Unveiling the Impact of Over-tourism: A Case Study on Zakopane, Exploring Symptoms, Effects, and Strategies for Sustainable Management

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Abstract:

Purpose: The main purpose of the considerations presented in the article was to determine the symptoms, effects and strategies for sustainable management aimed at limiting the negative effects of overtourism in Zakopane.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The most important sources of data and information include the following: 1. analysis of existing data (including reports, strategies, statistical data, scientific publications) related to the area and subject of research. 2. participant observation conducted in places of concentration of tourist traffic. 3. Questionnaire interviews containing elements of in-depth interviews conducted with representatives of local authorities, associations, private and public entities in the tourism industry, commercial entities, tourists and residents of Zakopane. The original questionnaire was developed, among others, based on the results of the UNWTO report.

Findings: The most important identified causes of overtourism include the following: 1. The relatively small area covered by the city and the national park, 2. Easy access to Zakopane by various means of transport and relatively close proximity to the Krakow agglomeration. 3. High level of tourist attractiveness of the place in question. 4. The influence of social media and a specific fashion for tourist stays in Zakopane. 5. Sometimes low capacity of tourist routes. 6. Lack of tools to control tourist flows. 7. Implementation of standard tourist programs, showing only the most famous places by people guiding tourists. The most important identified symptoms and effects of overtourism in Zakopane include: 1. Periodic lack of accommodation. 2. Crowds on city streets and tourist trails. 3. Communication problems, traffic jams, overcrowded public transport. 4. Social conflicts, reluctance of the local community towards tourists. 5. Increased prices of basic food products. Solutions aimed at limiting the negative impact of overtourism on Zakopane include all initiatives that contribute to "flattening" peak periods. These include the following: 1. Queue and waiting time management. 2. Promoting alternative tourist attractions (maps, tourist routes), 3. Promoting quality. 4. Dynamic control of tourist flows. 5. Regulation of the accommodation rental system. 6. Dispersion of tourist traffic in time and space.

Practical Implications: The presented research results and author's recommendations have

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broad implementation values. Both local authorities and entrepreneurs operating in the field of tourism services may be interested in their implementation.

Originality value: *The original research concept as well as the adopted methodology can be considered an innovative tool for diagnosing causes and effects in overtourism not only in Zakopane, but also in other areas of strong concentration of tourist traffic.*

Keywords: *Conflict, interest groups, practical solutions, local authorities, local community.*

JEL codes: *A13, D74, H7, L83.*

Paper type: *Research article.*

1. Introduction

Overtourism is usually defined as a phenomenon in which the excessive increase of visitors leading to overcrowding in areas where residents suffer the consequences of temporary and seasonal tourism peaks , which have enforced permanent changes to their lifestyles, access to amenities and general well-being (Milano, 2018). The above definition indicates two basic elements characterizing the described phenomenon: a significant, excessive increase in the number of people visiting a given place and the related decrease in the quality of life of the local community and tourists.

Interestingly, overtourism is most often considered in relation to large European cities such as Venice, Duborovnik or Prague. Meanwhile, symptoms of overtourism can also be observed in many other, smaller cities, regions and centers serving tourist functions. One of such regions is Podhale and the city of Zakopane, considered the capital of the Polish Tatra Mountains. The constantly growing tourist popularity of Zakopane and the accompanying problems make local authorities have to take actions that will limit the negative effects of excessive tourism.

The considerations presented in the article focus on three key issues. The first one is related to an attempt to identify the symptoms and causes of overtourism in Zakopane. The second one refers to the effects and influence of overtourism on the social environment of the discussed area. The third group of issues focuses on discussing activities and strategies for sustainable management aimed at limiting the negative effects of overtourism in the discussed area.

The most important sources of data and information include: 1. analysis of existing data, including: reports, strategies, statistical data, scientific publications related to the area and subject of research, 2. participant observation conducted in places where tourist traffic is concentrated; the aim of the observations was to identify "field solutions" to minimize the negative effects of overtourism, as well as to observe the behavior of people visiting places of concentration of tourist traffic, 3. questionnaire interviews containing elements of in-depth interviews conducted with representatives of local authorities, associations, private and public entities in the tourism industry, and commercial entities, tourists and residents of Zakopane.

Based on the information obtained, the causes and effects of overtourism in Zakopane were analyzed, and a number of recommendations were formulated to limit the negative impact of overtourism on the social and economic environment.

2. Overtourism and Sustainable Management: Theoretical Context

Overtourism is one of the most complex, negative phenomena occurring today in places with a strong concentration of tourist traffic. UNWTO indicates that overtourism can be defined as a situation in which "the impact of tourism on a destination, or parts thereof, that excessively influences perceived quality of life of citizens and/or quality of visitors experiences in a negative way" (UNWTO, 2018).

Volo (2020), offers a slightly broader view, pointing out that "quantification of overtourism is subjective and relative to each destination with respect to its number of residents, tourists and tourism businesses. While the number of tourists is certainly a significant factor in the definition of overtourism, and examination of the literature offers a view that goes beyond the mere numbers, portraying impropriety behavior and actions undertaken by visitors that undermines the quality of life of residents and often undermines the experience of others tourists".

Based on the above definitions, two key elements can be identified that characterize the described phenomenon: a significant, excessive increase in the number of people visiting a given place (temporarily or permanently) and the related decrease in the quality of life of the local community. It is also worth noting that negative feelings may affect not only the hosts of the reception areas (residents), but also the tourists themselves, who travel in conditions of increased tourist pressure (https://encyclopedia.pub/entry/history/show/8362).

Moreover, the phenomenon of overtourism may also appear in a situation where the thresholds of tourist absorption or capacity are not exceeded, but a reduction in the level of quality of life and the value of tourist experiences can be observed among both residents and visitors (Majdak *et al.,* 2021a; 2021b).

The key phenomena that contributed to the emergence of overtourism include (Weissmann, 2021; Arnie, 2021; Street, 2021; Arias-Sans, Pedret, and Sánchez

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Castro, 2021; Lamb, 2021; Crisp, 2021; Gierczak-Korzeniowska, 2019; Olszewski, 2021; Adamopoulos and Thalassinos, 2020):

1. Large-scale introduction of new business paradigms based, among others, on the sharing economy (activity of companies such as Airbnb and Uber).
2. Lack of tools to control tourist flows.
3. The influence of social media and influencers in creating needs, expectations and aspirations among people of different ages.
4. Actively striving to increase the number of tourists (income, taxes, investments).
5. Implementation of standard tourist programs, showing only the most famous places by people who guide tourists.
6. Sometimes a short period of availability of a given tourist attraction.
7. A relatively small area of Europe, conveniently located airports, and good locations of attractive tourist cities make it easier to organize cheap, safe and comfortable trips.
8. Multilingualism and applications that minimize the impact of language barriers.
9. Increased nationalism - reluctance towards visitors and, as a result, exposure of various dysfunctions accompanying tourist travel.
10. The enrichment of societies, the increase in purchasing power. According to the European Commission, by 2030, 5.6 billion people will have achieved the so-called "middle class" (two billion people more than today) (European Commission, 2020).
11. Consumer affluence and *hypermobility, which are the consequences of late capitalism* (Gowreesunkar and Vo Thanh, 2020).

As we can see, the list of factors influencing the emergence of the phenomenon of overtourism is very extensive and refers to various spheres of politics, economy and society. Given the complexity of the problem, entities responsible for managing tourist areas (both public and private) are faced with the need to take comprehensive actions to reduce the negative impact of "excessive tourism". In this context, the concept of sustainable management deserves special attention, which postulates, among others:

- *the need to protect the natural, social and historical-cultural environment (counteracting degradation, conservation protection),*
- *integration of tourism activities with nature conservation goals,*
- *promoting quality (services provided, product offered, etc.),*
- *ensuring a sense of security for tourists and hosts (local community),*
- *shaping new attitudes among tourism organizers and tourists* (Majdak, 2019).

In view of the above demands, a broad diagnosis of the needs and expectations of all interest groups operating in a given area, as well as actions aimed at developing

compromise paths of development (taking into account the interests of various groups) should be considered necessary.

3. Zakopane: Tourist Potential and Socio-Economic Conditions

The city of Zakopane is considered by many to be the winter capital of Poland and the pearl of the Tatra Mountains. The attractiveness of the city and the entire region is determined by valuable natural values typical of the high-mountain landscape, cultural heritage that builds the region's identity, as well as extensive accommodation and infrastructural facilities, creating favorable conditions for practicing various forms of tourism and recreation.

Based on data on the sale of admission tickets to the Tatra National Park, a large part of which is located within the city's administrative boundaries, it can be estimated that the area is visited by approximately 5-6 million tourists every year (https://tpn.pl/zwiedzaj/turystyka /statistics).

According to official statistical data, the city itself is inhabited by just over 27,000 people (https://demografia.stat.gov.pl/bazademografia/Tables.aspx) and offers a total of 40,924 accommodation places in facilities of various standards (https://bip.zakopane.eu/debata-nad-raportem-o-stanie-miasta-za-2022).

It should also be noted that in addition to legally operating facilities, there is also a large number of accommodation facilities operating in the so-called gray zone (including unregistered accommodation facilities that do not pay taxes or local fees), and unofficial estimates say as many as 150,000. accommodation places in these facilities (https://bip.zakopane.eu/debata-nad-raportem-o-stanie-miasta-za-2022).

The catalog of tourist attractions in Zakopane is very extensive and includes cultural facilities (museums, art galleries, libraries), sports and recreation places (tourist trails, sports and recreation infrastructure), cultural and sports events (festivals, sports championships) and infrastructure enabling practicing various forms of tourism. Individual places, facilities, tourist forms and event categories are presented in Table 1.

Among the tourist attractions of Zakopane and the entire region, the Tatra National Park (TPN) deserves special attention. Due to its unique character and landscape values (constituting an example of an Alpine landscape, with the highest peaks in Poland), most of the area of the Polish Tatra Mountains is under protection and is part of the TPN.

According to official data on ticket sales, TPN was visited by 4,580,015 in 2022 (https://tpn.pl/pobierz-plik/a52ef92250798896036a34c8fc3d3283/Bilety_2022_ miesieczne.pdf) people. A detailed breakdown of the number of visits in 2015-2022 is presented in the table below.

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Table 1. *Tourist attractions of Zakopane*

Attraction group	Objects/places/forms
Festivals	1. Film Festival on Art, 2. Tatra Festival of Highlander Bands Złote Kierpce, 3. Festival of Christian Creativity "I was looking for you", 4. International Festival of Organ and Chamber Music, 5. Zakopane Literary Festival, 6. Festival "Inspired by the Mountains" named after Ewa and Maciej Berbek , 7th International Mountain Folklore Festival, 8th Festival of Christmas Carols, Pastorals and Songs, 9th Zakopane Jazz Spring.
Museums	1. The Tatra Museum Dr. Tytus Chałubiński, 2. Museum of the Zakopane style. Stanisław Witkiewicz, 3. Koliba Villa, 4. Kornel Makuszyński Museum, 5. Karol Szymanowski Museum in the "Atma" villa, 6. Jan Kasprowicz Museum in Harenda, 7. Palace of Struggle and Martyrdom Museum , 8. TPN Natural Science Education Center, 9. Manor and Park Complex in Kuźnice, 10. Sabała Cottage.
Galleries	Grzegorz Pecuch Sculpture Gallery, 2. Willa "Oksza", 3. Władysław Hasior Gallery, 4. Art Gallery Włodzimierz and Jerzy Kulczycki, 5. Galeria Antoni Rząsa, 6. Galeria Kenar, 7. Galeria Strug, 8. Gallery of Contemporary Art "Dom Doktora", 9. Orski Gallery, 10. Galeria Owca Cala, 11. Municipal Art Gallery of Władysław Count Zamoyskiego, 2. Galeria Gazduś.
Cinemas and theaters	1. Kino Lokal , 2. Kino Sokół , 3. Kino Giewont , 4. Teatr im. Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz , 5. RZT Szymaszkowa Entertainment Theater.
Libraries	1. Public Library of Stefan Żeromski, Pedagogical Library in Zakopane.
Tourist routes around Zakopane	1. Kościeliska Street, 2. Tetmajera and Piłsudskiego Streets to Wielka Krokiew, 3. Oswalda Balzera Street, to Koziniec and Jaszczurówka, 4. Avenue of Tatra Guides to Kuźnice, 5. Chramcówki , Jagiellońska, Tytusa Chałubińskiego, 6. Krupówki and Zamoyskiego Street, 7. Kasprusie and Strążyska streets to the exit of Dolina Strążyska, 8. Krzeptówki, 9. Gubałówka, 10. Harenda, 11. Following the trail of writers and musicians.
Mountain shelters	1. Shelter in Polana Kondratowa, 2. Hotel Górski PTTK Kalatówki, 3. Shelter in Hala Ornak, 4. Shelter in Polana Chochołowska, 5. Shelter in Hala Gąsienicowa, 6. Shelter in the Roztoka Valley, 7. Shelter in the Valley of Five Polish Ponds , 8. Shelter on Morskie Oko.
Cable cars	1. Kasprowy Wierch funicular, 2. Gubałówka funicular , 3. Butorowy Wierch chairlift, 4. Szymoszkowa chairlift , 5. Harenda chairlift, 6. Wielka Krokiew chairlift.
Active recreation in summer	1. Bicycles, 2. Nordic Walking , 3. Running, 4. Rollers and scooters, 5. Horse riding, 6. Quad bikes, 7. Paintball.
Active recreation in winter	1. Alpine skiing, 2. Cross-country skiing, 3. Ski touring , 4. Snowmobiling.

Sports and recreational infrastructure	1. Swimming pools, 2. Outdoor gyms, 3. Ice rinks, 4. Bowling alleys, 5. Sports halls, 6. Tennis courts, 7. Rope parks.
Other tourist attractions	1. Tatra Lapidarium, 2. Center for Active Protection of Amphibians and Reptiles, 3. Parrot House, 4. Upside Down House, 5. Snowlandia , 6. Sleigh rides, 7. Butterfly House , 8. Ciuchcia Zakopiańska, 9. Mini Zoo, 10. Escape Room Zakopane, 11. Tatra Cultural Center "Jutrzenka" , 12. Multimedia Benches, 13. Jan Sztaudynger's House "Koszysta" , 14. Cultural Plac Niepodległości, 15. Czerwony Dwór, 16. Stacja Kultura Zakopane 17. Summer and winter sports events.

Source: *Own study based on https://www.zakopane.pl/strefa-turystyczna.*

Table 2. *Number of tourists visiting the Tatra National Park*

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	1019	2020	2021	2022
Number of tourists	3,348,246	3,683,063	3,779,209	3,973,589	3,947,350	3,470,343	4,788,788	4,785,847

Source: *Own study based on https://tpn.pl/pobierz-plik/7f75231cfd3a03c614bc274d4b41c1b6/Dozanie_2022_2015.pdf*

The infrastructure located in the TPN area allows, among others, hiking, cycling, skiing, speleological and high-mountain tourism. The most frequently visited TPN places in 2022 included Morskie Oko (approx. 773 thousand visitors), Kościeliska Valley (approx. 550 thousand visitors) and Kasprowy Wierch (approx. 549.5 thousand visitors) (https://tpn.pl/zwiedzaj/turystyka/statystyka).

Reaching the above-mentioned places is relatively easy and does not require specialized high-mountain equipment. On the other hand, these are places with significant natural and landscape values.

To improve safety and regulate tourist traffic, the TPN authorities have introduced a number of solutions to smooth out tourist flows. One of them is the obligation to purchase and have a parking ticket before arriving at the entrance to the trail (people without a ticket will not be able to park their private cars in convenient places).

Thus, a limit on the number of people allowed to enter a given area was indirectly introduced. In addition, one-way traffic has been introduced on selected tourist routes, which improves the smoothness of movement on designated routes.

The previously mentioned discrepancies between official and real data regarding, among others, the size of the accommodation base may constitute a challenge both for entities responsible for the broadly understood municipal economy (including, among others, public transport, waste management, management of public spaces) as well as organizations related to health protection and safety, which face the need to handle a rapidly increasing number of population in a short time (Majdak, Mosz, Almeida, 2022).

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4. Research Methodology

The main goal of our own research was to determine the causes and symptoms and to identify actions to reduce the negative effects of overtourism in Zakopane. The most important sources of data and information include the following:

- analysis of existing data (including reports, strategies, statistical data, scientific publications) related to the area and subject of research.
- participant observation conducted in places of concentration of tourist traffic. The purpose of the observation was to identify "field solutions" to minimize the negative effects of overtourism, as well as to observe the behavior of people visiting places of concentration of tourist traffic.

Questionnaire interviews containing elements of in-depth interviews conducted with representatives of local authorities, associations, private and public entities in the tourism industry, commercial entities, tourists and residents of Zakopane. The original questionnaire was developed, among others, based on the results of the UNWTO report (UNWTO, 2018) and in the full version contained 76 questions grouped into 11 thematic categories:

1. Dispersion of visitors in and around the city.
2. Dispersion of guests over time.
3. Creating new routes and attractions for visitors.
4. Verification and adjustment of legal regulations.
5. Visitor segmentation.
6. Providing the local community with the benefits of tourism.
7. A strategy to open the city to experiences that will benefit both residents and guests.
8. Improving city infrastructure and amenities.
9. Involvement of local stakeholders.
10. Guest engagement.
11. Monitoring tourist traffic.

Due to the thematic scope of this study, the analyzes contained in the rest of the article focus on three thematic areas along with proposals for potential actions to limit the negative impact of overtourism on the city of Zakopane (they are presented in Table 3). During the interviews, research participants were asked to comment on individual proposals.

Table 3. *Areas of activities and proposed solutions to reduce the negative impact of overtourism on Zakopane*

Thematic area	Action
1. Area of activities aimed at dispersing tourist traffic in Zakopane	- Organizing more events in less visited parts of the city and its surroundings. - Developing and promoting attractions and amenities for

		tourists in less visited parts of the city and its surroundings.
	-	Increasing the capacity of attractions and the time guests spend in these attractions.
	-	Creating a unified identity of the city and its surroundings.
	-	Introduction of a travel card enabling unlimited local travel.
	-	Designating the entire city as downtown to encourage people to visit less visited parts.
2. Area of activities aimed at dispersing tourist traffic over time	-	Promoting attractions/experiences outside peak hours.
	-	Promoted dynamic prices.
	-	Stimulating events outside peak hours.
	-	Setting time slots for popular attractions and/or events supported by real-time monitoring.
	-	Use of new technologies (apps and others) to stimulate dynamic dispersion over time.
3. Area of activities aimed at stimulating new tourist routes and attractions	-	Promoting new routes at entry points into the city and during visitors' journeys, including tourist information centers.
	-	Offering combined discounts on new routes and attractions.
	-	Creating city guides and books highlighting hidden gems.
	-	Creating dynamic experiences and itineraries for niche guests.
	-	Stimulating the development of guided tours to less visited parts of the city.
	-	Creating virtual reality applications for famous attractions to complement on-site visits.

Source: Own study based on the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO); Center of Expertise Leisure, Tourism & Hospitality; NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences; and NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences (2018), ' Overtourism '? – Understanding and Managing Urban Tourism Growth beyond Perceptions, Executive Summary, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284420070.

The study participants were asked to indicate the most accurate answer out of three possible variants (concept in progress / interesting mistake / idea will not work). Moreover, respondents were asked to develop and comment on selected issues. The set of questions was each time adapted to the competences and scope of interests of the people participating in the study. A total of 15 interviews were conducted.

The interlocutors included, among others, representatives of local authorities (2 people), entrepreneurs operating in the field of services (5 people), owners and operators of tourist attractions, including museums, galleries, TPN (1 person), representatives of local associations operating in the field of tourism (1 person), tourists staying in the discussed area (6 people). The research was carried out in Zakopane in May and June 2023.

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4. Overtourism in Zakopane in the Light of Own Research

During the research procedure, extensive material was collected to characterize the key causes, symptoms and actions aimed at limiting the negative effects of overtourism in Zakopane. The analysis of the obtained results is presented below and it refers to three thematic areas.

1. Area of activities aimed at dispersing tourist traffic in Zakopane

> *Initiative 1.1. Organizing more events in less visited parts of the city and its surroundings:* in the overwhelming opinion of people participating in the research, this postulate will not work in the case of Zakopane. A large number of events are already organized in the city. Moreover, physically limited space (private houses, narrow streets, private plots) require organizing events in places adapted for this purpose in terms of accessibility, communication and safety.

> *Initiative 1.2. Developing and promoting attractions and amenities for tourists in less visited parts of the city and its surroundings:* in the opinion of the interlocutors, this is a proposal worth implementing. Promoting Zakopane's lesser-known attractions would contribute to relieving the most crowded parts of the city.

> *Initiative 1.3. Increasing the capacity of attractions and the time that guests spend in these attractions:* in the opinion of respondents, the idea deserves attention, but at the same time, due to the limited space of museums, galleries and exhibitions, it would be difficult to take action in many places to increase the limits on the number of tourists.

> *Initiative 1.4. Creating a unified identity of the city and its surroundings:* in the opinion of the study participants, the city has very expressive and well-recognizable symbols resulting from history, culture and the influence of the so-called Zakopane style, as well as the marketing activities undertaken.

> *Initiative 1.5. Introducing a travel card enabling unlimited local travel:* in the opinion of people participating in the interviews, this would be a very good solution in many respects, as it would make traveling around Zakopane easier for both tourists and residents. Such action would reduce the number of individual trips (in private cars), which would consequently reduce traffic jams and problems with parking spaces. At the same time, such a solution would be difficult to implement due to the activities of many private entities providing transport services.

Initiative 1.6.   Marking the entire city as downtown to encourage visiting less visited parts: in the opinion of respondents, the idea would be difficult to implement because Zakopane has a very distinct center, which is a place of concentration of tourist traffic. At the same time, tourists looking for more secluded places will easily find places with a more intimate character.

2. Area of activities aimed at dispersing tourist traffic over time

Initiative 2.1.   Promoting attractions/experiences outside peak hours: in the opinion of survey participants, this would be a very practical solution, but requiring very decisive actions, e.g. significant price discounts outside peak hours.

Initiative 2.2.   Promoting dynamic prices: opinion as above. Additionally, it is worth noting that such a solution was introduced by TPN in the area of parking fees located at the entrances to the most popular trails (weekday parking tickets are cheaper compared to weekend tickets).

Initiative 2.3.   Stimulating events outside peak hours: opinion as above. Moreover, respondents indicated that event organizers always care about high attendance and it might be difficult to convince them to organize events outside peak hours.

Initiative 2.4.   Using new technologies (apps and others) to stimulate dynamic dispersion over time: in the opinion of study participants, this would be a very practical solution, but requiring the involvement of tourists and entities providing tourist services.

3. An area of activities aimed at stimulating new tourist routes and attractions

Initiative 3.1.   Promoting new routes at entry points to the city and during visitors' journeys, including in tourist information centers: according to survey participants, this proposal is worth special attention because it is a starting point for encouraging tourists to use new routes and tourism products. Activities of this type can quickly bring tangible results in the form of fewer tourists on the most crowded routes.

Initiative 3.2.   Offering combined discounts on new routes and attractions: opinion as above. Additionally, study participants pointed out the possibility of effective promotion of less frequented places.

Initiative 3.3.   Creating city guides and books highlighting hidden gems: opinion as above. In addition In the opinion of respondents, this proposal also deserves attention because it fits into the trend of searching for unique

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places and objects.

Initiative 3.4.   Stimulating the development of guided tours to less visited parts of the city: opinion as above.

Initiative 3.5.   Creating virtual reality applications for famous attractions to complement on-site visits: opinion as above. Moreover, respondents pointed out, on the one hand, the attractiveness of this solution, and, on the other hand, the high costs that must be incurred when implementing similar projects.

Initiative 3.6.   Creating dynamic experiences and itineraries for niche guests: according to the study participants, this proposal would be difficult to implement because it would require the development of tourist attractions addressed to a narrow group of tourists, and therefore its effectiveness in counteracting overtourism would be negligible.

The catalog of activities presented above contains a list of various solutions to limit the negative impact of overtourism on Zakopane and the Tatra National Park. The interviews showed that most of the proposals were accepted by the study participants, but there were also items that were considered difficult or impossible to implement. The specificity of the area requires further exploration and in-depth research in this area.

4.   Conclusions and Recommendations

The considerations presented in the article focus on three key issues, causes, symptoms and effects, as well as sustainable management strategies aimed to reduce the negative effects of overtourism in Zakopane. The theoretical framework of overtourism discussed in the introduction indicates that the list of factors contributing to the emergence of overtourism is very extensive and refers to various areas of social, cultural and political life. With regard to the city of Zakopane and the Tatra National Park, the most important causes of overtourism include the following:

- The relatively small area occupied by the city and the national park.
- Easy access to Zakopane by various means of transport and relatively close proximity to the Krakow agglomeration.
- High level of tourist attractiveness of the place in question.
- The influence of social media and a specific fashion for tourist stays in Zakopane.
- Sometimes low capacity of tourist routes.
- Lack of tools to control tourist flows.
- Implementation of standard tourist programs, showing only the most famous places by people who guide tourists.

The above-mentioned factors contribute to the temporarily occurring phenomena typical of overtourism observed in other cities performing tourist functions, such as Dubrovnik, Venice or Barcelona.

The phenomena observed in Zakopane occur, of course, with less intensity, but they are very symptomatic and require preventive actions. The most visible symptoms and effects of overtorusim in Zakopane include:

- Temporary lack of accommodation.
- Crowds on city streets and tourist trails.
- Communication problems, traffic jams on the streets, overcrowded public transport.
- Social conflicts, reluctance of the local community towards tourists.
- Increased prices of basic food products.

Solutions aimed at limiting the negative impact of overtourism on Zakopane include all initiatives that contribute to "flattening" peak periods. These include the following:

- Queue and waiting time management.
- Promoting alternative tourist attractions (maps, tourist routes).
- Promoting quality (services provided, product offered, lifestyle combined with recreational activity, etc.).
- Dynamic control of tourist flows (monitoring the number of tourists, current information on the number of guests).
- Regulation of the accommodation rental system.
- Dispersion of tourist traffic in time (promotions, different prices during the day, out of season) and in space (taking tourist traffic outside the city center).

The conducted research showed that the phenomenon of overtourism in Zakopane is very complex, mainly due to various interest groups operating in a relatively small area. Due to the constantly growing number of tourists, various preventive actions should be taken to reduce the negative impact of overtourism on the social, economic, natural and cultural life of the area. In this context, it seems justified to undertake additional research and search for compromise solutions that will benefit all interested parties.

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