

Summary of a doctoral dissertation

The consumer on the cultural route - behavior, typology

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This doctoral dissertation addresses the issue of consumer behavior on cultural routes understood as specific sub-markets of the cultural tourism market. The issues of research on consumer behavior on the market of tourist services and even on the market of cultural tourism are subjects eagerly undertaken by researchers. There have been no studies on consumers on cultural routes that were considered consumers on the cultural tourism market. However, it seems that due to tourism on cultural routes, including the constant movement of tourists along this route and often quite a long stay, it is worth focusing only on this group of tourists. Behavior analysis also allows the identification of different types of consumers in accordance with the adopted criteria.

Tourism on cultural routes is a rapidly growing type of tourism and, consequently, a faster and faster developing branch of the tourism economy and the national economy in general. In Poland, as well as in other countries, cultural routes are experiencing a renaissance, or are being created from scratch and are more and more popular among visitors. Routes that are visited annually by several hundred thousand people are an extremely interesting subject of research in the field of economic sciences, and in particular in the field of behavior of market entities.

It was assumed in the work that the cultural route is a specific market and as such can be defined as a collection of buyers and sellers. Sellers offer goods and services that meet the needs of buyers while staying on a geographically determined cultural route, understood as a set of objects and routes connecting these objects of special cultural significance with the surrounding infrastructure. The entities carry out transactions regarding tourist products, including accommodation, transport, gastronomy and other services, which allow to meet the needs arising during the temporary stay of the consumer-tourist on this market.

However, this is not a common approach in the scientific literature in which, as a rule, the cultural trail is treated as a type of tourist product. This approach also has a clear theoretical foundation and refers to market definitions commonly adopted in the scientific community.

This assumption gives the opportunity to analyze the behavior of entities operating on this market, and thus also the behavior of consumers present on it, who are tourists and day visitors, both those for whom the cultural route is the main purpose of the trip, and those who are the sometimes accidentally, or as a result of persuasion from family or friends, and the visit to the object or objects lying on the route itself is a kind of episode in such a journey. However, regardless of whether the presence of such a visitor on the trail lasts a few months or only a few hours, for that time it becomes an element of the specific market which is the cultural trail, playing the role of a consumer on it, for which the final product is the overall experience and experiences associated with it stay. This product is created based on tourist attractions (paid and free), tourist services, available goods, as well as the atmosphere on the route created by other people. It is thus an extremely complex product, and consumer satisfaction is on the one hand the result of their behavior, the actions of producers, as well as factors completely independent of these entities.

The goals set in this paper are cognitive, methodical and application-oriented. The main goal was to identify consumer behavior on the cultural route, understood as the market, and to formulate a typology of consumers on this market. This goal was disaggregated into specific theoretical and cognitive goals:

- Assessment of the supply of goods and services offered along the cultural route and its relations with needs - demand from consumers.
- Identification of consumer behaviors along the cultural route and factors determining these behaviors.
- Indication of the importance of economic factors among the identified factors determining consumer behavior on the cultural route.
- Identifying types of consumers along the cultural route.
- Determining whether consumption along the cultural path has prosumer features.

The methodical goal of the dissertation was to develop a research tool for conducting consumer typology on the cultural route, while the application goal was to create a collection of information useful for companies operating traffic on cultural routes.

In relation to the assumed objectives of the work, the main hypothesis of the dissertation was put forward, which is an assumption that on the cultural route, understood as the market, consumers form a heterogeneous group of entities. They expect to meet the needs of different levels of service, taking into account their financial capabilities. This hypothesis was disaggregated into five specific hypotheses:

H1: Supply of products along the cultural route does not meet the needs reported.

H2: Consumers on the market that is a cultural route are characterized by heterogeneous behavior.

H3: Economic factors belong to the group of the most important determinants of consumer behavior on the cultural route.

H4: There are several types of consumers on cultural routes that are distinguished by the varied behavior in these markets.

H5: Consumption on the cultural route has prosumer features, and the consumer has the opportunity to co-create a tourist system product, which is staying on the cultural route.

The basic set of data necessary to solve the adopted goals and hypotheses from the empirical side was information obtained through direct research. The research covered consumers on cultural routes selected by a non-random method (quota selection). The selection of units for the sample consisted in the deliberate selection of consumers on cultural routes and qualifying for research consumers from the three routes selected for the study, taking into account the proportions resulting from the division of the general population into gender and age group, and in the case of consumers on the Way of St. James, also by nationality.

The research was carried out in two countries - Poland and Spain. Due to the fact that the spatial scope of the study were geographically limited cultural routes selected for the study, direct research was carried out on the French Way of the Way of ST. James on the part Burgos - Santiago de Compostela (Region of Castile and León and the Autonomous Community of Galicia in Spain), on the Route of the Eagles' Nests (Śląskie and Małopolskie Voivodships) and on the Trail of Technical Monuments of the Silesian Voivodship (the route is limited only to the territory of the Śląskie Voivodship). Two interview techniques were used. These were: individual in-depth interview used to conduct the initial study, which enabled the preparation of the research tool and direct interview.

Research using the individual in-depth interview technique was conducted in August 2018 on the Way of St. James with the use of an interview scenario, combined with audio recording of conversations. Research using direct interview technique was conducted in the period from April to August 2019 on the three examined cultural routes. The research tools were standardized interview questionnaires, tailored, especially because of the terms and names used, to market situations on individual routes. These studies, both by means of individual in-depth interviews and direct interviews, were personally carried out by the author of this work.

There are two layers in the structure of the content of this doctoral dissertation - theoretical and empirical.

Chapter I is devoted to the cultural trail understood as the market, and more specifically to sub-market of cultural tourism. First of all, the place of cultural tourism in the area of tourism economy was presented. Then, the specificity of the cultural tourism market was presented. On this basis, within this market a cultural trail was distinguished as existing within this sub-market system, which characterized and described the elements of the cultural trail understood in this way, together with their interrelationships.

Chapter II focuses on the issues of the consumer - one of the entities on the cultural route. The current state of knowledge about the consumer and his needs, as well as types of consumers according to various criteria proposed in the literature and market behavior attributed to particular types were presented. Next, the participant of cultural tourism was presented as a specific consumer and an attempt was made to identify determinants of consumer behavior on cultural routes.

Chapter III is theoretical and empirical. It presents the characteristics, genesis and importance for the economy of the cultural routes selected for the study - the Route of St. James, the Route of Eagles' Nests and the Route of Technical Monuments of the Silesian Voivodeship. These routes were shown in a geographical sense, i.e. related to their physical course in space and with the objects that belong to them. The focus was also on the ways of traveling on these routes, the assumptions of their functioning or promotional events. Existing data collected by various institutions and other researchers were used. As far as available information was prepared data on the frequency of individual routes, accommodation facilities available in their vicinity and the economic aspects of the functioning of these routes in the economic space.

Chapter IV presents the results of direct research conducted on routes in Poland and Spain. The declared level of satisfaction reported by consumers and identified needs for various products available on cultural routes was presented. The assortment structure of the shopping basket along the routes was also shown, in particular accommodation, gastronomy, transport services, related to access to tourist attractions, as well as available goods. The determinants of these purchasing behaviors were also presented. Finally, results were presented regarding places and conditions of purchase, in particular regarding the purchase of tourist services via the Internet, the use of travel agency services or the size of groups in which the respondents traveled.

The most important goal of Chapter V was to carry out typology of consumers along the cultural route. Using the consumer typology criteria functioning in the literature, four were selected, on the basis of which three typologies with three to six types were created. The first typology is based on a psychographic criterion and is based on the cluster analysis carried out

on the results obtained, just like the second typology in which the criterion related to lifestyle was adopted. The third typology was based on the criteria of consumer preferences as well as the level of consumption and the frequency of purchase, and the clusters were distinguished using a matrix representation of individual groups of consumers. Based on the analysis, the implications for commercial and non-commercial entities servicing tourist traffic on cultural routes were presented, and in particular the possibilities of using the proposed typologies for market segmentation. Deficiencies reported by consumers and elements requiring improvement on the part of tourist services producers were also taken into account.

The work ends with a summary, which is a comprehensive synthesis of the results obtained during the tests as well as verification of research hypotheses and an indication of possible further directions of research and analysis in the field of this subject.

Consumers usually highly rated the degree of satisfaction of needs. They were clearly satisfied with their implementation in the field of accommodation, gastronomy or transport services, which are typical for the tourist economy. Entrances to monuments and museums, access to information or the possibility of buying souvenirs or gifts for the family were also rated well. The fulfillment of the needs in the area of guide services was assessed slightly less, although this assessment should also be considered moderately positive, and the least in the eyes of consumers were recreational and sports services, which, however, in the case of the cultural route, are clearly less important. The overall assessment of the degree of satisfaction of needs on the cultural route is higher than the simple resultant of assessments in the area of meeting individual needs - nearly 90% of consumers rated this degree positively. Such positive ratings are a consequence of good availability to individual products. Among the most important tourist products, physical access to transport was rated the least, but it was on the one hand on the Way of St. James, where the movement takes place on foot or by bicycle and the possibility of travel by bus or train is rarely taken into account, and on the other hand on the Route of the Eagles' Nests, to which consumers usually come using their own car transport. Consumers see their financial accessibility to particular goods and services slightly less. In their opinion, however, it is also positive and usually rated quite well. Thus, it can be said that the supply of products satisfies the needs reported by consumers along the cultural route. Consequently, the H1 hypothesis that the supply of products did not meet the needs reported was refuted.

The assortment structure of the shopping basket was very diverse. As a rule, consumers on the cultural route buy services such as accommodation, gastronomy, transport, admission to monuments and museums, and to a lesser extent guide services, sports and recreation, luggage

transport, as well as goods facilitating their temporary stay on the trail - food and drinks, tourist equipment, souvenirs, maps, guidebooks. Of course, not every consumer decided to buy each of these products. Some of them are one-day visitors, and therefore do not use accommodation services. Those who came by their own car did not decide to choose transport services. Few consumers used neither food service nor even bought any food items on the trail due to the short time on the trail or the issue of savings and preparing provisions at home before leaving. Different types of individual products were also selected. Tourists slept in hotels and guesthouses, but also in much cheaper and lower standard hostels and private accommodation. They ate in both bars and restaurants, and prepared their own meals, usually to reduce the cost of their stay, or decided on small snacks in the form of bars, cakes or other ready-to-eat items. Many people came by own means of transport, but others decided to take a bus, train, bicycle and even came on foot. Foreign tourists also often used the services of airlines, choosing transport to the route by plane. Thus, one can speak of confirming the H2 hypothesis, which says that consumers on the market which is the cultural route are characterized by heterogeneous behavior.

Based on the analysis of determinants affecting consumer behavior on cultural routes, thanks to the use of factor analysis, these determinants were classified into five groups of factors identified as: modernity (which includes: convenience of making payments, access to information using new technologies, saving time and the opposite of religion), consumer environment (willingness to accept, influence of other people, vogue, impulse decision making), shopping awareness (willingness to learn something new, awareness of the quality of goods and services, sense of security), lifestyle (willingness to care for health, professional activity, availability of goods and services) and economic aspects of purchase (price, income received, promotion of goods and services offered). On the basis of consumers' declarations regarding the importance of specific factors in their behavior on the cultural route, it was assessed that the economic aspects of purchase, and in particular the price and income obtained are among the most important determinants of consumer behavior on the cultural route, and thus the H3 hypothesis was confirmed. It should be remembered that these are not factors that completely determine consumer behavior. No less important was the willingness to learn something new, quality or sense of security for the respondents.

The work carried out three typologies of consumers along the cultural route. The first of them was based on the psychographic criterion. Four relatively homogeneous consumer aggregations were identified, characterized by similar personality traits that differ in market

behavior. Featured types are: quiet participant, enthusiast of new experiences, closed to the world and poseur.

In the case of "enthusiasts of new experiences" and "poseurs", the key to consumer decisions is above all the desire to learn something new, while "closed to the world" and "quiet participants" more often take them based on economic factors.

Typology created on the basis of a criterion related to lifestyle, and more specifically with the ways of spending free time has allowed to identify three types of consumers. They are globetrotters who travel most often, meet friends and play sports, erudites more eagerly than others to reach for a book and pursue their hobbies, and lyings on the couch who in their free time most often watch TV or just relax. Due to the fact that his purchasing decisions are influenced in particular by economic decisions, he chooses cheaper accommodation and food options, although most often those from the middle shelf, such as private accommodation and guesthouses, as well as bar meals. It is also more comfortable for them than the cheapest choices.

The third proposed typology is based on two separate criteria: the consumer preference criterion, whose emanation is considered to be the choice of the cultural route itself, and the criterion of the level of consumption and purchase frequency, which is reflected in the length of stay on the selected route. In this case, six types of consumers were distinguished: one-day-visitors on the historical route, one-day-visitors on the thematic route, tourists around the weekend on the historical route, tourists around the weekend on the thematic route, medium-term tourists on the pilgrimage route and long-term tourists on the pilgrimage route.

Thanks to the typologies presented, one can conclude that the H4 hypothesis that there are several types of consumers on cultural routes that are distinguished by different behaviors in these markets has been confirmed.

To a large extent, regardless of belonging to separate types, consumers on cultural routes decided to organize an independent tourist trip. Alternatively, they used what their friends or family had prepared. The use of tour operators' offers was rare. Thus, to a large extent they were co-creators of the final tourist product, which was considered a stay on the cultural trail. The level of meeting the needs in this market depends, therefore, not only on the quality of individual elements of this stay (such as accommodation, meals or transport), but also on their selection and skillful combination into one whole, which is usually done by the consumer himself. Thus, the H5 hypothesis confirms that consumption on the cultural route has prosumer features, and the consumer has the opportunity to co-create a touristic system product, which is staying on the cultural route. The consumer usually uses this option.

The conducted consumer research on cultural routes gave answers to many questions about their behavior in these specific markets, and also enabled the creation of three typologies that may further become useful in business practice. The prepared interview questionnaire can be modified and adapted to the specifics of other routes, which in turn may give the opportunity to conduct comparable research also on other markets of this type.