

TOURIST ACTIVITY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ON THE EXAMPLE OF WARSAW STUDIES

Tourist activity of local government employees

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Abstract

Introduction. The aim of this study was to determine the form, nature and level of participation of Warsaw local government employees in tourism. Identification of the relevant characteristics of this group can lead to the knowledge of its behaviour, and ultimately to conduct effective health intervention-promotional activities. **Material and methods.** The questionnaire study covered 321 local government employees (121 male, 200 female). The study was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 17 (SPSS). Assessment of the relationship of demographic variables with the type of trip and the level of tourism activity were made using chi-square statistics and adjusted residuals. The level of participation in tourism was determined using principal components analysis. **Results.** Short-term trips reported 87% of local administration employees, long-term – 77% and international – 26%. Average number of short trips was 7.0 ± 7.2 , long – 2.1 ± 1.44 and international – 1.4 ± 0.8 . Very low levels of tourism activity characterized 32%, low – 15%, moderate – 21%, high – 17% and very high – 14% of the respondents. Education is the main factor that determines the participation and level of tourism activity of respondents. **Conclusions.** Often the trips declared are not compatible with the level of tourist activity – analysis based on the number of trips a year (short, long and international). It follows that for half of the respondents participation in tourism is sporadic.

Key words: tourist activity, local government administration, Warsaw

Introduction

The recent 20 years has brought great changes in living standards of Poles, in the budget of their leisure time, and the methods of its use. Tourism as a form allowing for combining of rational relaxation with the development and meeting of cognitive, emotional and expressive needs became – especially for certain groups in society – the necessary need, constant element of consumption model and culture component [1]. This is the case of representatives of public authorities, senior officials and managers and specialists with higher education and the freelance professions [2]. One cannot say this for sure about office workers, where sedentary work almost takes away the opportunity to move, eliminating the forms based on the simple physical activity, and leaves one-sided and monotonous activities, i.e. the motor elements unevenly loading individual systems and parts of the body.

In the context of alarming reports from studies of Belarusian officials [3] it is reasonable to investigate the behaviour of Polish free-time office workers. Identification of the relevant characteristics of this group – including forms and range of tourist activity – can lead to the knowledge of its behaviour, and ultimately to conduct effective health intervention-promotion activities [4]. While the diversity of tourist activities is something obvious (or even desirable), since it results from the individual needs, motives, preferences, so much the level of social differentiation of this activity (such as participation or non-participation) is an important social problem. In Polish literature the subject of

tourist activity of various social groups is extremely rare. The exceptions are studies of Aleziak [5] on the financial elites, Gajewski et al. [6] on the judicial police officers and Biernat et al. [7] and Dabrowska and Dabrowski [8] concerning the teaching profession.

The aim of this study is to determine the form, nature and level of participation of local government administration employees in tourism.

Material and methods

For the purpose of the research, a specially developed – modified following the pilot application – questionnaire was used. It concerned the national (short-term and long-term) and international tourist trips undertaken in the recent year.

The study group was selected through a two-stage draw. The first step was to draw five offices of local administration of all existing in Warsaw. The second step was to draw 30-percent sample of each of these institutions.

The study was conducted in 2006 (after the summer tourist season – in November and of the winter season – in March), at workplaces of the respondents. In all selected offices the approval of the head of the institution and help in drawing of the respondents was offered. Interviews were collected by trained and supervised interviewers. Each of them had registered certificate issued by the management of the research team, authorizing the collection of information and containing special instructions – describing in detail the behaviour of both, the interviewer and

the manner of interviewing. Interviews were carried out according to plan (number of questions and the manner of their formulation were identical for all respondents). Questions were formulated in the same form, readable for all respondents [9].

The study covered 321 local government employees of five Warsaw offices (Bemowo, Bielany, Rembertów, Targówek, and Praga Południe). The characteristic features of the groups studied have been presented in Table 1.

In these studies, all analyses were made using the Polish version of SPSS 17. The results have been presented in tables and figures, in the form of real numbers, percentages, averages, their standard deviations and coefficient of asymmetry ($\hat{A}\chi$) [10]. Assessment of the relationship of demographic variables such as gender, education, age, marital status, body mass index (BMI), and income of respondents with the declared type of trip (short, long-term, international) and their characteristic level of tourist activity, has been made using chi-square test [11] and adjusted residuals [12].

Using the chi-square test the fractions were compared – showing a relationship between variables, and based on analysis using the adjusted residuals – it was confirmed that a particular variable is a factor having the highest impact on participation in tourism. The adjusted residuals reveal these Table cells that statistically significantly deviate from the average profile in the Table. If the adjusted residual exceeds 1.96, we deal with the probability of 95% (i.e. the significance level $\alpha=0.05$) that the cell differs significantly from the average cell in the sample. If the adjusted residual exceeds 2.58, we deal with the probability of 99% (i.e. the significance level $\alpha=0.01$). To be sure, however, a more restrictive value of 2.58 was adopted. Therefore it was adopted – both in the chi-square and adjusted residuals analyses – that the differences at the level $\alpha\leq 0.05$ were significant.

Table 1. Characteristics of the group

Specification		Gender of the respondent					
		Males (n=121)		Females (n=200)		Total (n=321)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
Average age \pm SD		44.7 \pm 10.9 ($\hat{A}\chi$ -0.23)		41.7 \pm 10.4 ($\hat{A}\chi$ -0.38)		42.9 \pm 10.7 ($\hat{A}\chi$ -0.28)	
Age	20-29	14	11.5	37	18.0	61	15.6
	30-39	29	23.8	42	20.5	71	21.7
	40-49	32	26.2	60	29.3	92	28.1
	50-59	37	30.3	61	29.8	98	30.0
	≥ 60	10	8.2	5	2.4	15	4.6
Institution	Office Bemowo	34	27.9	42	20.5	76	23.2
	Office Rembertów	20	16.4	50	24.4	70	21.4
	Office Targówek	30	24.6	34	16.6	64	19.6
	Office Bielany	21	17.2	39	19.0	60	18.3
	Office Praga Pd.	17	13.9	40	19.5	57	17.4
Education	Higher	100	82.0*	143	69.8	243	74.3
	Secondary	21	17.2	60	29.3*	81	24.8
	Vocational	1	0.8	2	1.0	3	0.9
Marital status	Married	101	84.9*	144	70.9	245	76.1
	Partnership	-	-	1	0.5	1	0.3
	Single	13	10.9	42	20.7*	55	17.1
	Divorced	-	-	9	4.4	9	2.8
	Widower/widow	5	4.2	7	3.4	12	3.7
BMI	underweight (<20)	-	-	30	15.5	30	9.6
	Normal (20.0-24.9)	26	21.7	97	50.3*	123	39.3
	Overweight (25.0-29.9)	55	45.8*	52	26.9	107	34.2
	Obesity (30.0-39.9)	39	32.5*	14	7.3	53	16.9
Gross income per family member	below PLN 1300	30	25.2	50	26.3	80	25.9
	PLN 1300-2100	50	42.0	92	48.4	142	46.0
	PLN 2100-2700	19	16.0	33	17.4	52	16.8
	over PLN 2700	20	16.8	15	7.9	35	11.3

* – significantly more often – males vs. females

The level of participation in tourism of the respondents was determined using principal components analysis. It was used in order to discover significant relationships that exist between the variables describing the multidimensional object, for optimal reduction of dimension of data space – permitting the control of the degree of relevance of neglected information [13]. In multivariate analysis, there is often a situation in which collected data relate to large numbers of variables, mutually correlated. Biological or medical phenomena are characterized by great complexity. On one hand, taking into account more variables allows for a fuller and more reliable description of the phenomenon under investigation, but on the other it entails a greater degree of complexity of output information, the increase of computational, and (above all) interpretation difficulties.

In this study, information on the frequency of participation in tourism (in short, long, international trips) was reduced – using principal components analysis – into one variable, and then subjected to categorization. Finally a variable received – *the level of participation in tourism* – grouped respondents into one of five categories (very low, low, moderate, high, very high).

Terms used

Tourist activity means the total acts and actions of people associated with participation in tourism.

Domestic trips are trips (travels), during which the participants spent all nights in Poland. *Short-term trips* are trips (travels) lasting 2-4 days, with at least one overnight stay away from home, but not more than three.

Long-term trips are trips (travels) lasting at least 5 days, with at least four nights away from home.

International trips are trips lasting 2 or more days, during which participants spend at least one night abroad.

Results

Among the respondents – employees of local administration, there were no relationship between gender and: age, income and employing institution. In the case of education it was shown that among men (82%) a higher percentage of persons with higher education than among women (67%) occurred. However, women more often than men had completed secondary education (29%, 17%). Women also more often than men had normal BMI (50%, 22%) and were less likely to be overweight (27%, 46%) or obese (7%, 33%) (Tab. 1).

Short-term trips in the last year were reported 87% of surveyed employees of local administration (Tab. 2). And they were relatively more often chosen by men (92%) than women (84%). Average number of short-term trips amounted to 7.0 \pm 7.2 during the year. A coefficient of asymmetry ($\hat{A}\chi$) was at 0.15 (including men $\hat{A}\chi=0.25$ and women $\hat{A}\chi=0.19$), which indicated a positive asymmetry¹. Positive asymmetry indicates that the majority of respondents went for a greater number of trips than the average.

The most frequent objectives of short trips were tourism and recreation (84%), visiting friends and relatives (35%) and trips to the summer houses (30%). There were no significant gender-related differences in this regard.

Using the chi-square test, the dependence of the declaration of short trips on the education of the respondents was shown (Fig. 1). Analysis of adjusted residuals confirmed that local gov-

¹ Asymmetry coefficient takes the zero value for a symmetric distribution, negative values for left-sided asymmetry, and positive values for right-sided asymmetry.

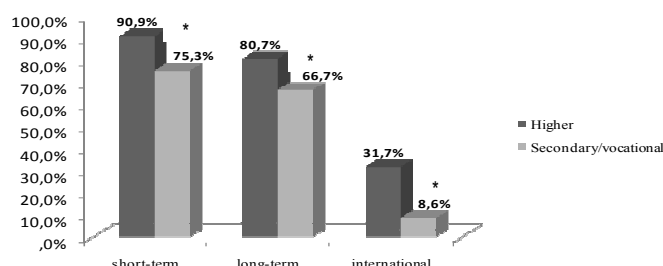
ernment employees with higher education (3.7)² more often declared such trips than those with secondary and vocational education (-3.5).

Short trips also depended on the marital status of respondents (Fig. 2). Analysis using the adjusted residuals showed that a single persons (divorced/widower/widow), relatively less often (-2.9) than the others (in a stable relationship - 1.7; bachelor, spinster - 0.0) chose this type of travel. There were no significant differences depending on income and BMI of the respondents.

Table 2. Number and percentage of local government employees who go on short-term and long-term domestic and international trips

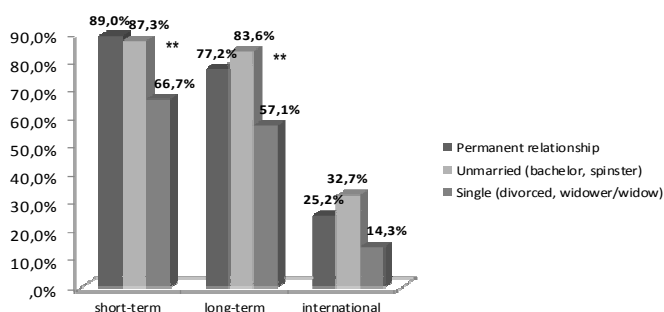
Trips		Males		Females		Total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
Short-term	Number and percentage of persons	112	91.8*	172	83.9	284	86.9
	Average \pm SD number of trips	6.6 \pm 7.1 (\hat{A}_x 0.23)		7.2 \pm 7.3 (\hat{A}_x 0.19)		7.0 \pm 7.2 (\hat{A}_x 0.15)	
	Number and percentage of persons	94	77.0	157	76.6	251	76.8
Long-term	Average \pm SD number of trips	2.0 \pm 1.4 (\hat{A}_x 0.25)		2.1 \pm 1.5 (\hat{A}_x 0.19)		2.1 \pm 1.44 (\hat{A}_x 0.15)	
	Number and percentage of persons	34	27.9	50	24.4	84	25.7
	Average \pm SD number of trips	1.6 \pm 1.2 (V 0.40)		1.3 \pm 0.5 (V 0.34)		1.4 \pm 0.8 (V 0.26)	

* - significantly more often; males vs. females



* - significantly more often; higher vs. secondary education

Figure 1. Short-term, long-term and international trips declared by the local government administration employees in dependence on their education level



** - significantly less often; single (divorced, widower/widow) vs. permanent relationship, unmarried (bachelor, spinster)

Figure 2. Short-term, long-term and international trips declared by the local government administration employees in dependence on their marital status

² In parentheses the adjusted residual is given. The values of the adjusted residuals has been discussed in *Material and methods*.

Long-term trips in the last year were chosen by 77% of Warsaw's local government employees (Tab. 2). There were no significant differences in this respect, depending on gender, income, and BMI of the subjects. The average number of trips of the entire group was 2.1 \pm 1.44. \hat{A}_x value was at 0.15 - which, as in the case of short-term trips testified that the majority of respondents were characterized by a greater number of trips than the average.

The trips were mainly for tourism and recreation purposes (92%). Visiting relatives and friends were the target of 13% of respondents (including significantly more often in the case of women - 17% than men - 9%). Other goals such as business, medical, religious trips, travels to summer houses were declared by a small percentage of respondents.

As in the case of short-term trips, the relationship between marital status and education and declarations of long-term trips was demonstrated (Fig. 1 and 2). The divorced/widowers (-2.2) travelled less for a long period of time than other people, i.e. those in a stable relationship (0.2) as well as bachelors/spinsters (1.3). Long journeys were often declared by persons with higher (2.8), than with secondary and vocational education (-2.5). It was also found that the age of the respondents had a significant impact on these trips. Respondents aged 50 or more (-2.7) travelled less for the long-term, than those aged 20-29 (1.4), 30-39 (1.4) and 40-49 (0.4).

During the last year 26% of respondents travelled abroad (Tab. 2). Most frequently they travelled to Italy (18%), Germany (14%), Egypt (13%) and Slovakia (13%). Frequency of trips abroad was 1.4 \pm 0.8. At the same time - also in this case - the \hat{A}_x value showed a strong positive asymmetry.

There was no correlation between gender, age, marital status, BMI, and income statements of respondents and trips abroad. It was found that the only important factor is education. Local government employees with higher education (1.8) declared such trips more frequently than those with secondary education (-3.0).

As already mentioned in the *Materials and methods*, information on participation in tourism (short, long, international trips) were reduced - using principal components analysis - to one variable, i.e. the level of participation in tourism. This allowed for classifying respondents into one of five categories (very low, low, moderate, high, very high).

According to analysis of the collected material, very low levels of tourism activity was characteristic for 32% of respondents, low - 15%, moderate - 21% high - 17% and very high - 14%. Figure 3 shows the distribution of this variable, depending on the gender of the respondents.

There were no statistically significant differences in the classification of the different levels of tourism activity dependent on gender, marital status, BMI, and income of respondents. The only factor that had a significant effect was education of the subjects. Very low and moderate levels of tourism activity characterized a relatively less number of local government employees with higher education (-1.7) than with secondary and vocational education (2.9).

Discussion

In the modern world the level of participation in tourism is an indicator of development of the country and quality of life of the population [14], and tourism is considered a symbol of status and prestige, and health condition [15].

Tourist activity of contemporary Poles is a constantly evolving process. On one hand, more and more people take it, on the other - for some social circles, it is still unavailable. Respondents representing the Warsaw local government administration be-

long to the people who due to their place of residence, profession and education, consider tourism as one of the canons of personal and social culture.

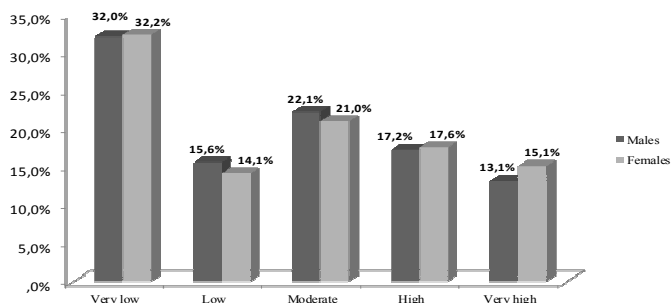


Figure 3. The level of tourist activity in the local government employees by gender

Education, occupation and associated responsibilities are some important factors differentiating participation in tourism. According to Solińska [16], the persons from the following groups more frequently take up trips: senior officials, managers of companies, freelancers, specialists with higher education (short-term – 41%, long-term – 53%, international – 38%) and administrative and office staff (respectively – 34%, 43%, 22%) – which next to the intelligence are considered the Polish equivalent of the new middle class. Against this background, tourist activity of the respondents is large. For both the short-term trips (87%), long-term (77%) and international trips (26%) the degree of participation in tourism is much higher than in the case of statistical Pole tested by the Institute of Tourism in Warsaw (23%, 28%, 15%) [17], GUS (21%, 23%, 6%) [18] and CBOS (28%, 34%, 11%) [19]. It is also higher than the average level of tourism activity of holiday trips of all European Union citizens (52%) [20]. Higher – than the Germans and Dutch, whose rate of tourism activity is one of the highest in Europe (78% and 70%) [21]. EUROSTAT studies included all national and international long-term trips, i.e. including a minimum of 4 nights away from home. In Poland, however, short-term, long-term and international trips were analyzed separately.

The average number of short-term trips of the local government administration employees in the last year was 7.0 ± 7.2 , long-term 2.1 ± 1.44 , international 1.4 ± 0.8 and in each case it was higher than that provided by IT (respectively – 2.6, 1.7, 1.3) [17].

Polish accession to the European Union clearly has changed the Polish tourist activity [22]. It has become more diverse – we more often travel abroad [23], the quality and availability of tourist services and thus the number of trips are increasing [24]. There is a hope that the economic recovery and growth of living standards will further increase the level of tourist activity of Poles – not only the highly educated groups.

Education – in the group of employees of local government administration – is the factor that most strongly differentiates the net tourist activity, that is, the percentage of people participating in at least one tourist trip in the period considered. Results of analysis showed that persons with higher education more often participated in all types of trips than those with secondary and vocational education. Other factors, such as gender, age, marital status and income, were less important, or were irrelevant. Despite the fact that in case of 1/3 of respondents it was found that they were overweight and 20% – obese (including males, respectively, 50% and 33%) – no significant effect of high body mass index on participation in tourism was found.

Frequent declarations of participation in different types of tourist trips do not fully correspond to the assessed using principal components analysis level of tourism activity. It was noted that very low and low levels of tourism activity is characterizes half the respondents (32% – very low, 15% – low), moderate – 21% high – 17% and very high – 14%. It follows that while the Warsaw local government administration employees declare their high participation in the travel (especially short-term) this is not reflected in practical actions. Analyzed, based on the basis of number of trips per year (short-term, long-term and international), level of tourism activity shows that for half of those surveyed it is a sporadic activity. One should also remember that the tourist trips often take the form of “hotel beach”, and tourist holiday destination – so often declared – is not always associated with active leisure activities.

The subjects are mostly people leading a sedentary life. It would seem that this reason is enough to take an active relaxation. Unfortunately, neither these nor previous studies on physical activity levels in this group [25] allowed for confirmation of this statement.

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