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OPINION OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY ON THE TOURIST ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE COMMUNE AND SELECTED AGRITOURISM DEVELOPMENT FACTORS

Key words: tourist attractiveness, tourism, agritourism, development, region,
commune of Siemiatycze

ABSTRACT. The main objective of the research was to present the opinion of the local community on the tourist attractiveness of the commune of Siemiatycze (Podlasie province) and selected factors of agritourism development. In order to fully and objectively recognise such factors, empirical material was collected with the use of the diagnostic survey method and survey questionnaire. Research was conducted in May 2019 and the questionnaire was sent to commune inhabitants. 52 respondents took part in the research. In addition, the author used the method of CATI (computer-assisted telephone interviewing) with 11 owners of overnight accommodation facilities operating in Siemiatycze commune. Research shows that the tourist attractiveness of the commune has a significant impact on the level of agritourism development. In addition, the majority of surveyed residents (73.1%) considered the area of the Siemiatycze commune as conducive to the development of tourism and agritourism. In their opinion, the area of the commune is rich in natural and cultural values and is characterized by high forest cover, the occurrence of meadows, ponds and rivers. The majority of respondents (80.1%) believed that the development of agritourism could increase the income of the population and raise the standard of living. Only 15.4% of respondents believed that agritourism could bring negative effects, e.g. taking over negative patterns of behaviour (especially young people), destroying equipment and buildings, and the aversion of the community towards visitors.

INTRODUCTION

Tourist virtues and tourism management are some elements of tourism potential. They have a great influence on a given region's tourist attractiveness. Tourist attractiveness means "the property of an area resulting from a series of natural or non-natural features that attract tourist attention and interest" [Kurek, Mika 2011]. In Włodzimierz Kurek and Mirosława Mika's opinion, tourist attractiveness may be relative or universal in nature. Relativeness determines particular forms of tourism where attractiveness means usefulness for water and bicycle travel. The universal form concerns an area attractive to all tourists and not just an individual [Kurek, Mika 2011]. According to Olaf Rogalewski, basic factors that influence the determination of tourist attractiveness include natural and

cultural virtues, and tourism management with transportation accessibility [Rogalewski 1979]. On the other hand, Grzegorz Gołembski believes that tourist attractiveness consists of four basic elements: the state of the natural environment (effects of its protection), transportation accessibility in the area, tourist virtues, and tourism management (tourism infrastructure) [Gołembski 2002]. Figure 1 presents the factors that are decisive in the tourist attractiveness of a given region.

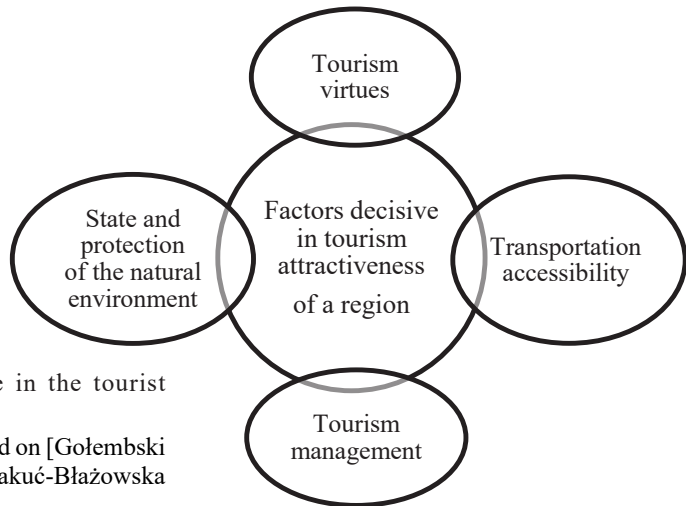


Figure 1. Factors decisive in the tourist attractiveness of a region

Source: own elaboration based on [Gołembski 1999, 2002 Roman 2018, Hakuć-Błazowska et al. 2018]

The concept of tourist attractiveness consists of elements constituting a basis for the development of any tourist activities and satisfying tourist needs. The development of tourist attractiveness is affected by such factors as service infrastructure, technical infrastructure, demographic relations and the financial situation. In the classical approach, basic elements decisive in tourist attractiveness include natural and cultural virtues and tourism management [Roman 2018].

Tourist attractiveness, like tourism potential, is a complex term; and are difficult to interpret unequivocally. Tourism potential (including tourist attractiveness) is an element of a region's competitiveness and determines the possibilities of tourism development. Its structure has an impact on the development of a given region in the area of tourism. According to the author of the article, "tourist attractiveness is the customer (tourists') evaluation of a tourist product offered" [Roman 2018].

Tourist attractiveness may be examined with the use of [Tomczyk 2005, Stach et al. 2014]:

- simple measures of space management, e.g. methods of grouping basic space units based on identity, a point-awarding valuation method, an attractiveness rate based on the point-awarding method of feature standardisation;
- a method of a higher level of aggregation, i.e. a model method, factor analysis methods, taxonomic methods and synthetic measures of development;
- qualitative methods.

A method of evaluation of rural recreational space developed by Maciej Drzewiecki presents the evaluation of Poland's space conditions concerning tourist attractiveness. The criteria in the method were selected in such a way that they statistically reflect factors important for tourism. It is used at a commune level because there are adequate statistical rates for them [Drzewiecki 2001]. The features of M. Drzewiecki's method of evaluation are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Features of M. Drzewiecki's method of evaluation

No.	Feature	Requirements for recognising a given commune as an area attractive for tourism
1	Population density per 1 km ² of agricultural land	It should be below 80 people
2	Share of private agriculture in agricultural land acreage	Above 60% of agricultural land acreage
3	Share of meadows and pastures in agricultural land acreage	The rate should exceed 30% of commune acreage
4	Share of forests in commune total acreage	It should be 30-60%
5	Share of waters in commune total acreage	At least 5%
6	Types of rural settlement	Commune classification into one of 5 groups
7	Share of people who earn a living outside agriculture	Below 60% of all inhabitants

Source: own elaboration based on [Drzewiecki 2001, Sznajder, Przezbórska 2006, Roman 2014]

M. Drzewiecki adopted the following criteria: the population density per 1 km² of agricultural land should be below 80 people, the share of private agricultural farms should account for above 60% of agricultural land acreage, the share of meadows and pastures in agricultural land acreage should exceed 30% of commune acreage, the share of forests in commune total acreage should be 30-60% and the share of water – at least 5%. The percentage of people earning a living outside agriculture should be below the level of 60% of all inhabitants [Drzewiecki 2001].

For the sake of evaluation, Krystian Heffner's work was used, which serves classifying communes into five groups reflecting development issues concerning the structure of settlement [Heffner 1999]. Communes classified into groups 1 and 2 are areas with a conditions of settlement structure unfavourable to economic development. On the other hand, communes classified into groups 4 and 5 are areas with optimal and favourable settlement structure features.

There are also other methods of evaluating tourist attractiveness discussed in the topical literature. The presentation of positive factors of given area development can significantly affect the development of agritourism [Hjalager 1996, Sznajder 2017, Roman, Golnik 2019, Tew, Barbieri 2012, Prus et al. 2017]. In the article, special attention is drawn to the attractiveness of the commune of Siemiatycze in the local community's opinion and the factors that have an impact on the development of agritourism.

Table 2. State of overnight accommodation facilities in the commune of Siemiatycze according to data provided by Commune Authorities in Siemiatycze

Name of place/ village	Number of overnight accommodation facilities	Number of beds
Agritourism farms		
Wólka Nadbużna	2	20
Ogrodniki	1	8
Romanówka	1	3
Słochy Annopolskie	1	9
Czartajew	1	15
Boratyniec Lacki	1	8
Rooms for rent		
Krupice	1	5
Summer houses		
Wólka Nadbużna	8 (1 owner)	35
SPA & wellness hotels		
Wólka Nadbużna	1	160
Holiday centres		
Wólka Nadbużna	1	150

Source: own elaboration based on telephone interviews with the owners of overnight accommodation facilities and data provided by Commune Authorities in Siemiatycze

STATE OF THE OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION BASE IN THE SIEMIATYCZE COMMUNE

The commune of Siemiatycze is located in the southern part of the Podlasie Voivodeship. The biggest advantage of the commune's location is its proximity to the Bug River. The Bug Valley is visited by tourists who prefer canoeing, hiking, biking or agritourism. According to the data provided by the Podlaski Agricultural Advisory Center in Szepietów, there are two agritourism farms in the commune of Siemiatycze and 22 agritourism farms in the county of Siemiatycze [PODR 2019]. On the other hand, according to the data provided by Commune Authorities in Siemiatycze, there are seven agritourism service providers operating in the commune territory. The state of overnight stay facilities is presented in Table 2. Table 2 shows that overnight accommodation in the Siemiatycze commune is poorly developed. The problem has been partially solved thanks to agritourism farms, the number of which has been growing over recent years. Most overnight accommodation facilities are in Wólka Nadbużna (upon the Bug River).

RESEARCH METHODS AND CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE SAMPLE POPULATION EXAMINED

The main objective of the research was to present the opinion of the local community on the tourist attractiveness of the Siemiatycze commune (Podlasie province) and selected factors of agritourism development. In order to fully and objectively recognise such factors, empiric material was collected with the use of the diagnostic survey method and a survey questionnaire. Research was conducted in May 2019 and the survey questionnaire was sent to commune inhabitants. 52 respondents took part in the survey. The social and

Table 3. Respondents' social and demographic characteristic features

Features	Total	
	N = 52	%
Sex:		
- female	28	53.8
- male	24	46.2
Age:		
- below 25	4	7.7
- 25-34	4	7.7
- 35-44	16	30.8
- 45-60	10	19.2
- over 60	18	34.6
Education:		
- primary	24	46.2
- basic vocational	6	11.5
- secondary	16	30.8
- higher	6	11.5
Professional status:		
- white-collar worker	7	13.5
- blue-collar worker	17	32.7
- pensioner	22	42.3
- student	2	3.8
- others	4	7.7
Average (net) monthly income per family member:		
- below PLN 1,000	18	34.6
- PLN 1,001-1,500	16	30.8
- above PLN 1,500	18	34.6

Source: own research findings

demographic features of respondents are presented in Table 3.

54% of respondents were women. Most respondents were over 35 years old (84.6%). Almost half of them (42.3%) have a secondary and higher education. The professional status of respondents is an important element of social and demographic characteristic features because white-collar workers only constituted 13.5% of the population sample examined. Most respondents came from small spots and villages (Romanówka, Ossolin, Baciki Średnie, Baciki Bliższe, Baciki Dalsze, Kajanka, Czartajew, Wólka Nadbużna). Every third respondent indicated that his/her average monthly income per family member exceeded PLN 1,500.

Moreover, the author used the CATI (computer-assisted telephone interviewing) method with 11 owners of overnight accommodation facilities operating in the Siemiatycze commune.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Most respondents (73.1%) believe that the territory of the Siemiatycze commune is conducive to the development of tourism and agritourism. In their opinion, the area is rich in natural and cultural virtues and what distinguishes it are big forest areas, meadows, ponds, lakes and rivers. Other respondents have a negative opinion (15.4%) in comparison with e.g. the

Mielnik commune. They believe that the region lacks natural and cultural virtues and that it is more agricultural than tourist in nature. Every tenth respondent (11.5%) had no opinion on the issue.

The appropriate application of tourist virtues is an important factor in the development of tourism and agritourism in the Siemiatycze commune. Over half of respondents (65.4%) believe that tourism virtues are used properly. Almost every fourth respondent (23.1%) does not have an opinion on the issue. Others believe that the commune is attractive for tourists but local authorities and tourist service providers taking care of area development use its virtues poorly.

Respondents were also asked about the development of other forms of tourism apart from agritourism in the territory of the Siemiatycze commune. Almost half of respondents (46.4%) have no knowledge of the issue and 40.4% of them believe that, apart from agritourism, other forms of tourism in the Siemiatycze commune include trekking (e.g. tourists walking around the neighbouring area), cultural tourism (e.g. a heritage park being built in Ossolin), cycling (bike paths), kayaking (Siemiatycze Reservoir), water sports (a beach in Siemiatycze), horse riding and motorcycling. Others (13.5%) believe that no other types of tourism are observed in the region.

In the respondents' opinion, significant changes in the development of the Siemiatycze commune have been observed over the last 10 years (96.1%). The rest have a different opinion.

Respondents believe that the Siemiatycze commune has greatly developed over the last decade. In their opinion, commune authorities promote it in the region to a greater extent. Moreover, the tourism infrastructure has been developed (e.g. Siemiatycze Reservoir, sheds, waiting rooms, places for bonfires, souvenir kiosks and places to have a rest have been built). Respondents are of the opinion that more care is taken of the commune's natural virtues, tourist events are organised (e.g. Blues-Rock Festival in August) and the road infrastructure has improved.

Respondents gave the commune's security level of security many points (Figure 2). The level of security of the inhabitants and tourists holidaying in the territory of Siemiatycze should be one of the basic tasks for the local authorities. They should undertake a series of intervention activities. The implementation of particular tasks by local authorities, aimed at limiting the indirect reasons for criminality and social pathologies, should influence an increase in the commune's security level. It is very important for a tourist to feel safe in the place. Respondents assessed the tourist attractiveness and tourism infrastructure in the area to be at a medium level.

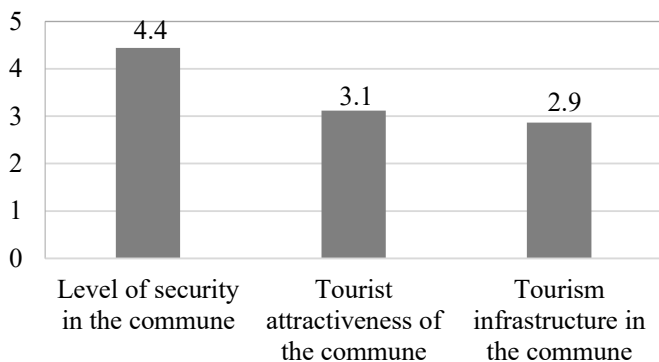


Figure 2. Evaluation of factors having an impact on the development of tourism and agritourism in the commune of Siemiatycze by its inhabitants (1 – very bad, 5 – very good), N = 52

Source: own research findings

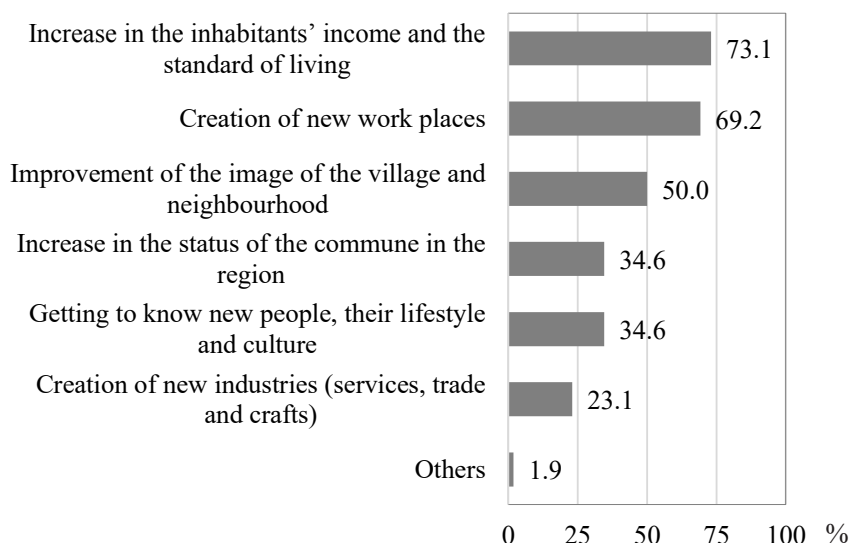


Figure 3. Benefits resulting from the development of agritourism in the territory of Siemiatycze commune in the respondents' opinion, N = 52. The respondents could indicate more than one answer

Source: own research findings

The respondents were asked about the benefits resulting from the development of agritourism in Siemiatycze. Detailed information on the issue is presented in Figure 3. The development of this type of business in Siemiatycze commune can result in economic and non-economic benefits. Most respondents believe that the development of agritourism can result in an increase in the inhabitants' income and standard of living (obtaining additional income by farmers and increasing the standard of living on agricultural farms). The remaining respondents think that new work places are created and contacts with tourists broaden the inhabitants' horizons and enrich their personality (Table 4).

The results obtained can be compared with other research conducted by the author¹. The benefits resulting from the development of agritourism in the commune are correlated with the age and level of education of respondents and the results are presented in Figure 4.

Research indicates that older people are, in general, in favour of an increase in income and living standard. For younger people, the creation of new work places connected with the development of agritourism is an important benefit. It can also be stated that people whose level of education is higher see more benefits resulting from the development of agritourism in the commune. Respondents whose level of education is lower are to a greater extent in favour of the increase in income and living standard.

¹ Michał Roman carried out similar research in 2010 with the participation of 225 residents of 15 rural communes of the Podlaskie Voivodeship: Białowieża, Giby, Grajewo, Gródek, Janów, Jaświły, Jeleniewo, Mielnik, Narewka, Nowinka, Płaska, Sokoły, Trzcianne, Turośl, Wizna. For more information on the issue: [Roman 2014].

Table 4. Benefits resulting from the development of agritourism in the territory of the Siemiatycze commune in the opinion of respondents depending on their age [in %]

Benefits resulting from the development of agritourism	Total		Age [years]				
	N = 52	%	below 25	25-34	35-44	45-60	over 60
	%						
Increase in the inhabitants' income and the standard of life	38	73.1	5.3	10.5	26.3	26.3	31.6
Creation of new work places	36	69.2	11.1	11.1	33.3	11.1	33.3
Improvement of the image of the village and neighbourhood	26	50.0	7.7	-	30.8	15.4	46.2
Increase in the status of the commune in the region	18	34.6	22.2	11.1	11.1	27.8	27.8
Getting to know new people, their lifestyle and culture	18	34.6	-	11.1	22.2	33.3	33.3
Creation of development of new industries (services, trade and craft) indirectly connected with tourism	12	23.1	-	-	66.7	16.7	16.7
Others	1	1.9	-	100.0	-	-	-

Respondents could indicate more than one answer

Source: own research findings

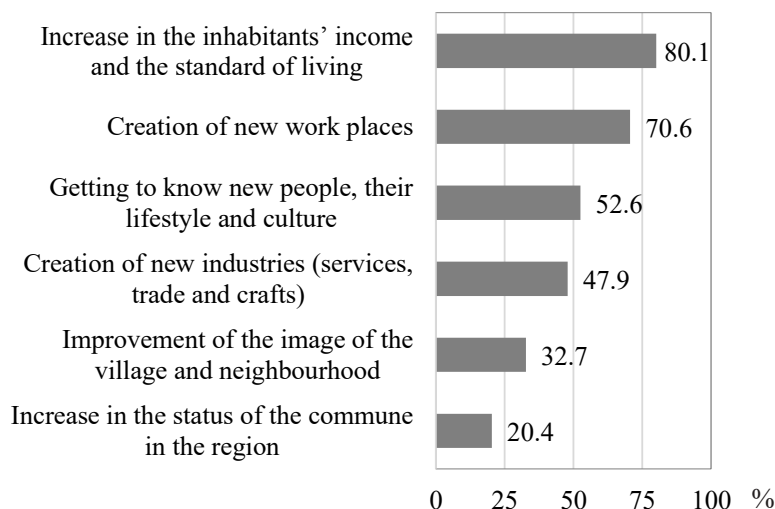


Figure 4. Benefits resulting from the development of agritourism in the commune in the opinion of its residents depending on their age and level of education. Due to insignificant percentage, the answer 'others' has been omitted, Respondents could indicate more than one answer

Source: [Roman 2014]

Respondents were also asked about the negative results of the development of agritourism in Siemiatycze commune. Most of them (73.1%) do not see such consequences, while every tenth (11.5%) does not have an opinion on the issue. Only 15.4% of respondents believe that agritourism can result in negative consequences that can be reflected in the biodegradation of the natural environment (an increase in waste and fumes) – 30.8%; adaptation of bad, negative behavioural patterns (especially with regard to young people) – 23.1%; an increase in noise level – 15.4%; overpopulation of villages – 7.7%; price increases – 7.7%; as well as a lack of mutual understanding, holiday criminality, “urban lifestyle and culture”, the destruction of equipment and premises, a will to achieve urban standards and the community’s dislike of visitors.

In the respondents’ opinion, it is worth developing agritourism in the Siemiatycze commune. Over half of them (81.5%) are of this opinion. The rest think otherwise.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research conducted, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Tourist attractiveness of a commune has a significant impact on the level of agritourism development. The Mielnik commune, which is close to the Siemiatycze commune (in the county of Siemiatycze), is an example. Its characteristic features include high tourist attractiveness, large forest areas and its location on the Bug River.
2. Most respondents (80.1%) believe that the development of agritourism can result in an increase in the inhabitants’ income and living standard.
3. Only 15.4% of respondents believe that agritourism can result in negative consequences, e.g. the adaptation of bad behavioural patterns (especially with regard to young people), the destruction of equipment and premises and the community’s dislike of visitors.

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OPINIA SPOŁECZNOŚCI LOKALNEJ NA TEMAT ATRAKCYJNOŚCI
TURYSTYCZNEJ GMINY I WYBRANYCH CZYNNIKÓW ROZWOJU
AGROTURYSTYKI

Key words: atrakcyjność turystyczna, turystyka, agroturystyka, rozwój, region, gmina Siemiatycze

ABSTRAKT

Głównym celem badań było zaprezentowanie opinii społeczności lokalnej na temat atrakcyjności turystycznej gminy Siemiatycze (województwo podlaskie) i wybranych czynników rozwoju agroturystyki. W celu pełnego i obiektywnego rozpoznania tych czynników materiał empiryczny zebrano za pomocą metody sondażu diagnostycznego z wykorzystaniem kwestionariusza ankiety. Badania zrealizowano w maju 2019 roku, a kwestionariusz ankiety skierowany został do mieszkańców gminy. W badaniach udział wzięło 52 respondentów. Dodatkowo zastosowano metodę CATI (wspomagany komputerowo wywiad telefoniczny) z 11 właścicielami obiektów noclegowych prowadzących swoją działalność na terenie gminy Siemiatycze. Z przeprowadzonych badań wynika, że atrakcyjność turystyczna gminy ma znaczący wpływ na poziom rozwoju agroturystyki. Ponadto, większość badanych mieszkańców (73,1%) uważała teren gminy Siemiatycze za sprzyjający rozwojowi turystyki i agroturystyki. Ich zdaniem obszar gminy jest bogaty w walory przyrodniczo-kulturowe i wyróżnia się dużą lesistością, występowaniem łąk, stawów, rzek. Większość respondentów (80,1%) uważała, że rozwój agroturystyki może spowodować zwiększenie dochodów ludności i podniesienie poziomu życia. Tylko 15,4% badanych osób uważała, że agroturystyka może przynieść negatywne skutki, np. przejmowanie negatywnych wzorców zachowań (zwłaszcza ludzi młodych), niszczenie sprzętów i budynków, niechęć społeczności wobec osób przyjezdnych.

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