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THE IMPACT OF THE INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENTERPRISES PROVIDING ACCOMMODATION SERVICES IN THE LUBLIN VOIVODESHIP

WPŁYW OTOCZENIA MIĘDZYNARODOWEGO NA ROZWÓJ PRZEDSIĘBIORSTW ŚWIADCZĄCYCH USŁUGI NOCLEGOWE W WOJEWÓDZTWIE LUBELSKIM

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Abstract: The aim of this article is to present the opinions of owners of year-round accommodation facilities operating in the Lublin voivodeship, concerning the impact of the international environment on the development of enterprises providing accommodation services. The assessment is based on the author's own research conducted with the use of the CATI method in April and May 2018. Entrepreneurs rarely see opportunities and threats related to the international environment. They seem to think "in a local way". Generally, the most positive feedback on pro-developmental actions related to the international environment is provided by respondents from urban-rural communes. Membership in international structures, including the European Union, gives a lot of opportunities for development. The entrepreneurs participating in the survey should be even more active while monitoring EU forms of support and applying for EU projects.

Keywords: international environment, impact, accommodation company.

Streszczenie: Celem opracowania jest przedstawienie opinii właścicieli całorocznych obiektów noclegowych działających na terenie województwa lubelskiego na temat wpływu otoczenia międzynarodowego na rozwój przedsiębiorstw świadczących usługi noclegowe. Ocena sytuacji została dokonana na podstawie badań własnych zrealizowanych metodą CATI w kwietniu i w maju 2018 roku. Przedsiębiorcy rzadko dostrzegają szanse i zagrożenia, które wynikają z otoczenia międzynarodowego. Wydaje się, że często myślą oni „w sposób lokalny". Działania prorozwojowe wynikające z otoczenia międzynarodowego najbardziej pozytywnie ocenili respondenci z gmin miejsko-wiejskich. Przynależność do struktur międzynarodowych, w tym Unii Europejskiej, daje wiele możliwości rozwoju. Badani przedsiębiorcy powinni być bardziej aktywni w monitorowaniu unijnych form wsparcia i ubieganiu się o projekty unijne.

Słowa kluczowe: otoczenie międzynarodowe, wpływ, przedsiębiorstwo noclegowe.

1. Introduction

Tourism is now considered a major global business as it contributes to the creation of a considerable part of the world's GDP (Carmen, 2011, p. 142). The beginning of this century has spectacularly altered the European tourism sector, whilst the process of globalisation and the increase in the number of consumers has led to a significant and sudden expansion of the market which creates numerous opportunities (Platon, 2018, p. 35).

The effective operation of tourism companies depends on the extent of the impact of the marketing environment factors, including those which are not controlled by these companies (Kulieshova, 2014, p. 246). Enterprises face changes which should encourage these companies to constantly undertake adaptation activities, allowing them to operate in a dynamic environment[1] (Zygmunt and Zygmunt, 2016, p. 15). Monitoring and tracing the phenomena occurring in this environment is of particular significance for the company's stable operation (Rosa, Perenc, and Ostrowska, 2016, p. 80). The environment of the company is its main source of opportunities and threats and at the same time sets requirements and limitations (Kowalczuk, 2015, p. 38). It also facilitates managers' identification of the assets and weaknesses of business entities. A detailed analysis of environmental factors helps in the appropriate allocation of enterprise resources and is the basis for all decision-making processes in the company and the position of the enterprise on the market (Gołembski, 2007, p. 66).

[1] A company's marketing environment may be defined as "the actors and forces outside marketing that affect marketing management's ability to develop and maintain successful transactions with its target customers" (Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders, and Wong, 1999, p. 146). The company environment is constituted by all phenomena, processes and institutions which shape its changing relations, the possibilities of selling products, the scope of activity and the developmental perspectives (Penc, 2003, p. 14). The company environment is a set of all factors which influence the survival and development of the company (Nowakowski, 2000, p. 22).

The literature presents several ways of segmenting the company environment according to various approaches to the relationship between the enterprise and its environment (Królik, 2015, p. 113). The oldest and most frequently quoted classification is related to the strength of the influence and frequency of interactions occurring between environmental elements and the company. It assumes the division into a macro-environment, i.e. a more distant environment, and a micro-environment called a close or a competitive environment (Małkowska-Borowczyk, 2011, p. 21). The macro-environment covers all the conditions of the operation of companies in a given place and time (Romanowska, 2009, p. 33). It is less institutionalised than the close environment (Limański, 2015, p. 51). The following segments constitute the macro-environment (Hatch, 2001, pp. 80-85): the economic environment, the technological environment, the social (sociological) environment, the ecological (natural) environment, the demographic environment, the political and legal environment, the infrastructural environment, and the international environment. Both the macro and micro-environment have an impact on the operation of the hospitality sector (Grotte, 2015-2016, p. 24).

The company's environment is also classified in the literature as regards the space, or a physical extent in the geographical and administrative contexts. In this respect, five levels of the environment may be indicated (Matejun, Nowicki, 2013, p. 160): the local environment usually at the level of a village/town, commune, or county; the regional environment which in Poland may be identified e.g. with a voivodeship; the national environment related to the socio-economic characteristics of a given country; the international environment covering a number of countries, usually operating in associations (e.g. the European Union) or based on certain cultural and economic similarities; the global environment covering the area of almost the entire world. Each of the aforementioned levels of the environment creates different and specific (as regards culture and economy in particular) conditions of operation and development of companies.

The author's sphere of interest is the international environment defined by Bali and McCulloch as the system of interrelations between factors in the national and foreign environments and factors in a given country's external environment (Bali and McCulloch, 1990, pp. 15-17). A company's international environment includes: the socio-political situation, the growth rate of the world economy, the economic policy of countries and integration groups, the economic situation on the world market, the scale and scope of interventionism, the development of world trade and changes of its structure, competition on the world market, market forecasts (Żurek, 2007, p. 60).

The aim of this article is to present the opinions of owners of year-round accommodation facilities operating in the Lublin voivodeship, concerning the impact of the international environment on the development of enterprises providing accommodation services[2]. The assessment is based on the author's own research.

[2] The development of enterprises providing accommodation services is understood as all kinds of changes in companies, which lead to the improvement of the efficiency of their activity and market position. The indicators of the development of tourism companies are: the obtained financial result,

2. Research methodology

In order to gather the opinions of the owners of year-round accommodation facilities in the Lublin voivodship, concerning the impact of international environment factors on the development of their companies, field research was conducted in April and May 2018. The CATI (computer-assisted telephone interviewing) method was used. The size of the research sample amounted to 110 entities. The dominant type consisted of other hotel facilities[3] – 38.2%. A considerable group was represented by hotels (24.6%) and guest rooms or private accommodation (22.8%). The survey was also conducted in guesthouses (4.5% of all entities), motels (3.6%), training--recreational centres (2.7%), rental tourist cottages (1.8%), a hostel (0.9%) and a spa facility (0.9%). Due to the organisational and legal form, the sample structure was dominated by natural persons conducting economic activity (86.4% of all entities in the study). The study also included civil-law companies (9.1%), budgetary units (2.7%), a general partnership (0.9%) and a limited liability company (0.9%). More than half of the entities (66.4%) had been operating for over 5 years, 21.8% of the entities had been operating for 3-5 years whereas 11.8% – 1-3 years.

In selecting the research sample units, the stratified sampling method was used. The type of year-round accommodation facility was the stratum, according to the typology provided by Statistics Poland. The number of units in the research sample in particular strata in counties depended on the number of these units in the general population in the same counties. In order to specify the structure of the general population regarding the types of year-round accommodation facilities, the data from Statistics Poland, available on the Internet, in the Local Data Bank, were used (Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 2000). The general population amounted to 290 entities (as of 31 July 2017). The respondents (research units) were owners of enterprises providing year-round accommodation services (entrepreneurs). In order to present the study in terms of statistics, the structure indices, medians and modes were calculated based on the responses obtained. The Kruskal-Wallis test was used to specify the statistically significant differences between responses of respondents operating in various types of communes.

3. Research results

The respondents assessed the impact of the international environment on the development of their economic entities. In the survey, the Likert five-point scale was applied where the value of 1 means a definitely unfavourable impact of the factor

return on sales, dynamics of sales revenues, financial liquidity, value of assets possessed, the level of employment, investment activity.

[3] Another hotel facility – a hotel facility, divided into rooms, managed by one management board, providing some services, which include cleaning rooms, making beds and cleaning sanitary facilities every day (e.g. a place which serves as a hotel, motel or guesthouse which has not been assigned a category). (Pojęcia stosowane..., 2020).

whereas 5 – a definitely favourable impact. A sizeable group of survey participants (20.00%) believed the offer of European Union aid programmes for entrepreneurs to be definitely unfavourable for the development of their companies. Almost one-third of the respondents (32.7%) found these aid programmes fairly favourable. A smaller number of entrepreneurs assessed very positively or positively the impact on their companies' situation of other factors of the international environment included in the survey, such as: the economic situation on the world market (6.36%; 20.91%), Poland's international relations (3.64%; 23.64%), EU economic policy (4.55%; 19.09%), EU and OECD tourism policy (3.64%; 11.82%), and the forecast for the development of international tourist traffic (3.64%; 10.00%). The results of the research are presented in Figure 1. What is interesting is the fact that the largest number of respondents did not refer to the issues in question and gave the evasive answer "I have no opinion".

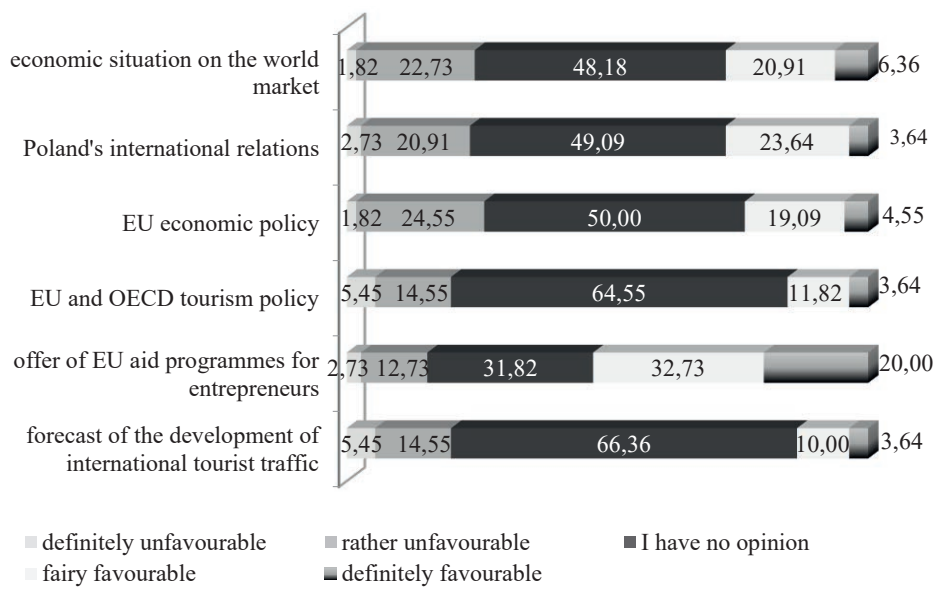

Fig. 1. The assessment of the impact of international environment factors on the development of enterprises providing accommodation services – structure of responses (%)

Source: author's own research.

The mean value (median) for the assessed factors of companies' international environment amounts to 3, which means that 50% of the results are located above or beneath this value on a 1–5 scale. Only for the offer of EU aid programmes for entrepreneurs, the median only had a different value which amounted to 4; The respondents most frequently assessed this factor as 4. The mode for the factors related to Poland's international relations, the EU and OECD tourism policy and the

forecast of the development of international tourist traffic was 3, whereas for the factors of the economic situation on the world market and EU economic policy – 2. The respondents from rural and urban communes more frequently assessed the offer of EU aid programmes for entrepreneurs as fairly favourable (mode 4), compared to the survey participants from urban-rural communes where the dominant response was "I have no opinion" (mode 3). The values of the median and the mode included in the research in various types of communes are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The assessment of the impact of international environment factors on the development of enterprises providing accommodation services – the median and the mode

Factors of the international environment which influence enterprises providing accommodation services	Urban communes		Urban-rural communes		Rural communes		Total	
	Median (Me)	Mode (Mo)	Median (Me)	Mode (Mo)	Median (Me)	Mode (Mo)	Median (Me)	Mode (Mo)
Economic situation on the world market	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	2
Poland's international relations	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
EU economic policy	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	2
EU and OECD tourism policy	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Offer of EU aid programmes for entrepreneurs	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4
Forecast of the development of international tourist traffic	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

The numbers reflect the values on the 1-5 scale where 1 – a definitely unfavourable factor, 2 – a rather unfavourable factor, 3 – I have no opinion, 4 – a fairly favourable factor, 5 – a definitely favourable factor.

Source: author's own research.

The statistical analyses allow to determine if the type of commune in which the companies surveyed operate has any impact on the assessment of the international environment by these respondents. The Kruskal-Wallis test was used to describe the situation. The dependent variable includes the assessments of the extent of the impact of particular factors of the international environment, whereas the independent (grouping) variable is the type of a commune. The results of the survey are presented in Table 2.

For three analysed factors (EU economic policy, EU and OECD tourism policy, forecast of the development of international tourist traffic), there are statistically significant differences in the assessment made by the respondents from rural and urban-rural communes (in these cases the p-value obtained meets the condition $p < 0.05$). Entrepreneurs from urban-rural communes saw these factors as more

Table 2. The results of the Kruskal-Wallis test for the assessment of the extent of the impact of the international environment on the development of enterprises providing accommodation services

Factors of the international environment which influence enterprises providing accommodation services	Average value of assessment grades			Test statistics H	*p*-value
	urban communes	urban--rural communes	rural communes		
Economic situation on the world market	49.18	64.84	56.94	5.63	0.06
Poland's international relations	52.82	64.06	50.22	3.92	0.14
EU economic policy	50.29 [a]	67.13 [a]	51.66	7.06	0.03
EU and OECD tourism policy	48.75 [b]	67.89 [b]	53.96	10.00	0.01
Offer of EU aid programmes for entrepreneurs	61.79	47.70	52.14	4.61	0.10
Forecast of the development of international tourist traffic	49.61 [c]	67.27 [c]	52.92	8.99	0.01

a, b, c – indicates a statistically significant difference between a pair of average values of assessment grades ($p < 0.05$).

Source: author's own research.

favourable. Likewise, compared to entrepreneurs from urban and rural communes, entrepreneurs from urban-rural communes assessed the impact of the economic situation on the world market and Poland's international relations as more significant.

4. Conclusion

The surveyed entrepreneurs operating on the market of accommodation services in the Lublin voivodeship rarely see opportunities or threats related to the international environment. It seems that they often think "in a local way" and do not identify the factors of the success of their economic activity with the further environment areas analysed in this article. The evidence for such a situation is the fact that only for the assessment of the factor of the offer of EU aid programmes for entrepreneurs, the number of the respondents who did not take any position on this issue and gave the response "I have no opinion" was relatively low. When assessing other factors, half of the respondents or even more had no idea on those issues.

The analysis of the results in the spatial dimension showed that in rural and urban-rural communes, the place of business significantly statistically differentiates the assessment of the impact of factors of the international environment on the development of accommodation companies. This is the case with three of the six factors included in the study. Generally, the entrepreneurs from rural communes have the most sceptical approach. The respondents from urban-rural communes most positively assessed the international environment activities apart from the offer of

EU aid programmes for entrepreneurs. EU aid programmes were particularly highly assessed in urban communes, which may result from their greater interest and use of this form of support.

The survey participants conduct their activity in the Lublin voivodeship. Just like owners of accommodation facilities in other parts of Poland, they should search for opportunities for the development of their companies not only in the local, regional or national environments. The key to success may be in seeing and taking advantage of the opportunities related to the international environment. A single economic entity does not have any impact on the shape of this environment, e.g. on the world economic situation, the development of international tourist traffic or the government's international policy. However, membership in international structures, including the European Union, gives a lot of opportunities for development. The entrepreneurs participating in the survey should be even more active while monitoring EU forms of support and applying for EU projects. The funds obtained under these projects would improve the competitiveness of a hospitality product.

The basis for planning development-oriented activities – the creation of relevant strategies of enterprises – is an awareness of the existing environment--related opportunities and threats. Their identification in the field of the international environment by the entrepreneurs surveyed seems to be insufficient. The situation could be improved by means of organising an information campaign by government bodies, responsible for the development of entrepreneurship and tourism, including the Department of Tourism in the Ministry of Development. The campaign should be focused on making pro-developmental entrepreneurs aware of the opportunities related to the international environment. Similar actions could be initiated by the Department of Tourism of the Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry in the European Commission, which shapes and implements the EU tourism policy. This undertaking seems to be justified, the more so when facing a new EU financial perspective for 2021-2027.

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