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Identification of forms of tourism that create extraordinary customer experiences and recognition of these forms in scientific literature

Identyfikacja form turystyki wywołujących niezwykle doświadczenia klientów i rozpoznanie tych form w literaturze naukowej

This paper creates a link between experience marketing and a contemporary trend in tourism towards seeking new forms of activity that offer tourists unforgettable experiences. The author's intention was to identify such forms of tourism and determine the number of references to chosen forms in scientific literature in the context of experience marketing. Eleven thematic areas of travel agency customers' interest were proposed, with each of them containing more than fifty forms of tourism. The examination of bibliographical entries aimed at exploring different forms of leisure activities - with attention being focused on both the very phenomena and tourists' experiences - was carried out with respect to one selected thematic area. Focus was given to the area of 'history' and the following forms classified under it: archaeological tourism, nostalgia tourism, tombstone tourism, war-zone tourism, dark tourism, gulag tourism, communist tourism, battlefield tourism, militarism heritage tourism, atomic tourism. The examination carried out led to two fundamental conclusions. First and foremost, those forms of tourism which until very recently have not been known or have been considered niche are becoming more and more popular now. The number of such activities being currently offered by travel agencies is on the rise, which is a response to contemporary tourists' pursuit of unique experiences. Second, the analysis of resources available on top scientific publication databases demonstrated that the level of recognition of respective forms of tourism in literature is diversified - with some attracting considerable interest, and others receiving only scant attention. In several cases, research gaps were identified, relating to topics which have not been covered by any article or have been referred to only in a few scientific papers that present the results of theoretical discussions and empirical research showing close relationships between experience marketing and chosen forms of tourism.

Keywords

tourism, niche tourism, experience marketing, extraordinary experiences

Artykuł łączy marketing doświadczeń ze współczesnym trendem w turystyce, którym jest poszukiwanie przez turystów nowych form aktywności dostarczających im silnych przeżyć. Zamierzeniem autora było zidentyfikowanie tych form turystyki oraz określenie liczby odniesień do nich w literaturze naukowej w kontekście marketingu doświadczeń. Wyodrębniono jedenaście tematycznych obszarów zainteresowania klientów biur podróży, a w nich ponad pięćdziesiąt form uprawiania turystyki. Rozpoznanie pozycji bibliograficznych pod kątem eksplorowania poszczególnych sposobów spędzania wolnego czasu — zarówno w wymiarze samych zjawisk, jak i z uwzględnieniem doświadczeń turystów — dokonano dla jednego, wybranego obszaru tematycznego. Skoncentrowano się na obszarze „historia” i przypisanych do niego następujących formach: turystyka archeologiczna, turystyka nostalgiczna, turystyka nagrobna, turystyka stref wojennych, ciemna turystyka, turystyka łagrowa, turystyka śladami komunizmu, turystyka pól bitewnych, turystyka dziedzictwa militarnego, turystyka atomowa. Przeprowadzone rozpoznanie pozwoliło sformułować dwa zasadnicze wnioski. Po pierwsze coraz większą popularność zyskują formy turystyki, które jeszcze do niedawna nie istniały lub były bardzo niszowe. Są one coraz częściej zamieszczane w ofertach biur podróży, co jest odpowiedzią na poszukiwanie przez współczesnych turystów wyjątkowych doświadczeń. Po drugie analiza zasobów wiodących baz publikacji naukowych wskazała, że rozpoznanie w literaturze poszczególnych form turystyki jest na zróżnicowanym poziomie — od szerszego zainteresowania po nikłe opisanie zjawisk. W kilku przypadkach zidentyfikowano luki badawcze — przy tematach, w których nie ma żadnych artykułów lub istnieją tylko pojedyncze prace naukowe prezentujące efekty rozważań teoretycznych oraz prac empirycznych łączących marketing doświadczeń ze wskazanymi formami turystyki.

Słowa kluczowe

turystka, turystyka niszowa, marketing doświadczeń, wyjątkowe doświadczenia

JEL: L83, M31, Z33

Introduction¹

At the end of the 20th century, Pine and Gilmore (1998) announced the emergence of experience economy, that is to say, a stage of market development in which customers' experiences become the main value-creating element. In an experience economy, experiences — events that engage people in inherently personal ways — are becoming the predominant economic offering (Pine, 2009). Goods and services have become only a background of or a medium for what actually matters to consumers — experiences (Dziewanowska & Kacprzak, 2013). The demand for experiences is increasing and consumers are willing to pay a high price for experiences. Therefore experience production becomes very profitable (Darmer & Sundbo, 2008).

Nowadays, in times of fierce market competition, experiences offered to customers should distinguish a brand, be full of emotions and remembered for long — that is to say, in simple terms, "unique". It is maintained that "ecstatic obsession" has become an immanent feature of the contemporary society. An imperative for being happy, feeling constant euphoria is becoming more and more common (Kacprzak, Dziewanowska & Skorek, 2015). People already live in a culture where "an adrenalin surge" is continuously sought in numerous ways and a fear of mundane existence is nothing unusual. Consequently, the lives of many people become the endless pursuit of extreme experiences (Melosik, 2012). Today's customers want to dive into the experience, considering offers available on the market specifically from that perspective. This observation refers particularly to tourists who, compared with customers of other business sectors, focus more explicitly on the experiential nature of purchased services (Choe, Lee, & Kim, 2014).

Plenty of opportunities for unique experiences that enrich people's lives are manifested in a variety of ways through niche tourism. For many people, mass tourism is no longer considered to be capable of offering remarkable experiences, therefore new, sometimes sublime leisure activities (e.g. disaster tourism, poverty tourism, war-zone tourism) are gaining in popularity. The phenomenon of seeking unique experiences in the tourist industry is described in this paper. It aims to identify the forms of tourism which evolve, while offering to tourists extraordinary experiences, and to determine the number of references in literature, linking these forms to experience marketing. In pursuit of this goal, publications indexed in top bibliography databases were reviewed. Conclusions presented herein not only imply that there are research gaps, but they also prove that they may be of practical use in setting the directions of further study by

researchers engaged in the exploration of experience marketing in the context of tourism services.

Extraordinary customer experiences — difficulty of providing exact definition

Giving a clear definition of extraordinary customer experience is problematic, as literature on marketing does not define any explicit criteria that could be adopted in order to perceive a given experience as unique. Nevertheless, it was noticed that, contrary to ordinary experiences, extraordinary experiences include such which are referred to in literature on the subject as meaningful (Riivits-Arkonsuo & Leppiman, 2014) or memorable (Kotler, 2003). Furthermore, in the context of extraordinary experiences, terms such as 'peak' and 'flow' are often used (Privette, 1983; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Walls et al., 2011). An ordinary experience corresponds to everyday life, routine, the past, and the passive acceptance of events (Caru & Cova, 2003). On the other hand, meaningful and memorable experiences form a firmer basis. They result from infrequent and uncommon events (Bhattacharjee & Mogilner, 2014). Extraordinary experiences are triggered by unusual events and are characterized by high levels of emotional intensity (Arnould & Price, 1993). Such experiences evoke positive feelings and emotions and make the consumer want to repeat them (Gołab-Andrzejak & Gębarowski, 2018).

In the experience economy, changing values from older to younger generations mean that consumers are seeking new meaning and self-actualisation in their tourism consumption patterns as they move beyond material possessions and services to experiences. Contemporary tourism products are increasingly being formulated to serve this demand by engineering experiences to match the expectations of the market place (Cooper & Hall, 2008). Tourism industry has always been selling emotions, dreams and memories involving travel. In recent years, however, it has become much more important to provide professionally (consciously and purposefully) prepared tourism products, strongly marked with emotion. More and more tour operators undertake continuous efforts to multiply and intensify tourism experience (Stasiak, 2013).

An attempt to provide a definition of 'extraordinary experience' may be made, however, this requires a synthesis of views presented in literature on the subject in relation to the tourist industry. As a matter of fact, extraordinary experiences include those which tourists have while



visiting new places — however, compared to 'ordinary' tourist experiences — in a context which is very specific and rare (e.g. extremely hard physical effort, natural disasters, wildlife, etc.). Consequently, tourists get extremely involved (while often going into a state of immersion) and they feel intense emotions that are remembered for a very long time.

Contemporary forms of tourism that provide tourists with extraordinary experiences

Literature on the subject divides the tourist market into many different forms (Cooper & Hall, 2008; Hudson, 2008; Triarchi & Karamanis, 2017; Jakubowska, 2018 and others). The review of those publications indicates contemporary forms which, according to the author, afford considerable opportunities for offering unique experiences to tourists. In the context of forms singled out, databases containing scientific publications were explored, while specifying the extent to which a given form of tourism has attracted researchers' interest — both in general terms and in relation to experience marketing.

The types of tourism that were singled out and are currently evolving as a result of contemporary tourists' quest for unique experiences can be categorised under the following main areas: physical activity, history, culture, nature, politics, local society, food, religion, entertainment, universe and love. The respective areas include the following forms:

- physical activity: adventure tourism, active sport tourism;
- history: archaeological tourism (archaeotourism), nostalgia tourism (diaspora tourism), tombstone tourism, war-zone tourism (war tourism), dark tourism (black tourism, grief tourism, atrocity tourism, thanatourism), gulag tourism, communist tourism (red tourism), battlefield tourism, militarism heritage tourism, atomic tourism (nuclear tourism);
- culture: bookstore tourism, literary tourism, film tourism (set-jetting, film-induced tourism), Tolkien tourism, pop-culture tourism, music tourism, festival tourism;
- nature: disaster tourism, garden tourism, speleological tourism, geotourism, volcano tourism, wildlife tourism, jungle tourism, shark tourism, nautical tourism;
- politics: political tourism, jihadi tourism, libel tourism;
- local society: ethnic tourism, township tourism

(poverty tourism, slum tourism, ghetto tourism), village tourism, industrial tourism, creative tourism, voluntourism (volunteer tourism);

- food: culinary tourism, enotourism (wine tourism);
- religion: Christian tourism, halal tourism, kosher tourism, religious and spiritual tourism;
- entertainment: amusement park tourism, theme park tourism, fashion tourism, shopping tourism, event sport tourism, stag party tourism, casino tourism;
- universe: space tourism;
- love: romance tourism, LGBT tourism.

In certain cases the unequivocal assignment of tourism forms to the aforesaid areas was arbitrary. For instance, war-zone tourism was classified as 'history'. Nevertheless, this form of travelling may equally be connected with somebody's interest in politics. Similarly, it was decided that 'pop-culture tourism' or 'festival tourism' falls into the category of 'culture', however, this could fit well with the area of 'entertainment'. Furthermore, due to word limit requirements applicable to this article, more detailed classifications were not proposed, although it was possible. For example, as regards film tourism, it was decided not to split it further into the subcategory of biography tourism (covering visits at museums devoted to the biographies of films stars, their birthplaces or lives, meetings with idols, etc.) and fiction film tourism (journeys orientated towards visiting film and studio sets — not always real, participation in film workshops, etc.) (Tucki, 2016). It must be emphasised that the classification presented above does not include such forms of tourism which are too general categories to be considered in the discussion contained herein (e.g. agri-tourism, responsible tourism, cultural tourism, extreme tourism) or have nothing in common with experiences in the context of marketing (e.g. accessible tourism, benefit tourism, medical tourism). Also, forms which are illegal (drug tourism, suicide tourism, sex tourism) were not covered.

Selected forms of tourism in scientific literature — identification of research gaps

This article refers only to the forms assigned to one area of tourists' interests, that is to say — 'history'. The area chosen was considered to be the exemplification of the identification of research gaps.

For each form of tourism taken into consideration, top two abstract and citation databases were explored (*Scopus*, *Web o Science*).



The exploration was carried out both with regard to the total number of scientific publications and in respect of works referring to tourists' experiences. Apart from results from those databases, also additional publications displayed by web search engines were used. This made it possible to specify interest in publications for each of tourism forms chosen, designated as: lack, low, average and high (table 1).

regions where large-scale migration occurred, e.g. Central Europe and Israel. Whereas most tourists become attached to a destination after repeat visits, the tourist-destination relation in nostalgia tourism is unique because tourists with immigrant origins often feel connected to the people, culture, and heritage of the destination before actually visiting the place (Huang, Haller and Ramshaw, 2013). This seems to be of paramount importance from the

Table 1. Interest in selected forms of tourism in scientific literature

| Area of tourists' interests | Forms of tourism | Number of publications | | | | Interest in publications | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|-----|---|-----|----------------------------------|---|
| | | Scientific publications in total | | Publications related to tourists' experiences | | Scientific publications in total | Publications related to tourists' experiences |
| | | Scopus | WoS | Scopus | WoS | | |
| History | archaeological tourism | 14 | 1 | 2 | 0 | ** | * |
| | nostalgia tourism | 50 | 31 | 2 | 3 | ** | * |
| | tombstone tourism | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | * | — |
| | war-zone tourism | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | * | — |
| | dark tourism | 357 | 194 | 112 | 66 | *** | ** |
| | gulag tourism | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | * | — |
| | communist tourism | 34 | 35 | 2 | 2 | ** | * |
| | battlefield tourism | 58 | 48 | 5 | 2 | *** | * |
| | militarism heritage tourism | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | — | — |
| | atomic tourism | 3 | 0 | 5 | 0 | * | — |

Designation: — lack, * — low, ** — average, *** — high.

S o u r c e: author's own elaboration.

The 'history' area encompasses ten forms of tourism, the first of which is **archaeological tourism** (archaeotourism). This way of travelling is orientated, first and foremost, towards the visiting of sites of historic and prehistoric significance (e.g. pyramids in Egypt). It is an attractive proposal for people who express interest in historical heritage, which they can discover in various forms tailored to individual tourists' needs (Kaczmarek, 2010). Archaeological tourism has not only received very little researchers' attention (Pacífico & Vogel, 2012; Jusoh et al., 2017; Ortea, 2017, and others), but has been also very rarely linked to experiences (Ross et al., 2017; Blasco López et al., 2019).

What is a driving factor behind **nostalgia tourism** (diaspora tourism) is a tourists' desire to see places (villages, districts, cities, regions, countries) where their ancestors were born and lived or which tourists themselves used to live in (travelling associated with the tourists' tracing of ancestral lineages is in a broader context referred to as genealogy tourism/root tourism). This phenomenon concerns particularly citizens of those

perspective of emotions experienced by tourists. Literature on the subject offers very few publications analysing nostalgia tourism in respect of this aspect (Yan & Santos, 2010; Etemaddar, Duncan, & Tucker, 2016; Christou, 2018; Géraud, 2018).

Tombstone tourism is a small niche in the tourist market, which is created by people interested in visiting famous cemeteries (e.g. Pere Lachaise Cemetery in Paris or Green-Wood Cemetery in New York) and graves of well-known people (e.g. Elvis Presley in Memphis, Tennessee). Contemporary tourists often reach sites connected with death, and they are guided by many different motives, usually educational, patriotic, cognitive, genealogical or religious. However, in the 20th c. another motive appeared, strictly connected with the need for entertainment through an experience of fear, dread and a fictional contact with death (Tanaś, 2006). Literature provides very few works devoted to tourists visiting deathspace (Stanton, 2003; Privitera, 2016; Tomašević, 2018), and there are no scientific works that would contain any references to tourists' experiences.



Another form is **war-zone tourism** (war tourism), which entails travelling to places ravaged by armed conflicts — areas where it is dangerous to stay because of military operations that have not been stopped yet or have already ceased. This phenomenon relates to travelling with an intent to do sightseeing rather than provide humanitarian aid or report on war as part of media coverage². Due to considerable risk of death or injury, war-zone tourism represents a niche activity. However, there are small travel agencies which for years have been arranging trips to places in which armed combat takes place. Their offers include journeys, *inter alia*, to: Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eastern Ukraine. War-zone tourism has been given only limited coverage in scientific literature (Adams, 2001; Stephens, 2007; Mahrouse, 2016; Dilek, 2018), and existing publications do not mention anything about tourists' experiences.

The area of tourism expounded above is closely correlated with **dark tourism** (black tourism, grief tourism, atrocity tourism, thanatourism). However, it is a safer and more common form of travelling than war-zone tourism, as excursions are made in peaceful times. This phenomenon includes visits to: death sites and disaster scenes; sites of mass or individual death; sites of incarceration; representations or simulations associated with death; and re-enactments and human interpretation of death (Lennon & Powell, 2018). Dark tourism involves mainly visiting real places of mass torture and execution, as well as museums, theme parks, memorials. Examples include The Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum (Phnom Penh, Cambodia) and The Kigali Genocide Memorial (Kigali, Rwanda). There is a comprehensive set of publications dedicated to dark tourism (Bowman & Pezzullo, 2009; Sharpley & Stone, 2009; Hartmann, 2014; Hooper & Lennon, 2017). Deliberations of many authors were set in the context of tourists' experiences (e.g. Robb, 2009; Chang, 2014; Binik, 2016; Yan et al., 2016; Boateng, Okoe, & Hinson, 2018; Sharma & Nayak, 2019).

It must be highlighted that dark tourism is a broad term and covers also certain niche areas of tourism which have been given focus, however, only in few scientific works. Such subcategories include **gulag tourism and communist tourism** (red tourism). After collapse of the Soviet Union a new type of tourism has emerged — gulag tourism. It involves visiting the places where, from the 1920s to the mid 1950s — the Soviets maintained their labour camps. These correctional labour camps were established by the communist government as prison facilities, where prisoners were forced to undertake heavy physical labour. In later years, they were transformed into labour colonies; however, in many cases, they continued to fulfil

their original purpose (Wites, 2008). There is a group of people whose main motivation behind setting out on a journey is taking a visit to gulags, nevertheless this phenomenon has drawn only little interest in literature on the subject (one may refer to barely few publications: Wites, 2008; Hardy, 2012; Wilson et al., 2018; Tiberghien, 2018), specifically from the perspective of the experiences of those who are engaged in this form of tourism. The examples of destinations visited as part of gulag tourism include labour camps in Magadan and in its vicinity (Russia) and Karlag (Karaganda Corrective Labour Camp, Kazakhstan). A similar form is communist tourism, which entails visiting countries which used to be governed by a Communist regime (or where the regime still exists, e.g. North Korea). In some countries (e.g. in Bulgaria and China), tourists can buy dedicated package tours which include trips to places of key significance to the former state system. Databases contain very few publications describing a phenomenon of red tourism (Light, 2000; Yiping & Hu, 2008; Lin, 2015 and others).

In the context of a historical aspect, another two related forms can be distinguished on the tourist market — **battlefield tourism** and **militarism heritage tourism**. The first type of tourism incorporates battlefields, including also museums dedicated thereto and all the remains of battles (e.g. fortifications, bunkers, vintage war planes, battleships, prison camps). The examples of such places to which trips are organised for people who are keen on battlefields are Pearl Harbour and the Normandy beaches. Battlefield tourism has received widespread recognition in literature on the subject. And despite the fact that this issue has been given considerable attention in comprehensive publications (Lloyd, 1998; Ryan, 2007; Eade & Katić, 2013, and others), there are merely few which describe battlefield tourism in the light of experiences (Cheal & Griffin, 2013; Miles, 2014; Lee, 2016, Chen & Tsai, 2019). Militarism heritage tourism, on the other hand, involves going to places of former military sites, which are now out of service. Examples include Korean Demilitarised Zone (Panmunjom — a village located at the border between North Korea and South Korea) and Borne Sulnowo (a former military base of the Red Army in Poland). Militarism heritage tourism has been described in scientific literature, however, only to a lesser extent (Olszewski & Wendt, 2012).

Major travel destinations which certain tourists desire to reach are cities on which nuclear bombs were dropped (Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan), sites of nuclear testing (e.g. Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan) or nuclear disasters (Chernobyl, Ukraine; Fukushima, Japan). This form of tourism, which is referred to as **atomic tourism** (nuclear tourism), so far has received scant mention in



literature (Freeman, 2014; Carvalho & Carvalho, 2017; Karpiuk & Popławski, 2017, and others), nevertheless, there are no publications presenting the results of research concerning directly tourists' experiences.

Conclusions

Pursuit of extraordinary experiences is seen in many industries; however, it is tourism that takes the lead, as many niche forms of travelling have emerged there. Over time, classic tourism has been replaced with its diversified forms — with some being very peculiar. For example, there are certain people for whom suffering holds strong attraction. Consequently, products sold to such customers by travel agencies, instead of sunny locations situated by the sea, offer excursions to former concentration camps or other places that evoke a feeling of immense pain and dread (Costa & Korstanje, 2016).

Current scholarly output relating to extraordinary, extreme tourists' experiences is quite large (*inter alia*, Morgan, Elbe, & de Esteban Curiel, 2009; Agapito, Mendes & Valle, 2013; Lin & Zi-Lin Kuo, 2016; Rivera et al., 2019). However, those publications refer to the tourist sector in general terms. Far fewer scientific publications are devoted to the area of niche tourism, with some of them — as evidenced by the examination conducted — either failing to mention it at all or raising the matter in question, however, only to a lesser extent. Research gaps can be thus spotted, which researchers engaged in the exploration of extraordinary experiences can attempt to address. The identification of those gaps may offer an introduction to more in-depth bibliometric analyses and future research. Although this article is confined only to several forms of niche tourism

(referred to under the 'history' area), it might be assumed that in the other areas indicated herein there are also matters relating to tourists' experiences, which have not been recognised sufficiently enough.

Research into the experiences of people enjoying various forms of tourism requires an interdisciplinary approach — as regards the scope and subject-matter of exploration. In addition to the understanding of the essence of experience economy and the intricacy of customers' experiences, it is also requisite to have knowledge of the individual areas of tourists' interest: history, politics, religion, nature, etc. This poses one of the greatest challenges for researchers, who — preferably while collaborating in interdisciplinary teams — should combine current scientific achievements of experience marketing with knowledge of various forms of tourism.

It is noteworthy that the exploration of niche segments of the tourist market in the context of experiences is both of scientific and practical significance. The recognition of tourists' needs in that respect, as well as of emotions and the dimensions of experiences bears considerable relevance to travel agencies which can use this knowledge for the preparation of their offers. Even today, we can find small tour operators specialising in offering extreme experiences (e.g. war-zone tourism), which allowed them to become successful on the market.

Many contemporary customers perceive their lives as a specific 'market of experiences' which is formed by proposals of various market entities. Also tourists from this 'market' strive to choose such offers which will create exhilarating, unique and unforgettable experiences. Therefore, the combination of niche forms of tourism and experience marketing requires thorough scientific explorations which will fill research gaps that have not been closed yet.

Endnotes

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² Although the expression 'war tourism' is also used in relation to war correspondents (O'Rourke, 1988).

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