based on survey.

On the other hand, as far as changes are concerned, it is primarily noticeable that there has been a decrease (by 16%) in the motivation related to exploring cultural values at a particular place, which, of course, may be related to the fact that many cultural facilities such as museums, galleries, theatres, etc. were closed or difficult to enter. It can also be noted that during the pandemic, there was an increase in the proportion of respondents interested in such motivations as, for example, health reasons, practicing various from tourism and active recreation, social reasons, which may be due

to the fact of prevailing lockdowns and isolation, forcing a passive lifestyle. After that, respondents, alike the majority of the population, needed active recreation, a respite from the substandard situation of long-term isolation and confinement.

It was also examined what factors were important to respondents when planning and organising trips (Figure 7). The participants rated the selected factors on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 was the lowest rating and 5 was the highest.

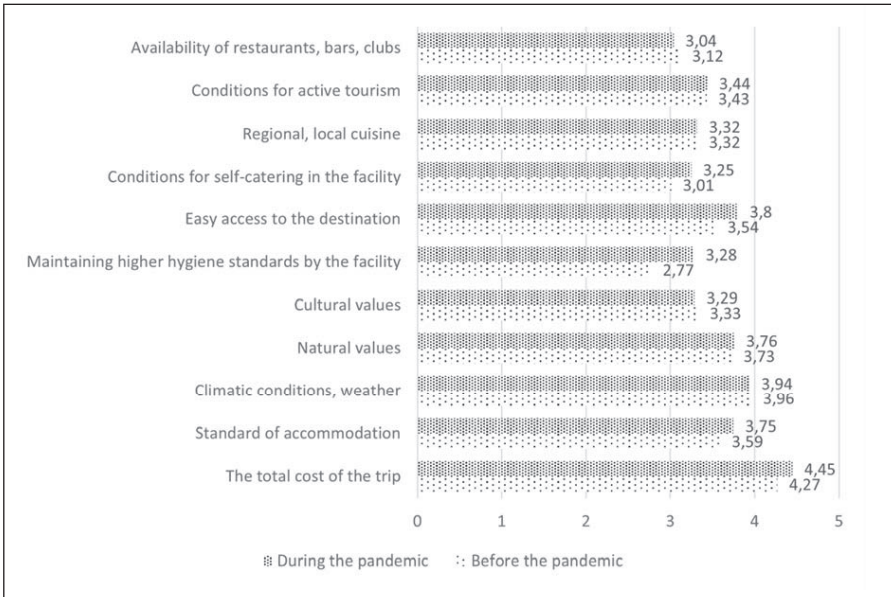


Figure 7. Evaluation of selected factors influencing choice of tourist destination

Source: Own elaboration based on survey.

The factor of most significance when respondents were planning a trip, both before and during the pandemic, turned out to be the total cost of the trip (mean score of 4.27 before the pandemic and 4.45 during the pandemic). In contrast, climatic and weather conditions (3.96; 3.94), natural values (3.73; 3.76), standard of accommodation (3.59; 3.75), ability to get to the destination easily (3.54; 3.80) and conditions for active tourism (3.43; 3.44) were mentioned next. In contrast, the least important factor considered by young tourists before the pandemic was the standard of hygiene at accommodation facilities (2.77), which only began to receive attention during and after the pandemic, but, as can be seen from the answers given, received a sufficient rating among respondents (3.28).

During the pandemic, as well as before it, a very small percentage of respondents purchased additional services for their tourist trip, which con-

firmes the opinion expressed by respondents that the most important factor paid attention to when organising a trip is its total cost, thus minimising expenses for additional services. No less, some of the respondents decided during the pandemic to purchase additional services prior to the trip to ensure the safety and comfort of travel, which, however, were rated (on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 was the lowest rating and 5 was the highest), at a sufficient level (Figure 8). The most common choices were health insurance (average rating of 3.94), the ability to cancel a reservation at no cost (3.78) or to cancel a trip (3.78). It is noteworthy that some of the respondents took advantage of purchasing the option that gave the possibility to re-schedule the trip (average rating of 3.25) during the pandemic. The occurrence of the pandemic also caused an increase in the popularity (very small, but noticeable in the conducted surveys) of the ODYSEUSZ system, where all travel information can be obtained.

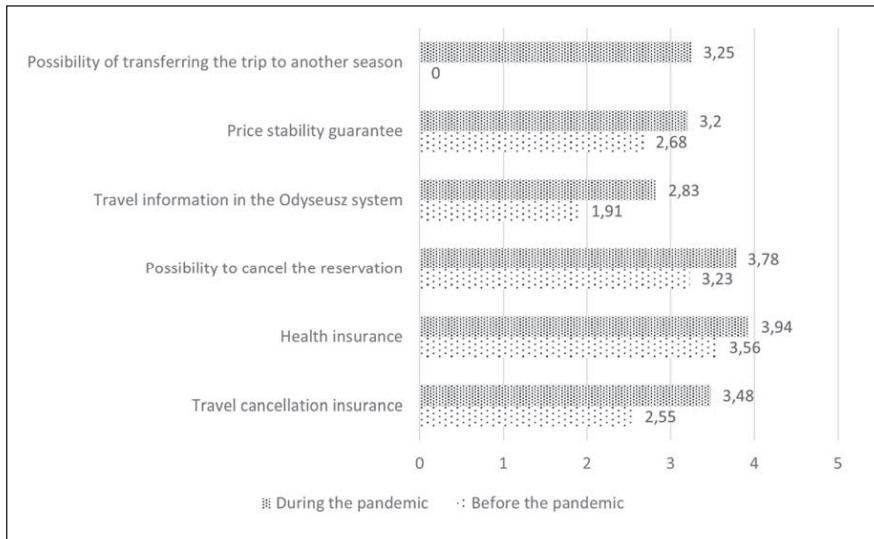


Figure 8. Evaluation of additional services used by respondents

Source: Own elaboration based on survey.

During and just after the pandemic, the majority of respondents (53.5%) said they would continue to travel, and among the most frequently cited reasons for abandoning tourist trips were problems with movement and lack of freedom of movement (13%) as well as fear of having to go through quarantine (10.5%).

A smaller percentage of respondents cited worse economic situation (7%) among the reasons for discontinuing tourist trips or reducing their number. In last place, with 6% of indications, was concern for the health of themselves and loved ones. At the same time, 10% of respondents pointed

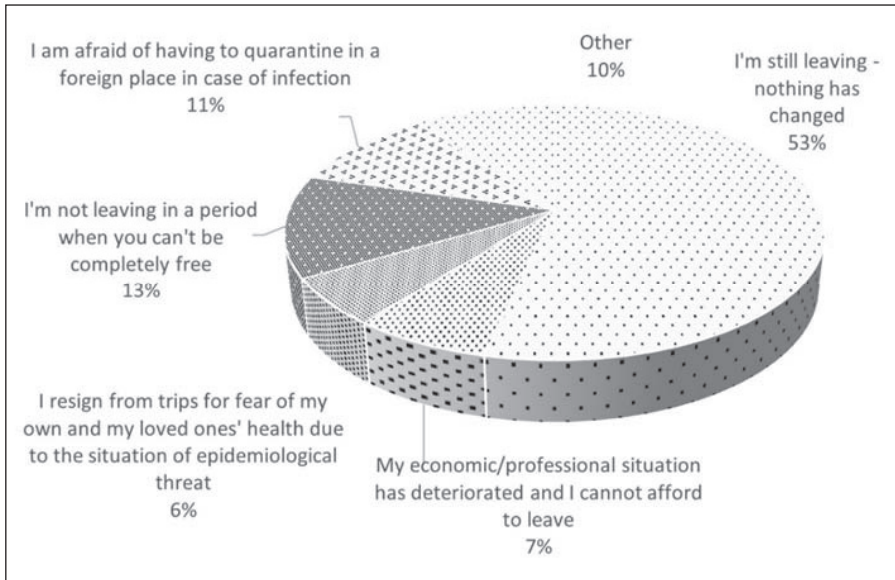


Figure 9. Changes in respondents' tourist trips after the pandemic
Source: Own elaboration based on survey.

to other answers among which the most common were those suggesting the ever-changing regulations for entering different countries and the uncertainty associated with this, as well as confusion among the many, sometimes contradictory, informational items and regulations; the choice of domestic tourist trips instead of foreign destinations; and rising inflation, all of which we are facing at the present time, just after the pandemic, and which often

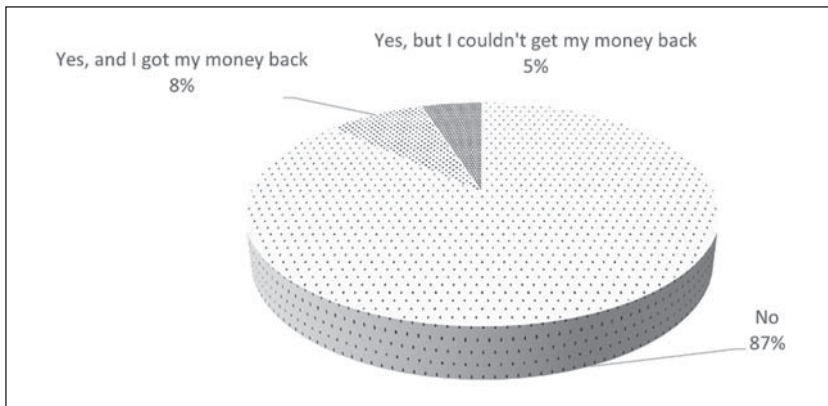


Figure 10. Respondents' need to cancel a planned tourist trip during the pandemic
Source: Own elaboration based on survey.

make it impossible to realise a tourist trip. Among the surveyed group, only 13% of participants were forced to cancel a tourist trip during the pandemic due to illness, and only a fraction of people were able to recover the costs they had already incurred as a result (Figure 10).

Conclusions

Currently, the world is struggling with a post-pandemic crisis that has affected virtually all areas of the economy, including tourism. For more than a year, the world's tourist traffic was significantly reduced, and the restrictions and limitations in force for more than two years in most countries of the world have caused one of the deeper tourism crises of recent decades. A return in 2020 to the volume of tourist traffic at the level of the 1960s is undeniably a huge problem for businesses and the entire tourism sector.

Consumers, influenced by the fear of rapidly changing entry regulations to individual countries, began to delay the purchase of tourist packages, but also, for example, air tickets themselves, until the last moment. Vacation organisers, wanting to inspire confidence and a sense of security shaken by the pandemic situation, tried to make the terms of tourist events more flexible by introducing additional services. Most often, these were services of additional insurance covering COVID-19, the possibility of changing the date of the holiday or reimbursement of the cost of the trip in the form of a voucher upon a positive test for COVID-19. The pandemic has significantly changed tourism behaviour and needs. Conducted surveys indicate that tourism decisions made by young respondents have changed, adjusting to the pandemic and current conditions. In particular, it is noticeable that interest in foreign travel has declined in favour of domestic trips [Wawoczny 2021, et al.]. At the same time, it should be noted that this trend is slight in the case of the group of young people, who, even during the pandemic, travelled more willingly and frequently than people older than them [UNWTO 2022b].

The directions of travel did not change more – domestic trips were dominated by standard vacation destinations, such as the north of the country with the Baltic coast and Masuria, the south with the Tatra Mountains in the lead, and larger cities. Foreign travel was practically limited to the European region, focusing on the south of the continent in the Mediterranean region [Kociszewski, Kugiejko 2021, et al.]. There is also a noticeable change in the frequency and length of the undertaken trips – a reduction in the number of trips per year and their duration. It is noteworthy that tourist cities, which during the pandemic were badly affected by reduced tourist traffic, closed cultural facilities, etc. in light of the results of the surveys, and lost few visiting respondents. What can be seen here is a trend that became widespread during the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, namely

“become a tourist in your own city”. Given that the vast majority of respondents are residents of large cities, it can be assumed that for this reason, among others, urban tourism during the pandemic period did not lose their interest and popularity. This was fostered by the various campaigns organised in cities to facilitate and enable people to visit and explore tourist attractions on their own (e.g. by providing audio guides, digital publications, e.g. in Cracow, Lublin or Warsaw). They seem to have been so interesting and engaging that this is one initiative that could also successfully take hold in the post-pandemic period in order to interest and attract a wider audience.

The most common form of trip organisation used by respondents before the pandemic was individual organisation or the use of trips organised by a fellow traveller, while during the pandemic, self-organised trips became even more popular. Among the surveyed group, the most important factor taken into account when planning a trip and choosing a tourist destination is its cost, which is also confirmed by the results of research, among others, by Dębski et al. [2019], indicating that due to fairly low financial possibilities, minimising the cost of a trip plays a key role for a group of young tourists. On the other hand, it should be noted that both before and currently, young tourists very rarely purchase ready-made travel packages at travel agencies.

During the pandemic, some of those surveyed began using additional services to improve travel comfort and safety, such as health insurance and cancellation, which tour operators began offering in order to make event conditions more flexible and retain customers. Even before the pandemic, respondents identified ODYSSEUS travel information and trip cancellation insurance as the least useful elements in planning and organising trips. In both cases, the emergence of the pandemic caused an increase in their popularity (but very little), with trip cancellation insurance rising to become the third most important service.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the factor that definitely differed from the others was the hygiene standard of the lodging facility, which was then rated by respondents as the least important. The pandemic, however, caused respondents to attach more importance (minimally) to hygiene standard, and its importance did not increase much. It should be noted that the surveyed group - young tourists, is a rather specific cohort, characterised by greater courage in their decisions. This is not a group that has paid and continues to pay a lot of attention to sanitary restrictions, keeping social distance or other issues important to older age groups, as also exhibited in other available research [e.g., Sztuk 2021].

Among the main reasons for not undertaking or limiting tourist trips, respondents primarily cited fear of passing quarantine and problems with rapidly changing regulations (rather than fear of getting sick). A major reason for limiting post-pandemic travel, on the other hand, is the deteriorat-

ing global economic situation, which appears to be a likely major factor inhibiting the development of international tourism in coming years.

Tourism recovery projections prepared by the World Tourism Organization [UNWTO 2023a,b] indicate that tourism, in most regions of the world, should return to more or less pre-pandemic levels as early as during the current year – 2023. The exception is the Asian-Pacific region, which was virtually completely closed to travellers for a long period of time and then imposed very restrictive entry conditions. As a result, is not expected to rebound until 2024. However, analyses show that international tourist traffic in 2022 outperformed the projected results, recovering 63% of pre-pandemic levels. Based on scenarios for 2023, it is estimated that international tourism traffic could reach up to 95% of pre-pandemic levels. Nonetheless, serious risks still await the tourism sector, especially economic and geopolitical ones, and obstacles to the plan for the volume of foreign tourist traffic include predictions that tourists will continue to opt for micro-tours and trips close to home, primarily in response to difficult economic conditioned.

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CURRENT TRENDS ON THE WELLNESS TOURISM MARKET IN LIGHT OF SELECTED REPORTS ANALYSING THE EFFECTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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*Dominik Jurasieński****


Abstract


Purpose. The aim of the article is to analyse current trends in the health tourism (HT) sector, with particular emphasis on wellness tourism (WT) and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the functioning of this sector.


Method. The article is based on the use of several different research methods. Empirical research (questionnaire-survey) was carried out and the content of selected reports regarding trends on the health tourism market was analysed using a table and the so-called 'word cloud' technique. The whole paper is supplemented with literature studies, especially concerning analysis of the above-mentioned industry reports. Ten reports from various international institutions were subjected to detailed analyses (their list can be found in the 'References' section), which are devoted to examining trends in the wellness tourism market with regard to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on this segment of the tourism market. As part of our the authors' research, 20 of the most important current trends were identified using the ChatGPT-4 tool. They were further subjected to preliminary analyses as part of a survey conducted among students of the University of Physical Education in Kraków, both at initial and final stages of education (585 students from both B.A. and M.A. from each field of study).

Results. As part of the conducted literature research, an increase in the global value of the wellness economy was identified, which is confirmed by the result of USD 5.6 trillion in global revenue for 2022, despite the earlier occurrence of the pandemic. The global scale of the disease influenced the spread of new trends among tourists related not only to maintaining mental health, leading a healthy lifestyle and the development of wellness tourism, but also trends connected with travel, technologies and the impact of sustainable development on wellness tourism. The present study (word cloud, questionnaire constructed on the basis of the ChatGPT-4 analysis addressed to students of the University of Physical Education in Kraków, and a table analysing selected reports and distinguishing trends), allows to indicate general consistency of the currently identified trends in the HT industry.

Research and conclusions limitations. The study is based on available literature sources and research targeted at students of the University of Physical Education in Kraków, thus, the results may

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not fully reflect the diversity of the global HT sector. This limitation results from the narrow nature of the research and barriers related to cultural and geographical differences. It is desirable to conduct broader research involving a greater number of respondents.

Practical implications. The conclusions indicate the need to adapt tourist offers to new trends and post-pandemic consumer expectations.

Originality. In the article, data is integrated from various sources, offering a comprehensive view regarding the trends and impact of the pandemic on the HT sector as well as future directions of its development.

Type of paper. In the article, the results of a literature review and the conducted empirical research are presented.

Keywords: wellness tourism, health tourism, trends, pandemic, COVID-19, health, healthy lifestyle, wellness, sustainable development.

Introduction

The basic meaning of analysing trends (and megatrends) in health tourism is to be aware of the constant changes taking place in the environment and within the tourism system. They should be detected and our business models adapted to them. Attention should be focused on those changes that are taking place ‘today’, but the most important consequences will only be devoted to ‘tomorrow’ [Alejziak, Zmysłony 2022]. The basic value resulting from knowledge of trends, especially megatrends, which are permanent tendencies affecting society and the economy on a global scale, determining directions of further development and generating transformations taking place in individual sectors of the economy and areas of life, lies in the fact that that it broadens the horizon of viewing reality to include issues that are still poorly visible and are associated with uncertainty. In this context, it is worth mentioning the significance of the ‘black swan’ phenomenon in market analyses and forecasts, which can have huge impact on the economy and society, an example of which is the COVID-19 pandemic¹. As a result, the following article will point out the research gaps occurring from the review of selected reports, point out future directions with the possibility of applying artificial intelligence.

Although the concepts of trends and tendencies are often considered to be analogous, there are subtle differences between them. The concept of a trend has a more measurable dimension and refers to quantitative changes that can be measured with numbers, statistics or indicators. For example, an increase in the number of people travelling, the growing popularity of a given product or service, changes in market prices or the number of

¹ ‘Black swans’ are perceived as something that symbolizes the difficulty (and in some cases, even the pointlessness) of predictions based on past experience (and forecasting models built on them). It is characteristic that, despite their unpredictability, such phenomena can, after some time, be logically explained, their causes determined, etc. [Alejziak, Zmysłony 2022, p. 186].

events sold are examples of trends that can be analysed using numerical data. Trends, however, have a less tangible and rather qualitative dimension. The term 'tendency' may refer more to qualitative changes or directions of development that are more difficult to express numerically. Trends may include changes in consumer preferences, changes in social behaviour or directions of technological development. These will be phenomena more complex and difficult to capture and require more subjective analyses. As mentioned, although in practice these terms can often overlap and are used interchangeably in various contexts of data analysis and social phenomena, in this article, these terms are used together, however, without clearly indicating which phenomenon, process or market change, being rather a tendency or trend.

The fundamental difference between health tourism and wellness tourism is the range of services provided. Health tourism is travel for treatment, medical interventions or therapies. It includes both domestic and international travel to obtain lower medical costs, higher quality care or access to specific care not available in the patient's country of residence. Within its framework, medical tourism and wellness tourism are distinguished. Wellness tourism is travel to improve health and well-being through disease prevention and health-promoting activities that typically do not require medical interventions [Smith, Puczkó 2009].

Sources point to the broader context of these differences. According to Alejziak and Zmysłony (2022), health tourism in general encompasses three main components, with wellness tourism being one of them, but considered dominant in both economic and social terms. Smith and Puczkó (2009) state that wellness tourism focuses on methods to improve quality of life, while the Global Wellness Institute (GWI) offers comprehensive reports that show the development and impact of wellness tourism on the wider economy [GWI 2023, p. 8].

Health tourism is thus a broad term that includes both medical and preventive measures, while wellness tourism focuses on preventive and holistic methods to improve overall well-being. Despite their overlap, the differences in definition are apparent and important to understanding the full range of services offered under each of these forms of tourism. The place of wellness tourism in the health tourism system and its basic characteristics are shown in Figure 1.

Health tourism is most often defined as the part of tourism characterised by the active pursuit of improving and balancing all major areas of life - physical, mental, emotional, professional, intellectual and spiritual health. Wellness tourism, understood as in the presented figure, is treated as trips that concern all people travelling outside their place of permanent residence in order to maintain or improve their health and well-being, which involves visiting places that are attractive in terms of tourism, pro-

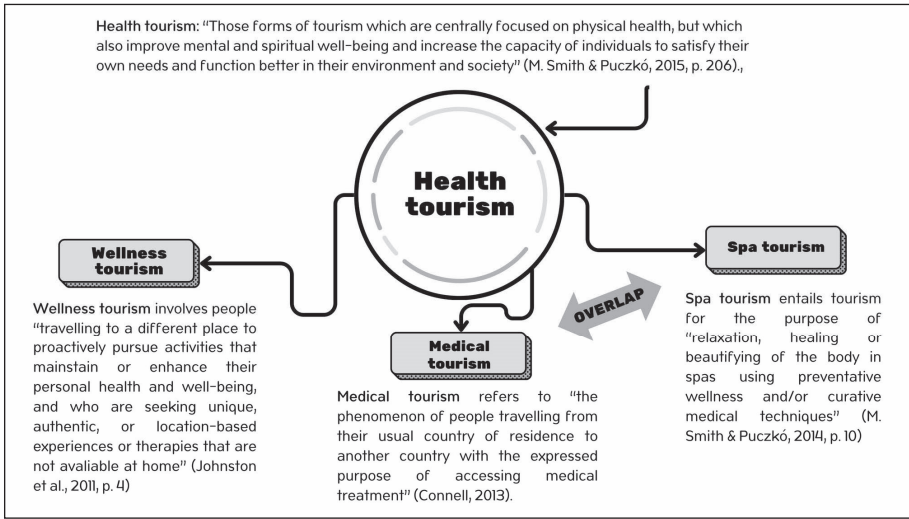


Figure 1. Overview of health-tourism definitions: concept of wellness tourism definition.

Source: Own elaboration based on [EU 2017, p. 16].

viding unique and authentic experiences. According to the Global Wellness Institute (GWI), there are essentially two basic types of wellness tourists [GWI 2021, p. 75]:

- **Primary wellness travel** refers to trips in which the trip itself, the destination, and the activities are primarily motivated by wellness.
- **Secondary wellness travel** refers to trips where wellness is not the primary motivation for the trip, but wellness affects some choices and activities because the traveller would like to maintain good health and/or his/her wellness lifestyle during the trip.

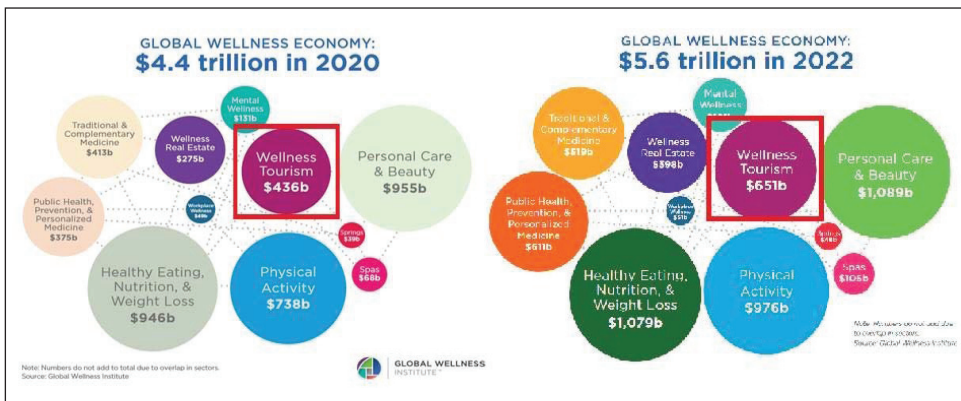


Figure 2. Global Wellness Economy and Wellness Tourism in 2020 and 2022.

Source: [GWI 2021, p. 1 : GWI 2023, p. 1].

The analyses presented later in this paper basically concern both types of tourists, and although depending on a specific report they may be focused more on one of them, it should be assumed that the described trends concern broadly understood wellness tourism, which is one of the important elements of the so-called global wellness economy, the scope and economic dimension of which in the 'pre-pandemic' and 'pre-post-pandemic' period are well-illustrated by the information and data contained in two reports of the Global Wellness Institute from 2021 and 2023, and especially the patterns derived from them presented in Figure 2 [GWI 2021, p. 1, GWI 2023, p. 1].

Tourism, as a dynamically developing economic sector, is subject to constant changes, which are dictated by both global phenomena and the evolution of customer preferences. In recent years, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been particularly visible, as it has radically changed the expectations and behaviour of tourists.

The COVID-19 pandemic, surprising with regard to its global scale and intensity, became an event that has fundamentally transformed the functioning of many sectors around the world, not sparing the tourism industry, including the wellness tourism sector. This crisis situation, characterised by global lockdowns, travel restrictions and constantly changing safety as well as hygiene guidelines, has presented the sector with a number of unprecedented changes. These include very significant regression in terms of turnover in wellness tourism, as evidenced by the data presented in Table 1. It is shown that on a global scale, during the first year of the pandemic, its level decreased by more than half, and by 2022, it did not return the pre-pandemic level.

Table 1. Wellness Economy by Sector in the 2019-2022 period:
Market Size of Wellness Tourism

	Market Size (US\$ billions)				Average Annual Growth Rate	
	2019*	2020*	2021	2022	2019-2020	2020-2022
Personal Care & Beauty	\$1,066.3	\$924.2	\$1,048.2	\$1,088.7	-13.3%	8.5%
Health Eating, Nutrition & Weight Loss	\$911.3	\$948.7	\$1,046.2	\$1,079.3	4.1%	6.7%
Physical Activity	\$875.9	\$746.8	\$927.1	\$976.3	-14.7%	14.3%
Wellness Tourism	\$720.4	\$350.6	\$466.8	\$650.7	-51.3%	36.2%
Public Health, Prevention & Personalized Medicine	\$358.2	\$537.2	\$600.9	\$610.9	50.0%	6.6%
Traditional & Complementary Medicine	\$486.6	\$449.6	\$502.4	\$518.6	-7.6%	7.4%
Wellness Real Estate	\$225.2	\$274.0	\$341.2	\$397.7	21.6%	20.5%

Mental Wellness	\$130.2	\$142.6	\$165.5	\$180.5	9.5%	12.5%
Spas	\$113.8	\$69.9	\$82.1	\$104.5	-38.6%	22.3%
Workplace Wellness	\$52.2	\$47.9	\$49.6	\$50.6	-8.2%	2.8%
Thermal/Mineral Springs	\$65.7	\$39.9	\$45.4	\$46.3	-39.2%	7.7%
Wellness Economy	\$4,931.7	\$4,463.5	\$5,193.3	\$5,611.6	-9.5%	12.1%

* 2019 and 2020 figures for most sectors have been revised since GWI released the previous version of the Wellness Economy Monitor (see box on Page 10 for more details)

Note: Figures do not sum to total due to overlap in segments.

Source: Global Wellness Institute, based on extensive primary research and secondary data sources.

Source: [GWI 2023, p. 5].

In response to the pandemic, consumers have demonstrated a number of changes in travel preferences. For tourism enterprises, flexible and quick adaptation of the offer to changing customer expectations is always an extremely significant factor. It is also a key to success. Understanding and adapting to changing trends and customer preferences are therefore essential for sustainable development in the tourism industry. Only through a flexible and innovative approach can one meet challenges and take advantage of new opportunities brought on by the rapidly changing world of tourism.

The aim of this article is to analyse tendencies and trends occurring on the contemporary tourism market, especially in that part of it referred to as wellness tourism. Moreover, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the further development of tourism is examined, especially in the health tourism sector. The fundamental questions that guide this analysis are the following:

- What current trends and tendencies can be distinguished on the health tourism market?
- What is the practical impact in terms of currently emerging trends and tendencies?
- How has the pandemic affected the perception and consumption of health and wellness tourism services, and what assumptions can be drawn for the future of this dynamically developing industry?

Answers to these questions are necessary to understand current trends in the broadly understood wellness economy and to be able to forecast future directions in the development of health and wellness tourism.

Applied methods and research techniques

To obtain answers to the questions presented above, several research methods and techniques were applied. In order to compare the reports appearing in selected publications and industry reports with the actual and current

preferences of tourists, in-depth literature studies were carried out, as a result of which 10 industry reports published between the 2021-2023 research period were selected for detailed analyses.

The criteria for selecting reports for analysis included:

- thematic relevance: reports had to cover trends in wellness and health tourism in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic,
- currentness: selected reports were published between 2021-2024 to ensure that the data is current,
- reputation and credibility of sources: selected reports from recognized international institutions and industry organizations.

They were subsequently subjected to quantitative and qualitative analysis. In this 'report' part of the research, a technique called 'word cloud' was also implemented, using the WordArt online platform. This allowed to identify the dominant topics discussed in the analysed reports as well as the main trends in health and wellness tourism. The conducted analyses further allowed for the identification of trends and tendencies in selected industry reports regarding broadly understood wellness tourism. Each report was analysed in terms of the presence or absence of trends and tendencies occurring on the market. The results of this analysis were presented in the form of a table, thanks to which it can be seen which trend or tendency and what content occurred in the selected report. The final research method was a diagnostic survey in the form of questionnaires conducted among students studying various fields at the University of Physical Education in Kraków. The research was a pilot study, and the research tool in the form of a special questionnaire was developed based on the response generated by ChatGPT-4 (20 most important, current trends with assessment of significance). The aim of the survey was to obtain information about students' perception and opinions on trends in health tourism and to indicate the differences between their significance according to respondents and the score given by the ChatGPT-4.

Market changes and trends in the wellness tourism sector – in light of analysing selected industry reports

As tourism develops as a field of study, academic and industry literature becomes not only richer in quantitative terms, but also more complex. There are now many valuable, publicly available publications in which the results are presented of research conducted on a global scale. By analysing a wide range of sources and conducting a systematic review of existing reports on the tourism industry, this chapter aims to isolate current tendencies and trends on the health tourism market. This is particularly important considering the post-pandemic reality, which in the case of sectors such as health tourism, has many specific features.

Constant observation and knowledge of tendencies and trends occurring on the market are the basic conditions for achieving success in any business activity. However, in the case of a phenomenon as variable and dynamic as tourism, such activities are of particular significance. All the more so because, firstly, the tendencies and trends in tourism are currently changing more and more rapidly, and secondly, changes sometimes occur that are caused by factors of a specific nature which are difficult to predict, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. With all this in mind, in the next part of the work, analyses are carried out regarding the most significant tendencies and trends that have been emerging on the health tourism market in the last five years, especially those related to the pandemic. This was done based on analyses of selected reports published by leading scientific institutions and the most important international tourism organisations.

The institution that, during the COVID-19 pandemic and in the years immediately following it, published many reports and other materials regarding the situation on the tourism market and the impact that the pandemic had on its further development, as well as some new trends caused by it, is the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) – that is the most important (and only intergovernmental) international tourism organisation. One such report created by UNWTO is “The Impact of Covid-19 on Tourism” [2023], in which a comprehensive analysis is given concerning the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global sector tourism between 2020-2022, showing both deep declines in the number of international tourist arrivals and financial losses for the industry. The pandemic led to the worst year on record for global tourism in 2020, when international tourist arrivals fell by 72%, from 1.465 billion in 2019 to 407 million – a loss almost twice the number of recorded arrivals in 2019. The total loss to global tourism between 2020 and 2022 was estimated at \$26 trillion in export revenues, with the direct impact on global GDP falling from 4% in 2019 to 2% in 2020 and 2021, then rebounding to 2.5% in 2022. In 2021, despite a slightly better result than in the previous year, the value of the sector remained 69% lower compared to 2019. Partial recovery occurred in 2022, with 963 million international arrivals, which was still 34% lower than as before the pandemic. The Asian-Pacific region was the hardest hit by travel restrictions, recording the largest declines in tourist arrivals. Europe, North and South America saw arrivals increased in 2021, but are still below pre-pandemic levels [UNWTO 2023, p. 5].

Changes in consumer behaviour during the pandemic allowed to highlight an increase in average travel spending, largely, due to longer stays and the willingness to spend more at destinations. The most popular tourist destinations in 2022 were different compared to those pre-pandemic, reflecting changing traveller preferences and the impact of various COVID-19 restrictions on global tourism [UNWTO 2023, p. 6].

Another interesting report in which the situation on the tourism market was diagnosed and the prospects for its development defined is “The Return of Travel” [2022]. The study conducted by Accor allowed to largely confirm the changes described above, while showing optimism within the context of the travel scale return in 2022, at least in relation to Northern Europe, which was the primary geographical area of analyses. In the study, which involved 6,000 people from Great Britain, the Netherlands, Germany, Poland and Russia, it was demonstrated that respondents planned to spend an average of 39% more on travel in 2022 compared to 2019, and make an average of four trips. It was also revealed in the study that two-thirds of Europeans travel to improve their mental well-being and relieve stress. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted travel plans, as there were 21% of respondents who had to postpone one or more trips due to the coronavirus, while 18% had to cancel one or more trips altogether. Expectations for the travel industry have changed, with booking flexibility and high sanitation standards topping the list of priorities for travellers in 2022. It was also shown in the survey that 31% of respondents want higher standards related to improving health and safety, and 30% desire more flexibility in terms of booking changes. The change in the way tourists planned to travel in 2022 is noteworthy, as 16% of respondents expected a reduction in the number of trips made by air, while 18% exhibited an increasing preference for travelling by railway and car. Moreover, increased awareness of sustainability was a priority and influenced traveller decisions. As much as 87% of respondents considered sustainable development and the impact of travel on climate and the planet as an important factor in travel planning.

It is worth highlighting that the analysed report, unlike other works of this type based on existing data (research desk), was largely based on empirical research. Accor’s study revealed a positive attitude towards travelling in 2022, with higher spending and the number of planned trips, but also indicated a change in priorities and expectations towards the tourism industry. Flexibility, sanitary standards, sustainability and technology, according to researchers, were key elements of travel in the post-pandemic years [Accor, 2022].

A study on consumer travel attitudes and expectations, conducted on behalf of the European Travel Commission by Silverlining Research, “Exploring consumer travel attitudes and expectations to drive tourism recovery” [2022] – the European Travel Commission, provides equally valuable information regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism industry and future traveller behaviour. According to the report, the pandemic has significantly influenced travel behaviour, forcing consumers to follow new guidelines, avoid crowded places and invest in travel insurance. There has been a temporal trend towards shorter, more local trips, and the pandemic has motivated many travellers to plan their trips more

carefully and in more detail. In the research, the most desired initiatives resulting from the pandemic that consumers would like to maintain in the future were revealed, including flexible cancellation policies and increased hygiene standards. The conclusions of the study indicate significant impact of the pandemic on future travel behaviour, with emphasis on the need for the tourism industry to adapt to new trends and consumer expectations, including flexibility, safety and sustainable development [ETC 2022].

Considering the preferences of travellers cited in the studies above-mentioned, it is important to pay attention to the economic dimension of health tourism, especially the part that is wellness tourism. The previously cited 2022 report by GWI (Global Wellness Institute) defines wellness as the active pursuit of health and well-being through a variety of activities and life choices, while emphasizing that the term ‘wellness’ goes well beyond physical health, encompassing various dimensions: including mental, emotional, spiritual, social and environmental; and pointing out that it is a rapidly developing and diversified sector. In 2020, the global wellness economy reached a value of approximately USD 4.4 trillion from 11 sectors, despite the decline caused by the COVID-19 pandemic compared to the previous year, and the most profitable sector turned out to be Personal Care & Beauty – USD 955 billion, ahead of USD 9 billion Healthy Eating, Nutrition & Weight Loss – USD 946 billion [The Global Wellness Economy, Wellness Tourism, Spas, and Thermal Mineral Springs, 2021]. The global crisis related to the spread of the coronavirus has therefore had major impact on wellness sectors, especially wellness tourism.

The report provides regional analysis, showing that the Asian-Pacific region, North America and Europe are leaders in the industry, together generating 90% of the global wellness economy. In particular, it was noted that in 2020, the largest declines were recorded in Latin America and the Caribbean, mainly due to the pandemic and related restrictions. The data also indicates the significant impact of wellness tourism on the economies of some countries, highlighting its role in attracting international tourists and generating income. Additionally, the GWI report provides detailed rankings of countries according to the size of their wellness economies, with the US, China, Japan, Germany and the UK in the lead.

Correlations between wellness spending and GDP *per capita* are also analysed, indicating that higher wellness spending is often associated with higher national income – “The Global Wellness Economy: Country Rankings” [2022]. The non-profit GWI organisation supports a wide range of important industry initiatives that help advance various sectors of the wellness economy. Led by Initiative Chairs, recognised leaders in their field, GWI programmes/initiatives have played a key role in driving the growth of the multi-trillion dollar wellness economy as well as uniting the health and wellness industries. Before the end of the first half of 2024, 30 concepts

were released [Initiatives indicated by GWI <https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/initiatives/> (04 May, 2024)].

1. Aesthetic Health Initiative
2. Africa Wellness Initiative
3. AI Initiative
4. Beyond GDP Initiative
5. Breathe Initiative
6. Connecting Wellness & Lifestyle Medicine Initiative
7. Consulting Best Practices Initiative
8. Cryotherapy Initiative
9. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiative
10. Dying Well Initiative
11. Hormonal Wellness Initiative
12. Hot Springs Initiative
13. Hydrothermal Initiative
14. Massage Makes Me Happy Initiative
15. Mental Wellness Initiative
16. Nutrition for Healthspan Initiative
17. Psychedelics & Healing Initiative
18. Respiratory Wellness Initiative
19. Sleep Initiative
20. Sound Wellness Initiative
21. Sustainable Development Goals Initiative
22. Touchless Wellness Initiative
23. Wellness Architecture & Design Initiative
24. Wellness Coaching Initiative
25. Wellness Communities & Real Estate Initiative
26. Wellness for Cancer Initiative
27. Wellness for Children Initiative
28. Wellness Tourism Initiative
29. Workplace Wellbeing Initiative
30. Yoga Therapy Initiative

Studies on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the health and wellness tourism sector paint a complex picture of challenges and adaptation. On the one hand, the pandemic has caused a global economic slowdown, travel restrictions and unprecedented operational challenges for service providers in the wellness industry. On the other hand, this situation has intensified interest in health, well-being and a healthy lifestyle, which may provide long-term benefits for the sector. Additionally, COVID-19 has accelerated the shift towards virtual communication and other delivery channels across many wellness sectors, which may have lasting impact on the industry [GWI, 2021].

With the growing significance of sustainability, the report “Destination 2030: The Readiness of Global Cities for Sustainable Tourism” provides an in-depth analysis of how cities around the world are preparing to welcome tourists in a sustainable and responsible way. The report “Destination 2030, Global Cities’ Readiness for Sustainable Tourism Growth” [2022], prepared by JLL (Jones Lang LaSalle) and the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), allows to highlight that the travel and tourism sector was dynamic before the COVID-19 pandemic a growing sector of the global economy, accounting for 10.3% of global GDP and creating one in four new jobs. However, the pandemic has brought unprecedented new challenges, while also offering an opportunity to rebuild the industry in a more sustainable and inclusive way. In the study, five types of cities are distinguished depending on their approach to the organisation and management of tourism, so-called **tourism readiness** and its development strategy:

- Dawning Developers – cities with developing tourist infrastructure, with many development opportunities ahead of them.
- Emerging Performers – cities with an increasing rate of tourism development thanks to the emerging infrastructure, but which are experiencing pressure related to overpopulation.
- Balanced Dynamics – cities with developed tourist infrastructure and the potential for further development, balancing the scale and concentration of the offer.
- Mature Performers – cities with a rich tourist offer that must actively manage potential threats, pressures and diversification opportunities.
- Managing Momentum – cities that have experienced rapid growth and have an established tourist infrastructure and must balance the scale and concentration of the offer.

In the report, the eight pillars of tourism readiness are examined in detail, including scale, concentration, recreational and business offerings, environmental and urban readiness, security, and policy priorities. The analysis of 75 indicators allows to understand how different cities can develop tourism in a sustainable and future challenge-proof way. Examples of strategies used by some cities, such as Berlin, Paris, Dubrovnik, Venice and Riyadh, illustrate the different approaches to tourism management and highlight the importance of investing in infrastructure, diversifying offerings and working with key stakeholders. The report’s conclusions point to the key role of cities in rebuilding tourism after the pandemic and emphasize the need for a holistic approach to tourism planning and management that takes economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development into account [WTTC & JLL, 2022].

In turn, researchers from the Wellness Tourism Association, in their report “Wellness Travel 2030 Post-COVID19: A Pioneering Study” [2021], draw attention to growing awareness regarding the importance of resilience,

mental health and the need to maintain balance between work and private life, which directly translates into to the increased demand for wellness services and products. The study provides a comprehensive analysis concerning the future of wellness tourism, based on research conducted among 131 industry representatives (from 25 countries) and 59 representatives from academia (from 24 countries). Key findings from the report include:

- Trends and forecasts; the Covid-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the wellness tourism industry while underscoring its importance. Experts predict an increase in interest regarding wellness tourism between 2025 and 2030, highlighting new products, services and regional differences. Wellness travel is intended not only for rest, but to also actively improve one's well-being.
- Impact of the pandemic on the industry; the study considers changes in consumer behaviour caused by the pandemic, such as greater interest in mental health, preventive health care and a healthy lifestyle. The need to adapt the wellness tourism offer to new consumer expectations is emphasized, including offers that are more individualised and focused on mental health.
- The role of technology; the pandemic has accelerated the shift to virtual means of delivering wellness services, which could have lasting impact on the industry. Technology enables access to wellness services remotely, which is especially important within the context of travel restrictions.
- The significance of sustainable development; the report draws attention to the growing importance of sustainable development in wellness tourism. Travellers are increasingly looking for experiences that are not only beneficial to their well-being, but also socially and ecologically responsible.

The "Wellness Travel 2030 Post-COVID19: A Pioneering Study" [2021] report particularly allows to highlight the growing importance of wellness tourism as a response to the changing needs and expectations of consumers, especially within the context of the pandemic. The industry faces the challenge of adapting its offer to more conscious choices of consumers who are looking for health, well-being and sustainable development [WTA, 2021].

Analysing the literature on the subject, it can be seen that the pandemic has accelerated some existing tendencies and trends, such as the digitisation of wellness services, personalisation of offers or integration of wellness practices in everyday life. New concepts also appear in industry and scientific reports, such as wellness tourism practiced close to home or the increased interest in preventive health tourism, which was described, for example, in a very interesting cross-sectional article on a detailed review of the literature from the years 1970-2020 - "Medical Health and Wellness Tourism Research" [2021]. Compared to other segments of the tourism market, trav-

ellers' healthcare and wellness needs are becoming increasingly important. According to the analysis of reports on trends in broadly understood wellness and well-being, meeting the psychological needs and perception of values that constitute the basis of this tourism sector is becoming a significant aspect. In the future, greater attention is expected to be paid to the individual requirements of travellers, particularly within the context of their mental and physiological health needs. As a result, the development of research on wellness tourism will be focused on the growing interest in issues such as health and medicine.

The conducted review of the literature, especially the described reports, allows to indicate growing interest in the health and wellness tourism sector among both consumers and researchers. However, current research on medical and wellness tourists is mainly focused on North American markets. Future analyses should take greater account of geographic diversity and changing trends on the global markets. In the analysed reports, it has been emphasized that special attention should be paid to tourists coming from eastern markets, such as Eastern Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

In addition to the analyses presented above, it was decided to examine the frequency of word occurrence in the researched reports that are key to the issues of trends and tendencies present on the health tourism and wellness tourism market. This was done using the so-called 'word cloud' technique (also known as: tag cloud). It is a fairly simple tool used to graphically present the frequency of words in a given text. In a word cloud, words are usually displayed in various sizes and colours. In different, specially created

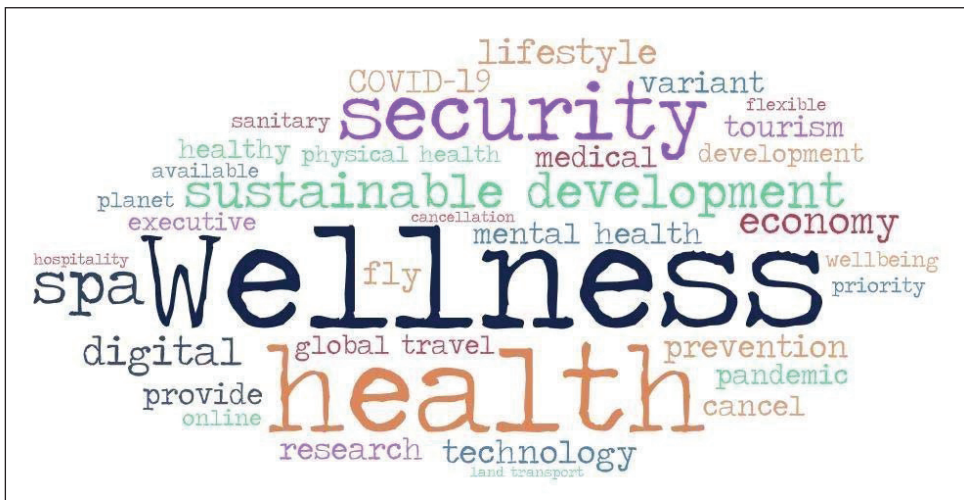


Figure 3. Cloud of key words appearing in selected reports analysed for purpose of the article.

Source: Own elaboration using WordArt program (<https://wordart.com>).

computer programs, the text is analysed, the frequency of words is carefully calculated, and then words are properly formatted and displayed in the cloud. The more often a word appears in the text, the larger and more visible its font is in the cloud. This is a tool used to visualise key terms in any document, which helps to quickly identify the most dominant topics in it . By using this tool, the following result was obtained:

The graphic content was created on April 13, 2024 using the WordArt tool. In order to select the terms most closely related to trends in health tourism, all words unrelated to the subject of the study were removed from the created cloud, as well as the most frequently occurring words – for obvious reasons – such as ‘tourism’ and ‘travel’, leaving only the key phrases. The most important words appearing in the reports selected for analysis are shown in the figure, confirming that the key term used in the analyses is the broadly understood ‘wellness’, as well as ‘health’ and ‘safety’, which are probably related to the pandemic.

The most frequently occurring words in the analysed reports presented in the figure (the larger the font, the more often the word appeared in the text of the report) largely reflect their importance for the issues of the analysed documents. In addition to those indicated above, the most frequently occurring words also include: ‘sustainable development’ and ‘lifestyle’, ‘SPA’, as well as ‘protection’, ‘pandemic’, ‘COVID-19’, which aids the understanding of how important they are within the context of the observed trends and tendencies. The tool used allowed to identify the following groups of trends:

- health – related to taking care of mental and physical health during trips, preference for active rest during holidays and trips related to biological regeneration;
- economic – related to the increased importance and resulting greater demand for affordable travel options and flexible cancellation policies;
- transport-related – changes in the form of transport chosen and the preferred length of stay;
- technological, especially IT (digital) – related to the increasing popularity of virtual travel, maintaining access to online bookings, increasing the database of available information about tourist destinations;
- lifestyle – related to increased interest in events in the form of travel packages, more frequent trips for recreation, combined with the possibility of active self-care;
- safety-related – such as: skipping trips to so-called ‘increased risk’ destinations, skipping trips to places with an increased probability of getting sick;
- sustainable development – including: preferences for regional trips, to places with less tourist traffic, awareness of choosing environmentally-friendly trips.

As part of a more in-depth analysis, it was decided to use artificial intelligence (ChatGPT-4) and ask questions about current trends. The question was as follows:

“Indicate the 20 most important changes that the COVID-19 pandemic caused on the health tourism market. For each of them, indicate the extent to which you agree with the presented change – for each change/trend, give your rating on a scale from 1 to 5 and assume that 1 means: ‘I strongly disagree’, 2 – ‘I rather disagree’, 3 – ‘I have no opinion’, 4 – ‘I rather agree’, 5 – ‘I completely agree’.

The generated response was: “The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced a number of changes to the health tourism industry that have had both short- and long-term effects on the sector. Here are the 20 most important changes in health tourism caused by the pandemic:

- Increased demand for wellness tourism: increased interest in health and well-being has resulted in an increase in demand for wellness and spa services. Rating: 4
- Increased importance of sanitary safety: hotels and health centres have increased sanitary safety measures to ensure the safety of guests. Rating: 5
- Growth of telemedicine: the pandemic has accelerated the adoption of telemedicine, which enabled remote consultations and treatment. Rating: 5
- Increased privacy and individualisation: health centres are focusing more on ensuring privacy and individual experiences. Rating: 4
- Digitisation of services: greater use of digital technologies to manage reservations and customer experience. Rating: 4
- Changing location preferences: interest in less populated and more isolated places has increased. Rating: 4
- Travel restrictions: the introduction of restrictions and the requirement to have health certificates affected international tourist traffic. Rating: 3
- Increased significance of domestic tourism: restrictions on international travel have increased interest in health services within one’s own territory. Rating: 4
- Increased hygiene awareness: increased awareness regarding the significance of personal hygiene and sanitation of facilities. Rating: 5
- Flexibility in bookings: introducing more flexible booking and cancellation policies. Rating: 4
- Mental health integration: greater emphasis on mental health in health tourism offers. Rating: 5
- Increased popularity of outdoor health services: more health activities organised outdoors. Rating: 4
- Change in customer demographics: increased interest in health tourism among younger demographics. Rating: 4

- Strengthening local economies: greater interest in local health services as a form of economic support. Rating: 3
- Development of ecotourism: combining care for health with care for the environment. Rating: 4
- Importance of safety certificates: increasing significance of health safety certificates as a factor influencing the choice of destination. Rating: 4
- Increased significance of travel insurance: greater awareness regarding the significance of travel insurance covering health care. Rating: 5
- Development of health infrastructure in tourist destinations: investments in health infrastructure to meet new requirements. Rating: 4
- Increasing transparency in communication: introducing more transparent communication regarding safety measures and health protocols. Rating: 4
- Development of health packages: greater offer of health packages aimed at specific needs, e.g. related to immunity or stress relief. Rating: 4

“I evaluate these changes based on my observations of industry trends and their impact on the consumer experience and their impact on the health travel industry”.

It was decided to verify the answer generated via artificial intelligence by conducting a survey and comparing the obtained results. The research was based on data obtained from a survey conducted among students of the University of Physical Education in Kraków (585 respondents from 14 fields of study, both B.A. and M.A. studies). 38% of all students were from the following field of study: Tourism and Recreation, Health Tourism, Adventure Tourism. The content of the questionnaire included answers to questions about opinions on trends in health tourism generated by ChatGPT-4. The survey consisted of a series of statements to which respondents answered using a Likert scale from 1 to 5, where 1 meant ‘I strongly disagree’ and 5 meant ‘I strongly agree’. The data were statistically analysed to determine the average ratings and the distribution of responses. Additionally, respondents provided demographic information such as age, gender, degree and field of study.

In the analysis, it was noted that the highest scores regarded:

- Increased transparency in communication (average: 4.01), which highlights the growing demand for clear and detailed information on safety measures and health protocols;
- Development of health packages (average: 4.04), indicating an increase in the interest regarding health services tailored to individual needs.

The lowest scores were received by statements concerning:

- Increased privacy and individualisation (average: 3.54), which may indicate moderate enthusiasm towards the personalisation of travel services;

- Digitisation of services (average 3.54), which may be due to the lack of appropriate technology implementation.

The increase in the significance of domestic tourism and restrictions on international travel (average ratings of 3.70 and 3.92, respectively) indicate that the pandemic has had significant impact on traveller preferences, promoting tourism closer to home. The trend towards increased sanitation measures and health awareness was also reflected in respondents' responses, suggesting long-term changes in the tourism industry.

In the table we have summarised the ranks assigned by ChatGPT-4 and the average score assigned by students. It is important that the presented data are weighted averages for 585 respondents, which gives them significant statistical significance. The difference between the average rating of ChatGPT-4 and respondents, e.g. 0.1, may seem small, but in the context of a large number of respondents it is significant and it shows big differences in the perception of a given trend.

Table 2. Comparison of average ChatGPT-4 and student scores

Trend	ChatGPT-4 score	Student score
1. Development of telemedicine: pandemic accelerated adaptation of telemedicine, which enabled remote consultations and treatment.	5	3.71
2. Increased demand for wellness tourism: increased interest in health and well-being resulted in increase in demand for wellness and spa services.	4	3.83
3. Increased importance of sanitary safety: hotels and health centres increased sanitary safety measures to ensure safety of guests.	5	3.80
4. Increased privacy and individualisation: health centres focusing more on ensuring privacy and individual experiences.	4	3.54
5. Digitisation of services: greater use of digital technologies to manage reservations and customer experience.	4	3.54
6. Changing location preferences: increased interest in less populated and more isolated places.	4	3.62
7. Travel restrictions: introduction of restrictions and requirement to have health certificates has affected international tourist traffic.	3	3.92
8. Increased importance of domestic tourism: restrictions on international travel have increased interest in health services within one's own territory.	4	3.70
9. Increased hygiene awareness: greater awareness of personal hygiene and sanitation facility importance.	5	3.69
10. Flexibility in bookings: introduction of more flexible booking and cancellation policies.	4	3.78
11. Mental health integration: greater emphasis on mental health in health tourism offers.	5	3.77
12. Increased popularity of outdoor health services: more health activities organised outdoors.	4	3.69

13. Shift in customer demographics: increased interest in health tourism among younger demographics.	4	3.87
14. Strengthening local economies: greater interest in local health services as economic support form.	3	3.76
15. Development of ecotourism: combining care for health with care for environment.	4	3.62
16. Importance of safety certificates: increasing importance of health safety certificates as factor influencing destination choice.	4	3.84
17. Increase in travel insurance significance: greater awareness of travel insurance importance covering health care.	5	3.62
18. Development of health infrastructure in tourist destinations: investing in health infrastructure to meet new requirements.	4	3.82
19. Increasing transparency in communication: introducing more transparent communication regarding safety measures and health protocols.	4	4.01
20. Development of health packages: larger offer of health packages aimed at specific needs, e.g. immunity or stress relief.	4	4.04

In the digital version of the article, the cells are highlighted in colours, while in the paper version they are highlighted in shades of grey:

- Green colour/medium grey shade – value closest to the average result indicated by ChatGPT-4;
- Yellow colour/lightest grey shade – higher value than the average result indicated by ChatGPT-4;
- Red colour/darkest grey shade – value lower than the average result indicated by ChatGPT-4.

Source: own elaboration based on ChatGPT-4 analysis and pilot study addressed to students of the University of Physical Education in Kraków.

Comparing the ratings generated by the ChatGPT-4 with student scores for various health tourism trends, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- In the majority of trends (13 of 20), ratings are most similar between ChatGPT-4 and students, suggesting general agreement regarding the significance of these trends. This concerns aspects such as the digitisation of services, the increase in the popularity of outdoor health services and the development of ecotourism.
- In five cases, ChatGPT-4 scores were higher than those awarded by students. All of these cases concerned issues related to safety, health and new technologies (e.g. development of telemedicine, increasing importance of sanitary safety, integration of mental health). This may indicate that ChatGPT-4 places greater emphasis on aspects related to the immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its long-term effects.
- In two cases (travel restrictions and strengthening local economies), the student rating was higher than that of ChatGPT-4. This may suggest that students perceive greater significance of these trends within the context of ongoing socio-economic changes.

The results of the study turned out to be so extensive that their broader analysis will be presented in a separate article.

Concluding, the majority of trends were assessed uniformly, which indicates that both students and ChatGPT-4 perceive similar directions of changes in health tourism. Differences in assessments may reflect varying perspectives on what changes are considered most significant or critical in the face of the pandemic and its aftermath.

High scores for telemedicine, sanitary safety and mental health integration given by the ChatGPT-4 may indicate that these areas will be crucial to the future of health tourism, while students may pay more attention to more practical aspects such as travel restrictions and support local economies.

The final stage of the research was a thorough analysis of individual, selected reports, thanks to which the occurrence of a given trend or tendency related to the wellness tourism market was described. In the table below, 10 selected reports are presented along with an indication concerning the presence or absence of trends and tendencies. Based on this, the results are as follows:

Table 3. List of selected reports as well as emerging tendencies and trends

Report name and date of publication	Trends and tendencies
Accor Northern Europe (2022)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Travel growth trend resulting from restrictions caused by Covid-19 pandemic 2. Willingness to travel within country 3. Flexibility in booking changes 4. Increased health and safety standards 5. Increase in technology of contactless payments and customer contact 6. Decline in number of air travel in favour of car and rail travel 7. The sustainable development factor influences = direction and purpose of travel among tourists 8. Improving mental well-being and eradicating stress as factor in travel
European Travel Commission (2022)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Possibility of flexible booking (including cancellation) 2. Increased sales of insurance among travellers 3. Improving network availability (as part of work-life balance) 4. Travel to places with increased hygiene in accommodation facilities, transport and public spaces at travel destination 5. Planning trip for shorter period of time within shorter period of time from its beginning 6. Domestic travel (closer to home) 7. Alternative forms of transport (environmentally-friendly)
GWI (Wellness Tourism, Spas and Thermal/Mineral Springs) (2021)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Largest region for health spending Pacific and Asian 2. Wellness spending higher in North America 3. The impact of technology and innovation on development of wellness segments 4. The impact of "Wellness Properties" and the external environment on health services 5. Impact regarding importance of healthy eating
GWI (Country Rankings) (2022)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Asian-Pacific region is fastest growing wellness market (2017-2019) 2. Per capita wellness spending higher in North America (\$3,567) than in Europe (\$1,236)

<p>GWI (Global Wellness Economy Monitor) (2023)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Per capita spending on wellness much higher in North America (\$5,108) and Europe (\$1,596) than in other regions of world 2. 26% of all wellness tourism spending comes from international travel 3. Wellness real estate (+20.5% annual growth 2020-2022; currently 177% of 2019 levels) is fastest-growing sector in wellness economy since pre-pandemic 4. Increased significance of mental well-being as important factor for consumers 5. Increased importance of general health (prevention, public) 6. Increased importance of healthy eating 7. Increased importance of physical activity and recreation 8. Increasing importance of personal hygiene and beauty products 9. Increased importance of outdoor recreational spaces 10. Increase in purchases of sports equipment (not only for exercise, but as part of lifestyle) 11. Importance of technology and digitalisation for physical activity 12. Increasing importance of mental health and its components 13. Increasing importance of access to wellness at work 14. Increasing spending on wellness travel relative to average tourist 15. Wealthier people spend more on wellness trips 16. Hotels and resorts provide SPA and wellness services to maintain market competitiveness 17. Influence of nature and thermal springs on growth of segment and number of customers 18. North America – highest expenditure on health, nutrition and weight loss 19. North America – largest region in personal care and beauty industries (\$335 billion) 20. Growth of traditional and complementary medicine sector by relaxing regulations related to legalisation of Cannabis and CBD (USA and Canada) 21. Increasing importance of personalised medicine
<p>UNWTO Tourism Highlights (2023)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revitalisation of local tourism, travel closer to home 2. Longer stays and higher expenses (2020 and 2021) 3. The impact of sustainable development on travel and tourist responsibility at destination 4. Flexible bookings and possibility of their cancellation 5. Development of transportation in favour of cars due to travel restrictions
<p>WTA (Wellness Travel 2030 Post-Covid) (2021)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Growth in wellness sales and travel post-Covid-19 2. Increase in number of people travelling to improve well-being 3. Travel focused on physical activity and self-care 4. Impact of pandemic on booking possibilities 5. Increased demand for appropriate wellness programmes and destinations (travel)
<p>WTTC JLL (Destination 2030) (2022)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Division of cities into groups of five categories, thus determining selected trends and tendencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dawning Developers • Emerging Performers • Balanced Dynamics • Mature Performers • Managing Momentum
<p>WTCF (Agenda for the Future Development of World Tourism Cities) (2021)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase in number of urban inhabitants as lifestyle 2. Tourism can contribute to achieving goals of sustainable development 3. Impact of technology and digitalisation is changing way tourists travel, provide services and consume 4. Tourism development in urban areas affects natural resources, socio-cultural effects, community relations, etc.
<p>Medical, Health and Wellness Tourism Research (1970-2020) (2021)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Impact of technology and digitalisation on obtaining information and tourist products 2. Increased importance of customer experience 3. Negative form of WT management will have consequences among local population 4. Positive form of WT management will have positive effect on economic development of countries providing these services 5. Greater focus on individual and his/her mental as well as physical health needs

Source: own elaboration based on selected wellness reports.

Looking at the different specificities and ways of preparing the reports, the results vary, but in most of them, trends can be found related to health and sustainable development. However, trends related to economy, lifestyle and security are less frequently highlighted. The table above may be an example of the fact that not every report concerning tendencies and trends in the health tourism market will contain individual components, despite the actual trends in a given area.

It is also noteworthy that there are several significant trends common to both Table 3 and the response generated by ChatGPT-4, while reflecting similar observations and assessments within the context of tourism and wellness development. Above all, these include:

- flexibility in bookings;
- increasing importance of health, hygiene and sanitary safety;
- the importance of domestic tourism;
- significant contribution and impact of technology development and digitalisation;
- increasing importance of wellness and mental health;
- increasing importance of travel insurance.

The ChatGPT-4 pointed to two trends that were not emphasized in any of the reports, namely changes in location preferences – increased interest in less populated and more isolated places, and changes in customer demographics – a rise regarding interest in health tourism among younger demographic groups. Both of these trends were rated by artificial intelligence as important (score 4), which coincided with similar responses from survey respondents (scores 3.62 and 3.87, respectively). This allows to suggest, firstly, an increase in interest in less populated and more isolated places, which may be a response to social needs related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the search for greater security and privacy. Second of all, younger demographic groups are beginning to show greater interest in health tourism, which may reflect growing health awareness and concern for well-being among younger individuals.

Discussion

Due to constant changes over recent years, changes can be observed with regard to tendencies and trends in consumer behaviour. The number of health tourists from the wellness sector is constantly increasing, their attitudes and travel motives are also rising, which means that various behaviours and events will have key impact in shaping these trends and tendencies among various areas. Therefore, the market situation should be constantly monitored in order to understand the changes resulting from various situations and thus, to try to predict those that are independent of the market and prepare for the changes related to them.

The COVID-19 pandemic undoubtedly had unprecedented impact on the health and wellness tourism sector, fundamentally transforming consumer behaviour and demand for wellness services. This change is primarily visible in the new approach to mental and physical health, which are now a priority for most people around the world. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of mental and physical health, placing it at the top of most people's priorities in all regions of the world. This, in turn, has accelerated the evolution and adaptation of tourism offers to meet new consumer expectations, which have significantly shifted away from traditional forms of recreation in favour of services focused on well-being, strengthening immunity and general regeneration. The observed increase in interest regarding mental and physical health is manifested not only in the growing popularity of wellness services, but also in the way consumers plan and experience travel.

Customers are now looking for more personalised experiences that offer opportunities for both relaxation and active health care – from yoga, meditation, cleansing diets, on to personalised health treatments. Adapting tourist offers to new consumer expectations is becoming an imperative for the industry. Tourism businesses and destinations are responding to these changes by developing products and services that act in response to the growing demand for wellness and health tourism. Service providers are adapting their offerings by introducing health and safety measures, immunity-boosting programmes, and using digital technologies to personalise experiences. Sustainability and technology play key roles in shaping the future of wellness tourism. The pandemic has intensified awareness of the need to take action to protect the environment and promote sustainable development. Health and wellness tourism, being closely related to nature and well-being, naturally fits into these aspirations, promoting responsible travel, using local resources and supporting local communities. Digital technologies, on the other hand, enable offers to be tailored to consumers' individual needs, while offering new opportunities to experience wellness services remotely. The pandemic has also accelerated the growth of virtual health and wellness services, from online meditation to consultations with health experts, opening up new prospects for the industry. In relation to the report "Destination 2030: Readiness of cities around the world for sustainable tourism development", the report entitled "Joining forces for the sustainable development of the world's tourism cities", in which the vision and action plan of the "World Tourism Cities Federation" [WTCF, 2021] is presented for the coming decade (2021-2030), is focused on promoting the sustainable development of tourist cities around the world. The significance of tourism for global GDP and employment is highlighted in the document, citing statistics before the COVID-19 pandemic, when tourism contributed over 10% to global economic growth and created over 11% of jobs. The pandemic has significantly affected the industry, causing the most serious losses

since World War 2 and prompting reflection on the future and directions of tourism development. In the report, the challenges and opportunities the pandemic brings to tourist cities are highlighted, including changes in traveller behaviour and the need to adapt to new trends, such as increased interest in health and safety. In response to these changes, the WTCF proposes 12 development goals for tourist cities, including promoting smart growth, supporting employment and tourism revenues, transforming the investment environment following the pandemic, building modern transport networks and promoting sustainable development. The vision presented in the document assumes that tourist cities will play a key role in the recovery and sustainable development of tourism, through innovation, cooperation and integration with global sustainable development goals. The need to engage various actors is also underscored, including governments, tourism businesses, tourists, urban residents and tourism organisations in achieving these objectives. The report concludes with a call for cooperation and solidarity among cities around the world to work together to revitalise tourism and create better cities for all, residents and visitors alike, based on the principles of sustainability, technological innovation, social inclusion and environmental protection.

The initial forecasts of “Accor – the Return of Travel” [2022], related to the increase in the number of trips and the change in expectations and priorities of travellers, are also confirmed in the report “Global Wellness Economy Monitor 2023”. In it presented is an in-depth analysis of the global wellness economy, which in 2022 reached the value of 5, USD 6 trillion, recording an annual growth of 12.1% from 2020 to 2022. In the document, it is highlighted how the COVID-19 pandemic has intensified interest in health and well-being, which has resulted in dynamic growth among most wellness sectors. The wellness economy is defined in the report as the aggregate of industries that enable consumers to incorporate well-being activities and lifestyles into their daily lives, spanning 11 diverse sectors such as mental health, wellness tourism, healthy eating, physical activity, wellness real estate, and more. The pandemic initially caused significant declines in the global wellness economy, but by 2022, there was a significant rebound and growth exceeded pre-pandemic levels. Seven of the 11 wellness sectors have already surpassed numbers from 2019, with wellness real estate being the fastest growing sector, indicating consumers’ growing awareness of the environment’s role in their physical and mental health. The growth of the wellness economy is driven by long-term trends of increased interest in health and well-being, which intensified during the pandemic. At the same time, the report points to the need for the industry to adapt to new consumer expectations, especially within the context of sustainable development, digital technologies and a personal approach to health and wellness.

In conclusion, the “Global Wellness Economy Monitor” [2023] provides detailed data and analysis on the current state of the global wellness economy, revealing its importance and growth potential in the coming years, especially within the context of ongoing social and economic changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic [GWI, 2022].

According to literature on the subject, the COVID-19 pandemic not only put pressure on the health and wellness tourism sector, forcing immediate adaptation to changing conditions, but also accelerated existing trends, focusing the industry even more on individual consumer needs, mental health, sustainability and the use of technology. These changes, although caused by the crisis, may lay the foundation for sustainable growth and innovation in the health and wellness tourism industry.

Conclusions

Analysis of the reports and articles collected and cited in this article regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the health and wellness tourism sector allows to emphasize that despite the numerous challenges faced due to the spreading virus, the current situation may in fact constitute a strong impulse to accelerate positive changes in this industry. These changes are related not only to the way services are offered and consumed, but also to the re-evaluation that consumers make regarding mental, physical health and sustainability.

The pandemic has caused us to recognise the importance of mental health, putting it at the top of the agenda for consumers around the world. This paradigm shift is forcing the health tourism industry to transform its offers to be even more responsive to mental well-being needs. The global spread of the virus has increased awareness of a healthy lifestyle which, in turn, translates into increased interest in services that support physical and mental well-being, offering both physical activities and health programmes. The industry’s adaptation to new trends and consumer expectations, as shown by the reports presented in the discussion, is inevitable.

The pandemic has accelerated the digitisation and personalisation of services, which in the case of wellness tourism means the ability to offer personalised health programmes, training sessions and online consultations with mental health experts. In turn, the growing interest in sustainable development requires the health tourism sector to not only adapt its offers regarding ecological standards, but also to promote responsible tourism that both respects the natural and social environments. In the context of the presented conclusions, it is also important to emphasize the role of technology, which has gained great significance during the pandemic, enabling access to wellness services remotely. This, as a consequence, opens up new perspec-

tives for the industry by combining health tourism with virtual tourism, thus allowing it to reach a broader audience and offer services regardless of geographical limitations.

The analysis of available literature leads to the conclusion that the COVID-19 pandemic, despite initial turbulence, may be a catalyst for the long-term development of the health and wellness tourism sector. Enforced changes in consumer behaviour and adaptations on the part of service providers can contribute to shaping a more conscious, healthy and sustainable future of tourism. The need to adapt to new realities is both a challenge and an opportunity for the industry, enabling the redefinition of wellness and emphasizing its role in improving the quality of life on a global scale.

In addition, based on an in-depth analysis of the selected literature, we can identify several important research gaps in the area of health and wellness tourism. First and foremost, most of the research focuses on North American markets, suggesting the need to expand the analysis to regions such as Eastern Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Africa, which may exhibit different consumer preferences and needs. In addition, there is a need for a more detailed understanding of health tourist demographics, taking into account the growing interest in wellness tourism among younger age groups. Research should also take more account of the economic and social aspects of wellness tourism and its impact on local economies and communities. Systematic research on the impact of global megatrends, such as digitization and sustainability, on the health tourism sector is also an area that needs further exploration.

At the same time, an important new element described in the article, which has not appeared in the literature before, is the use of artificial intelligence (ChatGPT-4) to generate a list of key trends and compare them with student opinions. This innovative approach shows how advanced technologies can be used to analyse data and identify new trends. Analyses using artificial intelligence have identified, among other things, a shift in tourists' location preferences toward less populated and more secluded places, something that has not been fully explored before. In addition, the article points to the growing interest in wellness tourism among younger demographics, a new perspective on the future of the sector, suggesting the need to tailor offers to younger audiences. At the same time, the responses collected from students, verify in a practical way the answers suggested by artificial intelligence.

The present research allows to highlight the importance of verifying publicly available data against consumer opinions. It is their opinions that shape the current tourism market and cause constant evolution in the HT industry. Tracking changes in preferences and adapting the offer to meet current needs is the key to meeting tourists' expectations.

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Netography

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

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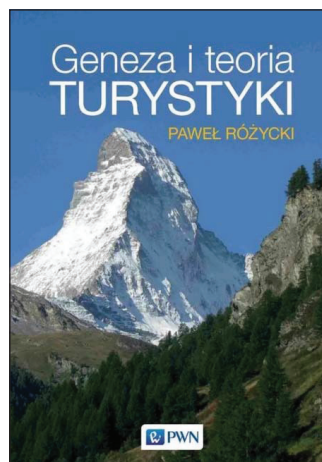
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**A BOOK REVIEW:
"GENESIS AND THEORY OF TOURISM"
BY PAWEŁ RÓŻYCKI**

Wojciech J. Cynarski*

About the Author of the Book

It is good practice in the humanities and social sciences, as well as in the scientific school of Prof. Zbigniew Krawczyk that we begin consideration of a given work by introducing the author of that work. Well, the author of the reviewed book is Assoc. Prof. Dr. Paweł Różycki, Ph.D. – researcher of tourism, author of works carried out from a humanistic perspective, who has been dealing with tourism for many years. He is an academic teacher at the University of Physical Education in Kraków; author, among others, of an interesting book titled "Tourism and Pilgrimage" (WAM Publishing House, Kraków 2017). I reached for the manuscript with interest, indicating the author's passion for the theory of tourism, especially since I had pursued a similar idea myself and this topic was close to me. I did a publishing review. Now, in turn, a post-publishing review, because the book was published by the prestigious PWN Scientific Publishing House [Różycki 2022]*.



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About the Content of the Book

The table of contents, as a description of the structure of the work and the division of its content, is fully justified, presenting the layout of a coherent whole. The reviewed book is a monographic study. Numerous issues, social facts and institutions co-constituting the phenomenon of tourism were taken into account, including a historical perspective. The author considers a wide range of literature on the subject, demonstrating appropriate erudition. The content of the book is logically coherent, presented diachronically and synchronously, and properly documented. Since it concerns tourism, a series of photos illustrating the main content was included as an addition, which constitutes additional value, both aesthetic and factual. In total, there are nine main chapters as well as an Introduction, Summary and Bibliography.

Already in the **Introduction**, we find a reference to American theorists – Goeldner and Brent Ritchie, Lohmann and Netto. The author of the book also emphasizes that he will analyse, describe and explain tourism from the perspective of humanism and Christian culture in the Western world. He encourages the reader, stating that “Theory will be presented from a humanistic perspective, relating to human experiences, impressions and thoughts that shape human attitudes and sensitivity through tourism” (p. 11).

The **Chapter One** is a synthesizing approach to the state of scientific reflection in this area. We find here references to the works of Aleziak and Winiarski, as well as Goeldner and Brent Ritchie. I recommended referring critically, at least in a few words, to the authors of other concepts of tourism theory, such as Lucjan Tuross, Tadeusz Chudoba, and to my “systemic anthropological theory of tourism”, developed together with Kazimierz Obodyński (I provide everything in the IPA bibliographic entry); see:

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- Cynarski W.J., Obodyński K. (2010), *Systemowa antropologiczna teoria turystyki jako perspektywa badań szczegółowych* [Systemic anthropological theory of tourism as a perspective of detailed research [in:] M. Kazimierczak [ed.], *Współczesne podróże kulturowe* [Contemporary Cultural Journeys], AWF, Poznań, pp. 107-120 [in Polish].
- Munsters W., Melkert M. [eds.] (2015), *Anthropology as a Driver for Tourism Research*, Garant, Antwerpen – Apeldoorn.
- Obodyński K., Cynarski W.J. (2004), *System paradigm of the theory of tourism* [in:] W.J. Cynarski, K. Obodyński [eds.], *Tourism and Recreation in the Process of European Integration*, PTNKF, Rzeszów, pp. 19-24. ISBN 83-920354-7-X.
- Obodyński K., Cynarski W.J. (2006), *The theory of tourism in system formulation* [in:] J. Kosiewicz [ed.], *Environmental Differentiations of Tourism*, Economical and Technical College, BK, Legionowo, pp. 17-29. ISBN 83-89829-26-6.
- Obodyński K., Cynarski W.J. (2006), *Teoria turystyki w ujęciu systemowym* [The theory of tourism in a systemic approach] [in:] J. Kosiewicz, K. Obodyński [eds.], *Turystyka i rekreacja, Wymiary teoretyczne i praktyczne* [Tourism and Recreation. Theoretical and Practical Dimensions], Ed. UR, Rzeszów, pp. 19-27. ISBN 978-83-7338-212-1 [in Polish].
- Tuross L. (2003), *Antropologia turystyki* [Anthropology of Tourism], Ypsilon, Warsaw [in Polish].

Nevertheless, even without this, the theoretical reflection is sufficiently described in the reviewed monograph and, in the author's view, it constitutes his original contribution to the theory of tourism. The subchapter on the history of wandering/travel is the introductory part of the chapter on the genesis of tourism. Cultural globalisation, as a significant process, the co-cause, manifestation and effect is tourism of which, has been rightly highlighted here. The last subchapter of Chapter One is devoted to values in tourism. In the case of active forms of tourism, especially mountain tourism (classified as extreme sports), the statements of hikers/travellers and mountaineers are particularly valuable in order to learn the reasons/motives for the risks they take. Is it some kind of test or a pursuit of freedom, or are these maybe extremely different motives and goals in individual cases? The author has done a lot of work to collect numerous comments from passionate tourists.

In **Chapter Two** ("Terminological issues"), we find establishment of the conceptual language. Tourism, as an encounter, is an issue that I have also discussed in several of my works on intercultural dialogue. The author is quite consistent here when he relies on the definitions of the "Kraków School". Indeed, in the era of globalisation, the role of tourism can hardly be overestimated. Incidentally, during the pandemic, this entire industry

shrank, but probably only temporarily. This concerned the very concept of "tourism" and the terms used to describe it. The conceptual language proposed here incorporates the UNWTO definitional arrangements. Despite the adoption of these findings for the purposes of economics and statistics, in the theory of tourism, it is also necessary to organise specialised terminology. The tourist is the hero of this chapter, which is a consequence of adopting this humanistic, anthropocentric vision. There is also a "traveller", a broader concept. The author proposed a typology of tourists. This is an attempt to tidy up this area, I think - successfully. Tourist attractiveness (the last subchapter) is an equally important issue for a humanist and an economist. What is this magnet that attracts tourists? This also changes over time. Currently, marketing and advertising specialists are working on the attractiveness of a product offer.

"Humanistic issues of tourism" are the topic of **Chapter Three**. The "sociological perspective of tourism" presented here refers to domestic and foreign approaches. However, I missed an important book by Zbigniew Krawczyk [Krawczyk Z. (2007), *O turystyce i rekreacji – studia i szkice* [About Tourism and Recreation – Studies and Essays], Almamater, Warsaw (in Polish)]. This chapter is similar to an application of the adopted ontological assumptions (people in the centre of tourist events) and epistemological/methodological assumptions. The author quotes John Urry's "tourist's gaze". Maybe it is worth including "tourist taste" as well?; see:

- Cynarski W.J., Obodyński K. (2006), *Tourist tasting as a form of cultural perception* [in:] J. Kosiewicz [ed.], *Movement Recreation for All*, Economical and Technical College, BK, Legionowo, pp. 291-297. ISBN 83-89829-21-5.
- Cynarski W.J., Obodyński K. (2006), *Smakowanie turystyczne jako forma kulturowej percepcji* [Tourist tasting as a form of cultural perception] [in:] J. Kosiewicz, K. Obodyński [eds.], *Turystyka i rekreacja, Wymiary teoretyczne i praktyczne* [Tourism and Recreation. Theoretical and Practical Dimensions], UR, Rzeszów, pp. 418-422. ISBN 978-83-7338-212-1 (in Polish).

Of course, impressions, inspirations and other internal experiences related to travelling and tourism are also worthy of scientific consideration. Here, we enter the areas of perception and psychology on the one hand, and axiology on the other. Reference to the sociology of free time is absolutely justified. This search for solitude far from civilization is an expression of the phenomenon of tourist "escapism" described in the literature. The next subchapter is "Philosophical aspects of tourism". Here, I suggest that, in addition to the classics, we should cite the statements of Józef Lipiec, who provides a brilliant presentation of these issues. In turn, "Psychological approach to tourism" is an indication of this important aspect rather than an in-depth reflection, which is justified because the spiritual/psychological di-

mension in this area of human activity is not only still present, but most often decisive. Therefore, the indication of the psychological dimension is a consequence of adopting the humanistic paradigm. "Motives for practicing tourism" is an issue at the intersection of psychology, pedagogy and sociology. However, this is not about the state of knowledge according to empirical research, but about an attempt to interpret, understand and explain. I really like the book by K. Przeclawski mentioned here, in which the sociological and anthropological approach is intertwined with humanistic axiology and valuation. In the last subchapter, we find a description of the relationship between host and guest. In addition to the meeting of personalities and cultures, we also refer to the phenomenon of dysfunction in tourism, which applies to areas subject to the process of touristification.

In **Chapter Four**, the author shows and interprets the relationship between tourism and physical activity. He discusses tourist "roads". It is impossible to ignore this geographical and spatial dimension of tourism. Here, we also find a historical, contextual and processual perspective. If active forms of tourism fall within the scope of recreational activity, it is worth referring to the theory of physical recreation. I also once proposed the concept of a systemic-anthropological approach: Cynarski W.J. (2010), *Spotkania, konflikty, dialogi. Analizy wybranych obszarów kultury fizycznej i turystyki kulturowej* [Meetings, conflicts, dialogues. Analysis of selected areas of physical culture and cultural tourism], 2nd ed. amended, UR, Rzeszów, pp. 63-80 (in Polish). ISBN 978-83-7338-527-6.

I looked carefully at the "Body and movement" subsection. Praise for physical activity is absolutely worthy of support. This indirectly suggests preference for active forms of tourism.

Chapter Five contains a description on the origins of tourism. The author draws upon literature on the subject, both Polish, English and German. He describes it from the beginnings of tourism in chronological order. This is not a strictly historical study, which would require division into stages/subperiods according to several time caesuras. However, referring to the monograph by Hans-Werner Prahł would allow these issues to be sorted out a bit - see: Prahł H.-W. (2002), *Tourismus* [in:] H.W. Prahł, *Soziologie der Freizeit*, F. Schöningh – UTB, Paderborn, pp. 234-247 (in German). Cf. Stegner T. (2016), *History of Tourism. Poland and the World*, University of Gdańsk Publishing House, Gdańsk. Also in part of my book *Czas wolny, turystyka i rekreacja w socjologicznej perspektywie* [Free time, tourism and recreation in a sociological perspective] (2017), I include references to the works of Prahł and Zbigniew Krawczyk, who skillfully took this historical context of the formation of contemporary tourism into account.

The conditions for the development of tourism are the main topic of **Chapter Six**. In it, we find a description of geographical, social, political

and mass culture conditions (the process of cultural globalisation). The approach is correct and consistent with the systemic paradigm, which requires such network connections and multi-factor analyses.

The conditions of tourist activity, their description and explanation, which can be found in this chapter, are well presented, with knowledge on the subject.

In turn, "Classifications and types of tourism" (**Chapter Seven**) is a fairly complete catalogue of varieties, with their characteristics. Only in the case of martial arts tourism, would I recommend adding a reference to a monograph on this topic, and in the case of congress/conference tourism - a monograph on scientific tourism; see:

- Cynarski W.J. (2015), *Turystyka naukowa w perspektywie socjologii wizualnej* [Scientific Tourism in the Perspective of Visual Sociology], Department of Cultural Foundations of Physical Education, Tourism and Recreation WWF UR, Rzeszów (in Polish).
- Cynarski W.J. (2020), *Tourism of Martial Arts: Social-Cultural Perspective*, Wydawnictwo UR, Rzeszów (bilingual monograph – in Polish and English).

In **Chapter Eight**, the author describes the "functions of tourism". This is a well-developed fragment – I have no objections. However, **Chapter Nine** seems more original: "Literature and travel and tourism". This fragment is an intellectual feast for literature connoisseurs, emphasizing the humanistic paradigm of reflection on the phenomenon of tourism. It also constitutes the conclusion of the monograph. The author cites numerous works of fiction. Aesthetic impressions and a sense of beauty, pleasure and satisfaction are values that are difficult to grasp, but they are very present and often decisive for human choices.

The **References** contain a list of approximately two hundred and seventy literature items. These are more important works of literature on the subject, written in various languages, especially monographs or chapters in thematic monographs.

Comments and Suggestions

Dr. Paweł Różycki, Ph.D., did not explicitly indicate what methodology was used by him. We can assume that this is an in-depth qualitative analysis from the perspective of a human participant of tourist events. In my opinion, this is right, because economic approaches often reduce people to the role of consumers of tourist services. However, what seems even more accurate to me is the (anthropological-)systemic perspective, befitting the new paradigm of science. Then we approach issues in their structure of connections, considering aspects of cultural context, duration and becoming/process. See:

- Cynarski W.J. (2014), *The New Paradigm of Science Suitable for the 21st Century*, "Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences", Vol. 149, pp. 269-275.
- Cynarski W.J. (2021), *Metodologia badań społecznych i antropologiczno-kulturowych w naukach o kulturze fizycznej i w obszarze turystyki* [Methodology of Social and Anthropological-Cultural Research in Physical Culture Sciences and in the Field of Tourism], Publishing House of the University of Rzeszów, Rzeszów (in Polish).
- Richards G., Munsters W. [eds.] (2010), *Cultural Tourism Research Methods*, CABI, Oxfordshire - Cambridge, MA.

Actually, the author of the book applies something similar, without naming it directly. I believe that one separate chapter on free time and its fulfilment was missing, which was the content of chapter XVI in the original version of the manuscript. This fragment was interesting, well-justified, supported by a good examination of the literature on the subject. In the book version, free-time issues appear in various subchapters.

Rating and Recommendation

Compared with other attempts to theoretically approach tourism, this is a successful endeavour. This book is probably the first of its kind, in which tourism is presented from a "general-humanistic" perspective, inter- and multi-disciplinary. The advantage here is the presentation of this socio-cultural phenomenon in accordance with the paradigm of comprehensive humanistic/cultural approaches, which was translated into the content of the discussed monograph. The content of the book deserves high praise. The author synthesizes knowledge while considering and introducing new knowledge from the field of fiction into scientific circulation. The adopted multidisciplinary approach is consistent with the recommendations of the new science paradigm.

This book can be used as an academic textbook. So far, a similar theoretical, "non-economic" approach is lacking. The only thing missing was the index of more important concepts that an academic textbook should contain, which I recommended in the publishing review. It makes it easier to find selected fragments. This monograph, as a theoretical concept, will probably also be interesting and useful for academic teachers and "tourism" researchers, theoreticians and empiricists. The above-mentioned comments and suggestions do not diminish the value of the book in question, and in most cases, constitute discussion remarks. However, I consider it advisable to enrich the next edition of this book with references to at least some of the literature items I have suggested.

The book under review was beautifully published editorially and aesthetically, in a hard cover, with a well-selected motif of a mountain peak on the cover, and with high-quality illustrative material. It is a combination of interesting content and elegance of form.

I recommend this monograph as a valuable item, interesting especially for researchers and students of tourism-related fields, as well as for tourism enthusiasts from outside the scientific community.

* * *


Paweł Różycki (2022), *Geneza i teoria turystyki [The Genesis and Theory of Tourism]*, PWN, Warsaw.


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**REPORT FROM THE 13TH INTERNATIONAL
SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE
TOURISM IN SOCIAL SCIENCES.
NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN A NEW REALITY,
KRAKÓW, 13-14 MAY, 2024**

Aleksander Panasiuk*, Bartosz Szczechowicz**

The international scientific conference organised by the Institute of Entrepreneurship of the Jagiellonian University under the banner “Tourism in the Social Sciences” has become a permanent fixture in the calendar of the most significant academic meetings in Poland on issues related to the functioning of the tourism economy. In May 2024, its 13th edition was held, this time concerning, in particular, the significance of new technologies in the new, dynamically changing social, cultural, economic, legal and political reality. Its aim, as could be read in the conference announcement, was discussion concerning the “growing role of new technologies on the tourism market” and “other determinants shaping the contemporary tourism market, and especially, the issues of: market revival after the pandemic, threats resulting from the international political situation, opportunities and the place of the tourism economy in EU financing on the 2030 horizon, other economic, social – including demographic and political – changes that affect processes regarding the functioning of the tourism market”. At the beginning of this note, let us add that in the report from a previous edition of the conference – i.e. the first organised in 2022 using the traditional formula after the COVID-19 pandemic – we expressed cautious hope that “the 13th edition of the conference organised by the Institute of Entrepreneurship of the Jagiellonian University, planned for 2024, will be met with at least

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as much interest as those from previous years”. We can now state with full conviction that the present edition has definitely – and very positively – exceeded these initial hopes.



The conference was organised in cooperation with the Polish Economic Society (PTE) – Szczecin Branch, and the Euro-Asia Tourism Study Association (EATSA). The patronage was granted by: the Secretary of State in the Ministry of Sport and Tourism – Ireneusz Raś; Rector of the Jagiellonian University in Kraków – Prof. Jacek Popiel; Mayor of Kraków – Aleksander Miszalski; President of the Polish Tourist Organisation – Rafał Szmytko; President of the Małopolska Tourist Organisation – Grzegorz Biedroń; President of the Polish Hotel Industry Chamber of Commerce – Ireneusz Węglowski; President of the Polish Economic Society – Prof. Marian Gorynia; and President of the Tourist Organisation of the Royal Capital City of Kraków – Grzegorz Soszyński. The conference was held at the facilities of the Department of Management and Social Communication of the Jagiellonian University in partnership with the Campanile Krakow South Hotel.

The conference was officially opened by the Chairman of the Scientific Committee and Director of the Institute of Entrepreneurship of the Jagiellonian University – Prof. Aleksander Panasiuk and the Chairman of the Organising Committee – Adam Jezierski, M.A. During this part of the conference, the following guests also spoke: Dean of the Faculty of Management and Social Communication, Jagiellonian University – Prof. Ewa Bogacz-Wojtanowska, Secretary of State in the Ministry of Sport and Tourism – Ireneusz Raś, President of the Euro-Asia Tourism Study Association – Prof. Kevser Cinar and President of the Polish Economic Society, Szczecin Branch – Prof. Barbara Kryk.

After the ceremonial opening of the conference, a special point of the programme was realised: the “anniversary session of the Jagiellonian University Institute of Entrepreneurship”. The conference, regardless of its substantive content, was also an opportunity to celebrate the 25th anniversary of establishing the Jagiellonian University Institute of Entrepreneurship. In connection with this, Prof. Marta Najda-Janoszka from the Jagiellonian University presented an outline of the history of the Institute and the extremely rich scientific and didactic achievements of its staff. This part of the conference was also honoured by the presence of Prof. Małgorzata Bed-

narczyk, who was the founder and head of the Department of Tourism Management and the first, long-term Director of the Institute of Entrepreneurship established on the basis of this department. The Institute currently employs 17 research and teaching employees, specialising in scientific research with regard to the area of management science and quality, in 3 main subdisciplines: tourism management, sports management and e-entrepreneurship. The Institute has approximately 500 students studying 2 M.A. fields: “Tourism and Sports Management” (specialisations: Tourism Management, Sports Management), “Social Media in Management”, and 2 post-graduate directions: “Sports Manager” and “Business Purchasing”. The Institute and its academic staff participate in educational ventures at the Jagellonian University Doctoral School of Social Sciences.

A very important part of the conference programme were the presentations by keynote speakers, which were broadcast in their entirety via Internet channels. The first speech was by Prof. Richard Robinson (Northumbria University in Newcastle/Queensland University Brisbane), who presented an extremely interesting and inspiring paper titled *Problematizing Tourism & Hospitality in the Digital Age: A Few Vignettes*. The second was by Prof. Konstantinos Andriotis (Middlesex University London) with an equally creative and stimulating presentation on *Tourism and Urban Regeneration: The Case of Lakkos (Heraklion City)*. It is worth adding that the presence of excellent keynote speakers definitely enriched the proceedings during the remaining conference sessions.

Traditionally, the conference also featured a panel entitled “EATSA Tourism Co-Creation Lab”, moderated by Prof. Desmond Wee (CBS International Business School) and Dr. Ali Afshar (Eqbal Lahoori Institute of Higher Education, Tehran, Iran). During the panel, Prof. Kevser Çınar (Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi), as the president of EATSA, presented the activities of this organisation, including in the area of creating tourist experiences in the era of new technologies, and Dr. Mona Erfanian Salim (Eqbal Lahoori Institute of Higher Education), who presented one of the projects implemented under the auspices of EATSA, concerning the implementation of the city storytelling concept to support development of tourism in urban areas (referring to the example of the city of Caldas da Rainha in Portugal).

Due to the great interest in conference participation – both active and passive – the organisers provided various options for inclusion in this event. Two plenary sessions, opening and closing the conference, were held in English and broadcast live online. In addition to them, there was a so-called “discussion panel” and a “special panel” (both in English) as well as parallel “panel sessions” (2 in English and 8 in Polish). In all these elements of the programme, approximately 110 participants were physically present – not counting people following the broadcast online. They represented all the

most important Polish scientific centres related to research and education in the field of tourism, as well as many foreign centres (Australia, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Indonesia, Iran, North Macedonia, Germany, Singapore, Slovakia, Turkey, Great Britain, Vietnam). In addition, the conference was attended by representatives of numerous local government organisations and the tourism business, which allowed for a valuable and creative confrontation of academic findings with the needs of so-called “practice”.

The first plenary session, moderated by Prof. Kevsar Cinar (Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi) and Prof. Aleksander Panasiuk (Jagiellonian University), featured Dr. Arkadiusz Tomczyk (Bournemouth University) with a paper entitled *Machine Learning-Driven Customer Segmentation: Exploring Customer Expectations of Personalisation and Willingness to Pay*, and Adam Jezierski M.A. as well as Prof. Ewa Wszendybył-Skulska (both from Jagiellonian University) with a paper on *Tourists' experiences in time of uncertainty – an analysis of eWOM before, during and after the COVID-19 pandemic*. In the second plenary session, moderated by Prof. Vanda Marakova (Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica) and Prof. Piotr Gryszel (Wrocław University of Economics), the following papers were presented: Prof. Katarzyna Podhorodecka (University of Warsaw and Ministry of Sport and Tourism) – *The future of transformative events: legal conditions and tourism dependencies in the EU*, Prof. Desmond Wee (CBS International Business School) – *Picture Europe, Picture Asia: Decolonizing gazes between East and West*, and Prof. Adam Pawlicz (University of Szczecin) and Dr. Tomasz Napierała (University of Łódź) – *War beyond national borders: Impact of Russian-Ukrainian war on hotel performances in neighbouring countries*.

The discussion panel, on the title issue of the conference – “New Technologies in New Reality”, was moderated by a team comprising Prof. Richard Robinson (Northumbria University/Queensland University Brisbane) and Prof. Ewa Wszendybył-Skulska (Jagiellonian University). Its participants were representatives of tourism organisations and enterprises: Wojciech Białecki (Hotel Life), Grzegorz Biedroń (Małopolska Tourism Organization), Adam Jezierski (Aparthotel Cztery Wiatry), Mariola Michalczyk (QR Communication), Krzysztof Paradowski (BluExperience), Ryszard Pierzchała (QR Communication), Lidia Wandas (5 Events – Marzeń Wedding Architects), Radosław Włoszek (Kraków Airport). The special panel entitled *Nuclear Heritage Tourism* was moderated by Prof. Piotr Zmysłony (Poznań University of Economics) and Dr. Małgorzata Ogonowska (Université Paris 8, France). The following papers were presented: Dr. Jovanna Janinovic (University of Montenegro), Prof. Kinga Anna Gajda (UJ Kraków), Dr. Sabine Stach (Leibniz-Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe) and Prof. Magdalena Banaszekiewicz (UJ Kraków).

The largest number of presentations took place – naturally – during the panel sessions; comprising approx. 40 of them. Without referring here to the content of individual presentations (the entire conference programme is available at: <https://przedsiebiorczosc.uj.edu.pl/tns2024>), let us just note that the collection of papers was extremely diverse in terms of the raised issues. For example, matters regarded the use of modern technologies for the purpose of undertaking physical activity, creating tourist experiences, handling tourist traffic, the functioning of cultural institutions, management of facilities providing tourist services, creating the image of tourist entities, co-creating value, caring for the safety of travellers, etc. References were made both to theoretical achievements – through literature studies and in-depth bibliometric analyses, as well as pilot study results and relevant empirical research. All this led to discussions, an exchange of views, proposals for cooperation and undertaking new research projects.

The content of many presentations will be available for review in the form of scientific texts prepared on their basis. They will be published as chapters in 2 monographs currently being created and published by the Jagiellonian University Publishing House, and in a collection of articles that will appear in 11 scientific journals: “Polish Journal of Sport and Tourism”, “Questiones Geographicae”, “International Journal of Contemporary Management”, “Studia Periegetica”, “Folia Turistica”, “Tourism Review”, “Advances in Hospitality & Tourism Research”, “International Journal of Tourism Policy”, “Turystyka – Zarządzanie, administracja, prawo”, “Journal of Qualitative Research in Tourism” and “Journal of Organizational Change Management”.

It is also worth noting that from the point of view of establishing and strengthening relations between the conference participants and the research centres represented by them, the so-called additional programme played an important role. It consisted of a cruise down the Vistula River in the vicinity of the Old Town and the Kazimierz district of Kraków (see photograph below) and a ceremonial banquet, an important element of which were memories related to the aforementioned 25th anniversary regarding the establishment and functioning of the Institute of Entrepreneurship within the structures of the Jagiellonian University. During the banquet, a specially prepared film was also shown on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the conference (its first edition took place in 2004). The content of the film was a presentation of the substantive and organisational achievements of previous conference editions.

The conference was officially closed on behalf of the organisers by the Chairman of the Scientific Committee and Director of the Institute of Entrepreneurship of the Jagiellonian University – Prof. Aleksander Panaś and the Chairman of the Organising Committee – Adam Jezierski,

M.A. They also initially announced the next, 14th edition of the conference, which is planned for 2026. We hope that it will be equally fruitful as this year's, if not more.



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“LEARN BY DOING, TEACH BY BEING”: PROFESSOR VALENE L. SMITH (1926-2024) AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL BEGINNINGS OF TOURISM STUDIES

*Sabina Owsianowska**

“Learn by doing, teach by being” – this was Valene Smith’s motto in her work as a lecturer and researcher, which is confirmed by people who participated in her classes and with whom she cooperated during her academic career. She treated travel as equally important as studies, a source of reliable knowledge about the world. In fact, it was the teacher’s ethos of providing credible information and developing critical thinking that motivated her to travel. Thanks to this, she could better perform her profession, which was also her passion. Already at the beginning of her professional path, when her students were veterans who knew the world much better than she did, she realised that geography cannot be taught only from textbooks (Smith, 2015). Krzysztof Przeclawski (1927-2014), who presented the profiles of the most important tourism researchers in his book titled “Life – it’s a journey” – wrote the following about Smith:

“Valene Smith, a professor at California State University, after completing her studies in geography, travelled to many European and non-European countries in order not to teach geography only theoretically. In later years, she also travelled a lot with her husband, Stan McIntyre. They also visited Poland together in 1989. After her husband’s death, she continued to travel. In the USA, in 1990, she took us around many interesting places for three days” (Przeclawski, 2005, p. 94).

Noteworthy, Prof. Smith also visited Poland with her then-husband in 2005, when she took part in our conference organised by the University of Physical Education in Kraków and the University of Information Technology and Management in Rzeszów on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Fac-

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ulty of Tourism and Leisure. She delivered a lecture – “Tourism in the 21st Century: Changing Socio-Cultural Values”, which was published as a chapter in the monograph “Tourism in Scientific Research” (Alejziak, Winiarski, eds., 2005, pp. 63-80). As she stated, tourism and travel “are topics known for centuries from stories and songs. However, transforming pleasure into an object of academic study and advancing scientific methodologies and literature is no mean feat” (Smith, 2005, p. 63). She played a huge role in making this feat achievable.

The beginnings of tourism research and autobiographical threads are described in the volume “The Study of Tourism: Anthropological and Sociological Origins”, edited by Dennison Nash (Smith, 2007), and in the book titled “Stereopticon: Entry into the Life of Travel and Tourism Research” (Smith, 2015). According to her students and friends, the role of the traveller was the most important in her life, as evidenced in the publication “Always a Traveller. A Portrait of Valene Smith” (Stone and Coon, 2017).

Personal and professional background

A look at Valene Smith’s travel experience, which began in childhood and was cultivated thanks to family trips, allows us to appreciate her pioneering approach and the courage to follow a passion for travelling and deeper understanding of other people and their cultures. Born on February 14, 1926 in Spokane, Washington, she had the opportunity to freely explore the United States at a time when this was not easy for people from the social class to which she belonged, much less for women. Meanwhile, Valene took most trips only with her mother, breaking gender stereotypes in pursuit of their dreams and goals (Smith, 2015). Family trips were made— as she writes – by car, a 1929 Buick “Lizzie”, and they were also sometimes combined with picking hops and pears in migrant worker camps. Thanks to these seasonal jobs, they could not only continue their escapades, but also earn money for Valene’s further education. From an early age, she was fascinated by observing nature and learning about other people’s customs. By 1947, she had visited every state, and the previous year she had earned a Bachelor’s degree in geography from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). In the years 1947-67, she worked at Los Angeles City College, obtaining the title of professor in earth sciences. In 1950, she graduated with a Master’s degree in geography, also from UCLA, and then began travelling the world, eventually opening the Jet-Age Travel Service in North Hollywood in order to organise and guide excursions to Europe, India and Asia.

In 1953, she proposed a course on tourism in geography classes (Graburn, 2018, p. 29). As a Fulbright Scholar, she also taught in Pakistan for a year (1953/1954). A special place in her expeditions was a trip to Alaska in 1950,

where she conducted research on the indigenous people. Documenting everyday life and customs, recording stories, songs, dances, etc. of the Kotzebue (or Qikiqtaġruk) inhabitants, aimed at saving and protecting their heritage. Together with Ira LaTour, she directed films based on local folk stories, including “Three Stone Blades”, receiving the Bronze Award at The New York Film Festival in 1983. Travel experiences in Arctic area contributed to her doctorate in anthropology from the University of Utah in 1966 (Smith, 2007).

In 1967, Smith accepted a tenured position at Chico State College, where she taught anthropology for over 30 years and helped found an anthropology museum three years later.

The Valene L. Smith Museum of Anthropology at California State University in Chico is a unique place. Its exhibits help understand cultural diversity and prepare specialists in museum and tourism studies. Currently, it is visited by thousands of guests each year, also by former students who testify to the will that Professor Smith played in their lives. They remember the lectures on geography and anthropology that she gave, presenting information, visualisations and slides about the lives of people from different parts of the world. She devoted her time to the local community of Chico, wanting to share knowledge and improve the higher education system. Prof. Smith generously supported the Museum that bears her name by donating more than \$4.6 million. A museum exhibition which showed the history of travel and tourism and the development of research on this phenomenon in the 20th century – “From Chico to China: The Life and Travels of Valene Smith” – was dedicated to her.

The Museum of Anthropology is a testimony to the vision of Valene Smith, promoting and supporting education. She left behind not only scientific and teaching achievements, but also the memories of a life filled with adventure, anthropological insight and the desire to learn through action and continuously (Nitzky, 2024). In 1981, Valene Smith was recognised as a Distinguished Professor at California State University. She owed these nominations to students, colleagues and the local community who emphasized her role as an outstanding and dedicated lecturer. In 1982, Prof. Smith retired but continued teaching and participating in the Museum activities for another 15 years. In 2020, she received the UNWTO Ulysses Prize for excellence in knowledge creation and dissemination.

She also remained an active traveller until her ninth decade of life, e.g. in 2016 she flew to Iran and Laos (Stone and Coon, 2017). Throughout her life, Valene Smith shared a passion for travelling with her spouse - she was married and widowed four times. In 1970, she married her instructor, Ed Golay, whom she met while obtaining her pilot’s license. They were married until he passed away 10 years later. Stanley McIntyre was her husband from 1983 to 2000, then she shared a life with George Posey, and, after his death, with Bob Benner.

She was a co-founder and active member of the International Academy of Tourism Studies (IAST). She was also a member of the American Anthropological Association, American Ethnological Society, Washington Anthropological Society, Southwestern Anthropological Society, and the Society of Women Geographers. She was also, among others, a founding member of the Los Angeles Geographical Society, founding co-chair of the Northern California Geographical Society and founding president of the Chico Museum Association.

Anthropological beginnings of tourism studies

In the portrait of Dr. Smith, Stone and Coon (2017) describe her contribution to tourism studies in four main areas. Firstly, they remind the symposium at an AAA meeting in Mexico City in 1974 and the publication of "Hosts and Guests..." (1977), which was a milestone. Secondly, the authors refer to arctic research in Alaska conducted since 1950s. Thirdly, the concept of 4 Hs of tourism (habitat, heritage, history and handicrafts) proposed by V. Smith to describe and analyse indigenous or ethnic tourism, is mentioned. Fourthly, her openness to "looking ahead" and to visualise the future of tourism is revealed (Stone and Coon, 2017, p. 301-303). Finally, they added a paragraph regarding her "personal impact on tourism sciences" and cited Prof. Jafari's words (Jafari, 2007, p. 117):

"In my mind, [Valene Smith is] the one who, through her many contributions to an anthropology of tourism... has done the most to introduce the social sciences and tourism to one another. Much of the multidisciplinary strength of in tourism research we witness today is due to her path-making initiatives".

A special issue of "Tourism Geographies" was published in 2024 after Valene Smith peacefully passed away on January, 16, giving the space to voices of appreciation, friendship and gratitude (Adams, 2024; Di Giovine, 2024; Nitzky, 2024; Swain, 2024).

The list of those influenced and inspired by Valene Smith is long and includes such names as Erik Cohen (1974, 1979), Dean MacCannell (1976/2002), Jafar Jafari (1977), Nelson H.H. Graburn (1983), Judith Adler (1989), Denison Nash (1996), Ed Bruner (1991, 2005) and many others. She co-edited a special issue of "Annals of Tourism Research" (1991). Prof. Smith's work is also significant for regional case studies in the anthropology of tourism worldwide. In thematic literature in Poland and Central and Eastern European countries, her achievements are also referred to, both by anthropologists and tourism researchers, such as Krzysztof Przeclawski (1997), Krzysztof Podemski (2005, 2008), Andrzej Kowalczyk (2022), Paulina Cichoń (2016), Natalia

Bloch (2018), Maarja Kaaristo (2018), to name a few. An international conference “Anthropology of tourism – heritage and perspectives”, which took place in Kraków in 2015, with two monographs and thematic issues of “Folia Turistica” published, are also the examples (Owsianowska, Banaszekiewicz, eds., 2018; Owsianowska, Winiarski, eds., 2017).

Kathleen Adams (2004) writes about remapping the terrain of tourism anthropology. She discusses the importance of Prof. Smith’s work for the anthropology of tourism and argues that her contributions played a key role in paving the way for this new field of study. Adams reminds the well-known event in the 1970s - a group of researchers gathered in response to a question directed by Valene Smith to members of the American Anthropological Association as to whether anyone is dealing with the phenomenon of modern travel and considers this issue important (Smith, 2007; Graburn, 2018; Adams, 2024). The result was a panel at the AAA annual meeting in Mexico City in 1974 and a groundbreaking publication titled “Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism” (1977). In this publication, case studies are presented from different parts of the world, discussing various aspects of the relationship between visitors and natives. Although there is still no consensus on the status of this field of knowledge (see, among others, Leite and Graburn, 2009), the authors of the collection created the basis for anthropological research on tourism. Prof. Smith’s role as originator, co-author and editor of the volume in legitimising a previously “invisible” area of anthropological research is crucial.

In 1989, a second edition of “Hosts and Guests” was issued, presenting “updated essays on the same topics as the original, allowing a reflection over time on the influence of modernisation and tourism on people” (Stone, Coon, 2017; Smith 1989). In 2001, “Hosts and Guests Revisited. Tourism Issues of the 21st Century” (Smith and Brent, eds., 2001) appeared. In this volume, apart from continuing and expanding existing research, a broader theoretical background was given. Noteworthy, it included a kind of identification and announcement of future interests, heralding such problems and challenges for tourism anthropologists in the 21st century as plans for the development of space tourism, terrorist threats and new forms of travel tourism, as well as interactions between guests and hosts, including volunteering.

At the above-mentioned conference in Kraków (2005), Prof. Smith also touched upon important social issues in her speech, including demographic, political, ecological, socio-cultural and economic issues, outlining not only the current state, but also visions for the future. For people like me, who were at the very beginning of their academic journey, it was an opportunity to meet an exceptional researcher, educator, writer, traveller, tour guide and woman. We had a chance to listen to one of those lectures that are an invitation to ask insightful questions and a call to actively and thoroughly search for solutions for emerging contemporary problems.

In fact, this deeply humanistic, empathetic and enthusiastic attitude is reflected in interviews, testimonies and films devoted to Professor. I would like to recall two of them in the end: Michael di Giovine (2024), the convenor of Anthropology of Tourism Interest Group (Valene Smith was the Distinguished Honorary Member of ATIG board), admits she was a “foremother” of anthropologists and tourism researchers, while Margaret Byrne Swain drew attention to the fact that Valene Smith not only had huge impact on the development of tourism studies, but was also a mentor and guide for those who had the opportunity to work with her (Trinet). Prof. Valene Smith’s multidisciplinary and versatile activity was of particular significance – as a role model – for young female researchers, in the years when both travel and an academic career were much more difficult for them than today.



Valene Smith and her husband at the conference in Kraków and Rzeszów, Poland, 2005.

Source: Archive of the conference organizer.

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The Valene L. Smith Museum of Anthropology at California State University, Chico, <https://www.csuchico.edu/anthmuseum/>.

Trinet communication, 22.01.2024, <https://outlook.office.com/mail/>.

INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR AUTHORS

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 15th.

**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**”).

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