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TOURIST PRODUCT IN EXPERIENCE ECONOMY

Abstract: The turn of the 20th and 21st c. was marked by the development of experience economy, in which the basic commodities are not specific products, but the customers' emotions, impressions and experiences. Tourism has always been a particular "holiday experience industry". In recent years, however, the importance of the conscious creation of emotional tourism products has become even greater; we may observe continuous efforts to multiply and intensify tourism experience. The key activities to achieve this goal include transforming tourism infrastructure into unique tourism attractions, enlarging traditional services/service packages by elements providing additional emotions and satisfaction, using modern technologies in order to add virtual entities to real tourism space (augmented reality), as well as to conveniently record tourism experience and share it with the public.

Key words: experience economy, modern tourism, tourist product, emotional product, holiday experience, augmented reality.

1. EXPERIENCE ECONOMY – CONTEMPORARY TOURISM – TOURIST PRODUCT

The world economy in the early 21st c. is becoming increasingly global, and simultaneously complex and multidimensional. In order to describe and analyse it, new theories and models are needed, one of which is the 'experience economy' concept. According to Pine & Gilmore, we are living in times of a new, advanced economy, based primarily on services, and which should provide consumers with strong emotional experience (NOWACKI 2011).

Experience is then yet another form of offer in economics, after raw materials, products and 'ordinary' services. It cannot function independently, but becomes an essential part of a traditional good or service. Experience is considered a new value and the main source of consumer satisfaction. Economic activity may then be compared to theatre, as the product itself includes experience, emotion, sensation, thrill, mood and atmosphere (MARCISZEWSKA 2010).

Other major features of the 'experience economy':

- a combination of experience with the process of product consumption;
- widespread creation of experience by means of modern technologies;

- the need for active participation (immersion) by the product's consumers (opposite to the frequently passive participation in earlier economic models);
- individualization and personalization (personal nature) of the created experiences (the necessity to adjust them to individuals every time);
- the fact that experience is stored in human memory (including all its positive and negative sides) (MARCISZEWSKA 2010).

In the light of the general assumptions on the 'experience economy', it is not surprising that its leading branches are the creative industries (IDZIAK 2009), along with tourism¹, because they are areas of human activity where, by definition, the 'product' itself is experience. Cultural institutions and tourism businesses are transformed into kinds of factories for emotions, impressions, thrills and memories².

Tourism in the 21st c. is moving further and further away from the former model, referred to as 3xS (sun, sea, sand), which signified passivity on a beach. The 'new tourism' is rather 3xE, where E stands for education, entertainment and excitement. The skilful combination of knowledge and entertainment has been given a separate name – *edutainment*.

However, in contemporary tourism proportions among the three 'Es' are not always well balanced or most desired. The tourist offer is very frequently heavily dominated by entertainment and excitement alone. *'Travelling is incessant fun and joy, during which tourists are in a state of continuous eating, sampling, tasting and consuming the products offered to them'* (WIECZORKIEWICZ 2008, p. 287). Critics even speak of the *disneyization* of tourism (RITZER 2001) or *tourist fast food* (MIEDZIŃSKA & SZABLIKOWSKA-MANYŚ 2004). Tourism is occasionally treated as a kind of a mirror of contemporary consumer culture, reflecting materialistic societies and individuals (RYMARCZYK 2006). Naturally, not all tourists are like this, there is also a large and constantly growing group for whom travel is a way of expanding their understanding, a form of personal development, as well as an extraordinary experience of the world (BUCZKOWSKA 2009).

However, regardless of how sophisticated tourists' needs are, they always expect first of all a professionally prepared, all-inclusive offer, which will meet their expectations. Treating emotions and experiences as a particular market value that tourists are ready to pay more for is not a new phenomenon in the tourist business, and this is reflected in definitions of the tourism product.

For at least 20 years, the theory of tourism has been dominated by a holistic approach in which the tourism product is treated as **'experience available for a certain price'** (Middleton 1996, p. 89, all use of bold by the author). For MEDLIK (1995), a tourism product in its broad sense is *'a combination of what tourists do and the assets, devices and services which they use for this purpose. From the tourist's point of view (...), it comprises the whole experience from the moment of leaving the house to the moment of return.'* A similar view is presented by KACZMAREK, STASIAK & WŁODARCZYK (2005), who define the tourism product as a *'set of utilities related to tourism trips, i.e. tourism goods and services available on the market, enabling people to plan a journey, travel and collect experiences'*. MACCANNELL (2005, p. 33) points out that *'more and more often it is pure experience, which does not leave any material traces, that is produced and sold'*.

The fact that *'there is no ordinary product'* on the market was pointed out by ALTKORN (1999). Every tourism package contains certain additional benefits generated in the tourists' minds during, before and after the journey, in the form of emotions, impressions, experiences and psychological satisfaction. They are partly a result of general stereotypes regarding the destination (e.g. *'a luxury resort for elites'*), as well as intentional activity by tour operators who consciously create added value to the product (logo, slogan, promotion, market image, etc.). The choice of destination, as well as the approach expresses the tourist's

attitude and life philosophy, reflects his/her personality, signifies prestige, belonging to certain social groups, it builds self-image both in the tourist's eyes and – which is often more important – in the eyes of others (KACZMAREK, STASIAK & WŁODARCZYK 2005).

Facing such sophisticated, not to say high expectations, it is necessary to construct a well-thought-out, wide-ranging offer, in which the tourist and his/her emotions occupy the central position and which will guarantee an expected level of experience. More or less consciously, perhaps intuitively, the tourism industry is trying to meet these expectations.

The main methods of intensifying tourists' thrills and emotions:

- transforming the tourism infrastructure to offer unique tourist attractions,
- expanding older forms of a tourism product by elements of experience and emotion,
- creating a so-called *'augmented reality'*,
- new forms of recording tourism experience and sharing it,
- discovering new tourism spaces, to provide unique, sometimes even extreme experience,
- developing new forms of tourism to provide original, extraordinary emotions and develop the tourist's skills, creativity and personality.

The author will discuss the first four in this article, while the last two – due to the scale of the issues – will be the topic of a separate paper.

2. TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AS A TOURISM ATTRACTION

Unconventional architecture, especially such which arouses extreme emotions and causes controversy, has always attracted tourists' attention. A perfect example is the Eiffel Tower which initially was a subject of fierce argument and discussion. Nearly dismantled, with time it became *'an unrivalled landmark', 'an icon of architecture and modernity (...), a symbol of Paris, its inseparable attribute'* (SYKTA 2012, p. 181). Today too there are many controversial constructions which quickly have become icons of mass tourism, such as the Pompidou Centre or the Louvre Pyramid in Paris, Gaudí's works in Barcelona or the buildings designed by Hundertwasser in Vienna (houses and the waste incineration plant), the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, *'Dancing House'* (*'Ginger and Fred'*) in Prague, *'Face House'* in Kyoto and many others. We may also find extravagant ideas in Poland, which have become a strong magnet for tourists, e.g. *dom do góry nogami* (upside down house) in Szymbark, *Hotel Pekin* in Władysławowo, or *Krzywy Domek* (Crooked House) in Sopot.

COHEN (1972) believes that creating such artificial tourism attractions is a common and typical characteristic of contemporary mass tourism. What is new, however, is the fact that it increasingly commonly concerns tourism infrastructure facilities as well.

In the traditional sense, the material base of tourism comprises all the elements of infrastructure, which *'ensure the proper functioning of the reception site, assuming the maximum satisfaction of the tourists' needs'* (KACZMAREK, STASIAK & WŁODARCZYK 2010, p. 55). Until recently, their main function was only to support or supplement tourism assets.

At present, some elements of tourism infrastructure are becoming target tourism attractions themselves, successfully attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors. The main examples here include swimming pool complexes (aquaparks, thermal pools), amusement theme parks (PISARSKI 2009), science centres, huge shopping – cultural – recreation centres (malls³) (KOSTECKA 2007, FUHRMANN 2008, DUDEK-MAŃKOWSKA & FUHRMANN 2009), hotel-casinos (DUDEK 2005, 2006), stadiums of legendary football clubs⁴ (NOWACKI 2009) and other, often extravagant sports and recreation complexes (e.g. Ski Dubai roofed ski slope, or 'Tropical Islands' near Berlin). What they have in common is usually modern, breath-taking architecture, full of flair, functional and attractive interior design, as well as a varied and rich offer (including permanent events), guaranteeing excitement for many hours, or even several days. A slogan expressing the idea of this type of place could be the shopping centre motto: *'Forget your car, forget the street, forget services, forget yourself'* (MAKOWSKI 2003). It is true indeed that due to the extraordinary concentration of wonderful attractions, visiting them allows tourists to forget grey, bland reality.

A huge number of stimuli, adventures and experiences, i.e. a unique (extreme) holiday experiences⁵, are provided by cruises (ROUBA 2002). Apart from luxurious accommodation in cabins of a variety of standards and an opportunity to have meals in several themed restaurants, the newest Voyager class vessels offer a countless number of recreation and entertainment attractions. They include a beach deck with swimming pools, a health and beauty centre, saunas, 'hot springs', a gym, an aerobics hall, basket ball and volleyball courts, an ice rink, a climbing wall, a roller skating track, a Mini Golf course, a casino, a shopping gallery, a theatre, a library, a concert hall, a disco, a small museum of technology, and an oceanographic laboratory. *'Disembarking after a week long cruise, tourists have a feeling that they have not managed to see everything yet'* (ROUBA 2002, p. 51). It is not surprising then that neither the cruise route nor the visited ports or beaches, but the cruise itself is the greatest attraction for the tourists.

A similar trend is observed in the traditional hotel industry. As it is impossible to compete only by providing high quality service, many hotels decide to make their offer original, expressive and unique, and sometimes extravagant, bizarre or even shocking. It is a particular kind of response to the growing needs of guests who are no longer satisfied with ordinary accommodation, even at the most luxurious hotel. They expect something more – a stay at an exceptional, unconventional place which will enable them to collect unusual holiday memories and experiences, different from their friends. Hotels offer accommodation in strange places, in buildings of bizarre, often experimental architecture, in unusual, fanciful interiors, with sophisticated service.

Discussing such exceptional hotel facilities, MILEWSKA (2008) listed the following:

- renowned and luxury hotels, e.g. 'Burj Al Arab' in Dubai,
- boutique and designer hotels (with individually arranged interiors, unique décor, often designed by star-architects or fashionable designers),
- peculiar and untypical hotels, e.g. built in ice or under water,
- hotel record-breakers (the largest, the smallest, the tallest, built at the highest altitude, etc.),
- curious, extravagant hotels, e.g. situated in unused harbour cranes, in the heart of the Amazon jungle, with rooms arranged in concrete rings or old wine barrels, at a military prison, or where men are not admitted,
- hotels in means of transport, e.g. in a tramway car, helicopter, Boeing 747, or other vehicles moving on wheels (including *rotels* a combination of a luxury coach and a hotel).

No matter how we name and classify them, hotels have long stopped being merely an element of tourism infrastructure. Currently, they are components of the tourist's whole holiday experience, providing additional emotions, thrills and satisfaction when staying at a given place, similar to tourism attractions.

The urge to surprise guests may also be observed in gastronomy. There are many restaurants and bars, whose architecture and interior design aim at shocking their customers. Gastronomic establishments are arranged in various unusual places (e.g. in planes) and settings (e.g. on a high platform or below the sea), and their eccentric décor is often amazing. Meals may be eaten, for instance, next to an ancient bath-tub placed among the tables, or sitting on toilet bowls or in a wheelchair. The biggest surprises, however, wait in the toilets. Sometimes even finding them may be difficult, e.g. when the entrance is hidden behind the door of a ... wardrobe. Inside, one may be astonished by uneven, bulging floors, Venetian mirrors with

a view to the main dining room, gasmasks, military-style instructions how to use the urinal, etc. (MILEW-SKA, PRAĆZKO & STASIAK 2010).

3. ADDING AN ELEMENT OF EXPERIENCE AND EMOTION TO OLDER FORMS OF TOURISM PRODUCT

According to some researchers (*cf.* KACZMAREK, STASIAK & WŁODARCZYK 2010), the turn of the 21st c. brought a new generation of travellers called 'new tourists', who are steadily growing in numbers. They are very different from their predecessors: more experienced, flexible, independent and mobile, representing other demographic features, guided by a different system of values, and preferring a different life style.

Their education and the influence of the modern media are the reasons why the 'new tourists' show a different sensitivity and a liking for a particular 'visual' aesthetic; they get bored easily and require more varied media. At the same time they display varied interests, not only in traditional tourism-related areas (history, historical monuments, famous people, etc), but also in many other, sometimes quite marginal ones (industrial heritage, sport, politics, places known from literature and films, cooking, cultural events, life styles, fashion, jokes and anecdotes, etc). The 'new tourists' want not only 'to see' and 'to learn', but also 'to understand' and 'to experience', and come into a direct contact with the visited place. It is not surprising then that the traditional 20th c. forms of sightseeing (city tours) turn out to be inadequate. The classical transfer of information (often encyclopaedic) in one direction is not only unattractive and boring, but even outdated and unacceptable (*cf.* MIKOS VON ROHRSCHEIDT 2011).

The role of the modern tourism guide is then not simply to communicate facts, but to interpret heritage seen on the way. It is about explaining different meanings and relations by means of direct contact with original items, through direct experience, by using various media, as well as by being engaged emotionally (*cf.* NOWACKI 2005, KRUCZEK, KUREK & NOWACKI 2010). The role of the person responsible for interpretation is to help tourists to understand the sense of a given place (*genius loci*), its exceptional history and present time, as well as experience the visited areas to the full using all the senses.

Interpretation should be pleasant and interesting, contain elements of fun and entertainment. It may take the form of provocation or discovery (but presented in an attractive manner, clear to those who are not specialists in a given field). Not only are bare facts

important, but also jokes and anecdotes; not only verified information, but also presumptions, predictions and self-commentary. The most wanted interpretive approaches include raising doubts, quoting controversial sources, debunking myths and false beliefs, quoting literature excerpts, involving the listeners in a dialogue (asking questions, puzzles for a prize, encouraging thought, drawing conclusions), etc.

The essence of interpretation then is telling an emotional story of a given place. The images created in tourists' imagination in this way should excite and make them involved, evoke a spontaneous reaction. Naturally, even a perfect command of the language may prove insufficient, so it is necessary to reach for other media which have an effect on all the senses: sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch. The right atmosphere is created and tourists become familiar with the theme of a trip by watching documentaries and feature films, or listening to music (ethnic, folk, modern) on the coach. An important part includes tasting exotic dishes, fruit or alcoholic drinks, natural (flowers, spices) or artificial (aerosols) smells, touching – taking an exhibit into the hand, picking up and using a tool, feeling its texture, weight, etc. In this way the reception of information becomes multisensory, giving the tourist the personal experience desired.

In order to create an illusion of travelling in time in many historical places, historical costumes are worn not only by the guides or museum staff⁶, but by the tourists themselves. The costumes, staging, lighting, music and additional sounds stir the tourists' imagination and evoke pictures from the past. Sightseeing usually takes place according to a scenario earlier prepared, and the tourists become not only spectators, but also active participants in the performance, who actually have an influence on the course of action. More and more often the theatricalization of tourism space is spoken about. The world 'becomes a huge stage, where a performance takes place, and the main part may be played by any tourist, especially as the spectrum of the possibilities offered is very wide. They include sightseeing with theatrical elements (wearing costumes, playing scenes), playing games (solving puzzles, looking for treasure, discovering the past), taking part in shows and presentations, reconstructions of historical events and many others' (STASIAK 2011, p. 46).

Initially, interactive sightseeing (with a plot) was popular mainly as an interesting aspect of incentive or team-building trips. Today, it is common and available to all tourists. The most interesting options include the *Communism Tour* in Nowa Huta (sightseeing with a guide dressed in worker's overalls, a ride in a Trabant or by a 'cucumber' bus, a visit to a typical flat from Gierek's times, taking part in a dancing party from the 1970s, a fictionalized visit to Łódź (solving a crime puzzle set in the reality of the

'Promised Land' – a term used to refer to the 19th c. Łódź – meetings with typical inhabitants of the 19th c city), or discovering the secrets of medieval Toruń in the company of Copernicus or a Knight of the Teutonic Order (KACZMAREK, STASIAK & WŁODARCZYK 2010).

Other alternative ways of bringing the heritage of an area closer to the tourist include:

- **city trails with micro-events**, i.e. sightseeing with a guide or alone, following a route set earlier (real or virtual), enriched with performances, concerts, interactive shows or other multimedia elements (MIKOS VON ROHRSCHEIDT 2011);
- **city games** – a form of sightseeing which combines elements of a traditional scout paper chase, street happenings, as well as computer games and role-plays. The participating teams try to be the first to reach the target following a set of rules. Discovering secrets and solving puzzles involves strong emotions due to the element of competition. There are many types of city games: historical, based on literature, films, legends, looking for hidden objects, finding QR codes, etc. (cf. STASIAK 2011, MIKOS VON ROHRSCHEIDT 2011);
- **geocaching** – searching for treasure with the help of GPS. The treasure is a 'geocache' – a box hidden earlier by other players, containing a visit log and small gifts for exchange. Its location is revealed in the form of geographical coordinates that can be found on an internet website (e.g. www.geocaching.com, <http://opencaching.pl>, www.geocaching.pl);
- **questing** – discovering the cultural and natural heritage of the area in a non-standard way, which means walking along pre-prepared but unmarked tourism trails (quests) with the help of maps and clues (usually in the form of rhymed puzzles). The trail is set in such a way that it makes it possible to reach intriguing places, not described in guidebooks or on the internet, and the crowning achievement is finding the treasure – a box with a seal confirming quest completion (WILCZYŃSKI 2011).

It is interesting that it is not necessary to invent new forms of old tourism services in order to incite tourists' interest. Sometimes it is enough to offer the same products, but at an unusual time and in a different setting. A perfect example is the European Night of Museums – a French initiative since 2005 – a unique cultural event during which museums and galleries are open for one chosen night. Today, it is organized in over 40 countries every year, attracting crowds of people willing to visit cultural institutions. The popularity of the Night of Museums is quite

surprising, because apart from special exhibitions, they are mostly the same as those which can be visited during the day. Here, however, the key factor is the atmosphere of a mystery, exceptionality, unusualness, festivity, and a holiday of culture.

Another event – the Night of Restaurants is based on the same principle. Its second staging took place in 2013 in Białystok, Gdańsk and Poznań (<http://nocrestauracji.pl>).

As regards gastronomy, another extraordinary idea was conceived in order to increase customers' impressions, stimulate their senses, and provide them with unique experience. At the *Dans le Noir* restaurants meals are eaten in complete darkness and the menu remains unknown until the last moment. The waiters are blind and the guests gradually learning to move and eat in the dark (MILEWSKA, PRĄCZKO & STASIAK 2010). In 2013, restaurants of this type were open in Paris, London, New York, Barcelona and St. Petersburg (<http://www.danslenoir.com>).

4. MODERN TECHNOLOGIES

An important move modifying and enriching the holiday experience of modern tourists is the use of modern technologies. The range is very wide and constantly growing. They include CD-ROM or DVD presentations, audio-guides, audio-visual presentations, multimedia kiosks, internet websites, mobile devices, 3D techniques, and virtual or augmented reality (PARDEL 2008, WIZA 2008).

Combining the real world with computer-generated elements may take many forms. The simplest solutions (power point presentations, web pages, multimedia kiosks) allow additional extended textual, graphic and sound information about a given site, historical monument, museum and so on to be presented. They are currently fairly popular, but due to the limited interaction with the user they are slowly going out of use. Young tourists in particular treat them as standard techniques and are not really excited about them.

Mobile tourism guides installed in cellular phones are more advanced technologically. They make it possible to download unlimited amounts of tourism information, in various languages, together with a variety of multimedia contents, such as illustrations, photos, music, sounds, etc., which ensure easy access to an interactive map, service guide, suggestions of tourism theme trails or city games.

Another technology commonly used in tourism is the mobile navigation which has caused a real revolution in cartography. *'We may even talk about a departure from typical, map-based information towards egocentric*

communication, in which the key role is played by the map user' and his/her needs (Gotlib 2011, cited after: KONOPSKA 2012, pp. 259-260). The problem is not information capacity any more (theoretically unlimited), but the appropriate grouping of its content in individual data layers, from which the tourist may then select (road map, infrastructure, road hazards, tourism information). The key element, however, is the dynamic matching of the map content to the location of the tourist (KONOPSKA 2012).

The most complicated, but also the most effective technique of building tourists' satisfaction is the augmentation of existing reality, i.e. supplementing it with computer-generated models or scenes. Using special equipment, it is possible to project three-dimensional objects in real space (cf. PARDEL 2008). They transform static tourism space into an interactive world of education, excitement and fun. Its superiority, compared to traditional 'ordinary' space, lies in the 'interactive properties and immersive (creating the feeling of actually staying in the virtual world) contact with the geographical environment' (NIKIEL & ZAWADZKI 2008, p. 199). The tourist has a subjective impression of 'being inside' the generated reality, and at the same time has an influence on what is happening in it, can manipulate the objects generated by the computer. In effect, he/she moves around an artificially developed world, full of computer stimuli affecting all the senses.

It is already possible to take virtual walks in the reconstructions of ruined buildings (e.g. the Great Synagogue in Lublin) or no longer existing cities (e.g. medieval Krakow, Wawel, Zielona Góra - NIKIEL & ZAWADZKI 2008). Augmented reality has already appeared in museums (e.g. the Museum of Polish Jews in Warsaw); scientists are working on opening digital museums in open spaces (WIZA 2008).

The examples quoted above refer primarily to the enrichment of tourism space in order to multiply tourists' experiences and impressions. Modern technologies, however, also leave an imprint on ways of recording tourism experience and sharing it.

At the end of the 20th c. Fierla wrote jokingly: 'The most important change in the tourist of the recent times has been the appearance of a small, yellow human figure on the tourism map. He has slanting eyes and a third eye on his belly - he is the Japanese tourist, who quickly visits the world, taking pictures or making films using expensive equipment'.

Limiting a tourism visit to just looking at objects and thoughtlessly pressing the camera shutter-release button has been called 'kodakization' and was one of the first tangible symptoms of travel mostly for the visual consumption of places (URRY 2007). Sociologists stress that taking photographs results from the wish to own the world (store it in a private collection). The desire to immortalize oneself with famous views and

landscapes in the background is equally important. Many tourists feel that it is the best evidence of their journeys all over the world and a confirmation of their wonderful holiday experience.

Nowadays, at a time when cameras and digital camcorders are commonly used (routinely installed in mobile phones), the behaviour described here is typical of not only one nation. All tourists, regardless of their country of origin, like to take hundreds or thousands of photos, or make long films during one trip. The more they do it, the more mechanical and thoughtless it is. Thanks to the preview function, they may check the quality of the photo right away. If they are not satisfied (blurred picture, ugly face, unwanted elements within the frame of the picture), the photo may be deleted and the shot repeated (improved) immediately.

We deal here then with an instant selection of experiences eliminating the imperfect - holiday memories must be flawless... They may not only be transformed but also purposefully arranged. Therefore, at many tourism destinations, we can easily find local inhabitants who will gladly point out the most satisfying shots, settings and postures to tourists, for a small price ('holding up' the Leaning Tower, 'measuring' the Eiffel Tower, kissing the Sphinx, etc.). As a result, all photographs are the same and show similar views. But this is exactly as it is supposed to be - only familiar landscapes will enable the prospective viewers to recognize without mistake the place visited by the author of the photo.

The desire to impress friends is so strong that the majority of travellers do not want to wait till they come back home; they want to share their experience on the spot - right after they have climbed to the top of a mountain, while they are visiting a 'top' historical monument, during their stay at a prestigious resort, etc. Thanks to modern technologies, it is possible. Having a mobile phone, one can make a call, text or send an MMS. If you have access to the internet, the number of communication channels becomes even greater, including e-mails (with attachments), social networks, blogs, or private websites.

The change in tourism behaviour in this respect, which has taken place in the last two decades, is an unquestionable sociological phenomenon. The traditional photographs brought from holidays in relatively small numbers were an important part of the remembered journey (KACZMAREK, STASIAK & WŁODARCZYK 2010). They were made public in a controlled way, usually in a small circle of family members and friends. Nowadays, reminiscing about the journey starts ... during the journey, e.g. in the evening, when looking through the pictures taken during the day (and deleting unwanted shots). Photographs are often shown to strangers - incidental travel companions.

After the return home, there are so many photographs that... hardly anyone has enough time to see them all. They are usually stored on the computer hard drive, but will never be sorted and described.

A particular fashion of the recent years has been the publishing of private holiday photos with descriptions and comments on the internet (social networks). It is surprising because the published materials can be viewed by every net user, and their distribution and the way they are used, are not necessarily what the author would wish. This situation, however, may be explained by a certain dose of vanity (the desire to be admired, to impress others), or even some kind of exhibitionism on the part of the author.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Travelling has always been inextricably connected with exploring the unknown, having exciting adventures and gaining new experience. In this sense, the tourist was and still is a perfect exemplification of the 'experience economy', a particular 'holiday experience industry'. For at least two decades, it has also been reflected as such in the approach to the tourism product, which, in a broad sense of the term, signifies the whole of the tourist's experience.

In recent years, the significance of experiencing the tourism product emotionally before, during and after the trip has been strongly stressed (*cf.* the concept of three journeys in KACZMAREK, STASIAK & WŁODARCZYK 2005). It is largely the result of the development of the modern experience economy in which the basic commodities are not specific products, but the consumer's emotions, impressions and experiences. Internal feelings, excitement, satisfaction with a given destination turn out to be more important than the standard of tourism service provided. Tourists are no longer satisfied with passive recreation or common entertainment; they wish to take part in something extraordinary, feel surprised by something, and have a unique holiday adventure (*cf.* IDZIAK 2009).

The most significant change is the transformation of the tourist from a passive observer to an active participant. For the 'new tourists', it is essential that they can interactively influence the course of the action, co-decide, co-create their own and their companions' experience. Using IT terminology, this phenomenon is defined as 'tourism 2.0'. *'In such tourism, the borders between suppliers and buyers, as well as between tourists and the inhabitants of tourism destinations are becoming blurred'* (IDZIAK 2012 p. 265). In this way, consumers are paradoxically becoming the producers of the tourism product, or even a part of it (*cf.* KACZMAREK, STASIAK & WŁODARCZYK 2010).

A response to the consumer's growing expectations is the assurance of an appropriate supply by the tourism sector. The current trend is to multiply and intensify impressions and emotions in order to surprise, amaze, or sometimes shock modern collectors of holiday memories, so that they are fully satisfied.

This analysis shows that the activities to achieve this goal are varied. The most important of them include:

- transforming tourism infrastructure into unique tourism attractions, presenting controversial architecture, interior design, a particular atmosphere or the unusual character of the services provided;
- enlarging the traditional service package by elements providing additional emotions, impressions and satisfaction;
- using modern technologies to enlarge real tourism space by virtual entities (to create augmented reality), evoke a feeling of satisfaction in tourists' minds, as well as to conveniently record tourism experience and share it with the public.

Activities aiming at the intensification of consumer emotions concern the modification of both the simplest products (individual services) and the more complex, multi-faceted ones (tourism package, event, site, area). Despite the many efforts of tour operators, the obtained results are not always satisfactory.

The basic problem is that consumer's expectations are constantly growing; tourists are becoming more and more experienced, 'they have been everywhere, seen everything', even if not personally, then on modern media, which considerably raise their expectations. They demand new and stronger stimuli, which is why it is getting increasingly difficult to obtain the 'wow!' effect of surprise and amazement. This appears when the psychological product is larger than expected - when tourists' expectations are exceeded (*cf.* product dimensions in KACZMAREK, STASIAK & WŁODARCZYK 2010). In order to achieve it, it is necessary to take a well thought-out, comprehensive approach to constructing a modern tourism offer, based on emotion management.

This is a fact well known to hoteliers, who build their customer's satisfaction patiently, step by step, by means of providing small pleasures. The final opinion depends on the receptionist's everyday smile, personalized welcome on the TV screen in their hotel room, a few sweets resting on their pillow, inviting them to rest, a slightly unfolded duvet, a set of miniature toiletries in the bathroom, 'towel origami' (e.g. towels folded in the shape of animals), or a rose in a wicker basket with clean laundry. Individually, these details are insignificant (and cheap), but if they are offered jointly, they are mutually strengthened

(synergy effect), creating an atmosphere of exceptional hospitality. In this way they successfully create in the guests' minds the feeling of exceptionality and satisfaction with the choice of the hotel.

Another genuine threat to the effective creation of a competitive tourism product is the danger of overloading the offer with too many attractions. According to BOGACZ (2012), travel agencies typically offer a 'combination of different values – a programmed abundance'. Although the modern tourist – a collector of experiences – keeps searching for new sensations, the excessive demand on emotions may lead to boredom or even indifference. It is worth noticing here that modern travellers do not evaluate or give hierarchy to their experiences. Hence, in Witkacy's words, the transcendent experience stands right next to 'the pleasures of the stomach'. '*The cultural product is a carnival, during which the lofty mixes with the banal; art with kitsch (...)*' (LENIARTEK 2012, p. 128). Following this way of thinking, contemplating the Mona Lisa or a visit to the red light district, Corpus Christi in Łowicz or Oktoberfest, the Chopin Piano Competition or traces of the UFO in Wylatów all remain at the same level of importance as regards tourist memories (KACZMAREK, STASIAK & WŁODARCZYK 2010).

In this situation, it is very easy to trivialize the tourism offer. Satisfying the tastes of a large number of undemanding tourists often leads to tourism traps, i.e. artificial, kitsch attractions which play on the tourists' basic feelings, only to make them spend their money. Good examples are haunted houses (very popular in the USA), dark rides (riding vehicles in the dark) or shooting dark rides (riding in the dark and shooting) (KRUCZEK 2009b).

In Poland, the conscious creation of tourism products involving strong emotions has only just begun. Some trends or phenomena which are already present in the West will probably appear soon in Poland as well. Perhaps it will be possible to see the different character of the Polish tourism market (resulting from particular attitudes to religion or patriotism). Whatever happens, tourism studies are gaining a new, intriguing field of study.

FOOTNOTES

¹ The word 'industry', referring to both cultural and tourist activity, has many opponents and critics. Due to the popularity of this term, it has been used in the article but without any discussion of its use and semantic range.

² Just as the cinema gained the nickname 'dream factory', tourism might be described as a 'holiday experience factory'.

³ The world's largest shopping centre, the West Edmonton Mall in Edmonton (Canada) consists of 800 shops and 11 department stores, 110 restaurants, a full-size ice-rink, a hotel (360 rooms), a lake, a chapel, 13 night clubs and 20 movie theaters.

⁴ Modern stadiums offer sports fans not only many hours of carefully staged, emotional sports events, but also an opportunity to visit the club museum, the gallery of trophies, the backstage (e.g. changing rooms), to buy club souvenirs in the large shopping and recreation zone, and sometimes to meet sports stars in the recreation-restaurant part.

⁵ The slogan of the Royal Caribbean International cruises owner on the American market in the early 21st c. is: '*The Ultimate Holiday Experience*'.

⁶ This is not always recommended or welcomed by tourists. For instance, dressing the employees of Hitler's underground laboratory in Kamienna Góra in German military uniforms and concentration camp clothes was an idea which raised strong controversies.

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