

CURRENT TRENDS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

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Abstrakt: Turistické zajímavosti jsou označovány jako klíčový prvek trhu cestovního ruchu a jsou důležitou součástí cestovního ruchu, protože podněcují zájem o cestování do Vaší cílové destinace a zajišťují spokojenost návštěvníků těchto míst. Jsou magnetem, který přitahuje turisty do regionu a také podporují poptávku po dalších turistických službách. V článku o pozadí vývoje turistických zajímavostí jsou ukázány současné *trendy* vývoje a faktory určující tento vývoj. Obsahuje četné příklady vytváření nových zajímavostí (atrakcí).

Abstract: Tourist attractions are regarded as a key component of the tourism market and an important element in the tourism system, for they stimulate interest in travelling to a destination and provide people visiting these sites with satisfaction. They are magnets which attract tourists to a region, while at the same time stimulating demand for other tourism services. In this paper evolution of the tourist attractions background was used to show modern trends of development and to determine development factors. It includes numerous examples of creating new attractions.

Klíčové slova: Turistické zajímavosti, vývoj, *trendy*, růstové faktory.

Key words: Tourist Attractions, Evolution, Trends, Determinants of Development.

Introduction

Tourist attractions have become a phenomenon of our times. Attractions and the behaviours associated with them are one of the most complex and highly structured universal codes co-creating modern communities. The role of tourist attractions in the postmodern world is changing. Consumer requirements and the innovativeness of tourism organisers have led to change and evolution on the tourist attraction market, which have led in turn to this sector becoming more diversified. Tourist attractions are dynamically changing in terms of form, location, style and scale.

The goal of this article is to show modern trends in the development of tourist attractions. This paper presents the evolution of tourist attractions from ancient to contemporary times. Current trends of development are identified and the factors determining the development of tourist attractions market are defined.

The Evolution of Tourist Attractions

Reconstructing the historical development of attractions is very difficult for two reasons¹ Firstly, it is not easy to decide how many people need to visit given sites in order for them to be called “attractions”. For example, were the Egyptian pyramids an attraction in Roman times if they were annually visited by several dozen Romans? Does a site only become an attraction when it is annually visited by thousands of people, is easily reachable by various

¹ SWARBROOKE J., *The Development and Management of Visitor Attractions*, 2nd edn., Elsevier. Butterworth Heinemann, Oxford, p. 406, 2002, p. 17. ISBN 0-7506-5169-5.

means of transport and offers numerous visitor services? These days the most popular attractions are visited by millions of people (e.g. visitor attendance at the Louvre in Paris can reach 8 million). The second reason is the purpose for visiting an attraction. The majority of sacred buildings (e.g. cathedrals) fulfil the dual role of tourist attractions and centres of worship. It is difficult to determine what proportion of visitors come to them for religious reasons and what proportion out of curiosity for the sites (or attractions) themselves.

Many attractions of the Ancient World continue to be popular. One researcher of travel in the Ancient World mentions many attractions which motivated travellers in the period from 3000 BCE to 600 CE². Ancient Egypt was an attraction due to religious events occurring as often as several times a year. During the New Kingdom of Egypt (1600–1200 BCE), many marvellous buildings, including the Sphinx and pyramids at Giza, were visited by ancient travellers who (just like today's tourists) left their graffiti on its walls. The Greeks and Romans were also frequent travellers and visited sites famous for their architectural or artistic objects simply for pleasure.

In Ancient Greece, the attractions were temples such as the Parthenon on the Acropolis, the Delphic oracle or the stadium at Olympia. It was back then, thanks to the efforts of Antipater of Sidon, that the first ranking system for attractions appeared: the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World³.

The Roman calendar abounded in public festivals and events which drew Roman citizens to the famous Colosseum for chariot races, theatre productions or gladiatorial contests. The Roman Empire also pioneered the creation of coastal or health resorts focused around mineral or thermal waters. Culinary attractions motivated ancient Romans to undertake trips to the Lucrine Lake for tasty eels or Rhodes for its rare species of fish. One attraction which not only appealed to wine producers was the formally observed wine harvest festival, the Bacchanalia.

The disintegration of the Roman Empire and onset of the Dark Ages in the 5th century caused the degeneration of geographical knowledge and a decline in travel. Possessing a common currency and language declined in importance and the routes to previously famous attractions were forgotten about.

During the Middle Ages only a few attractions prospered. Thanks to religious pilgrims, the famous churches in Jerusalem, Rome, Canterbury or Santiago de Compostela became travel destinations. It should be remembered that, apart from the Christian sanctuaries, important pilgrimage sites appeared on the Arab Peninsula, and later throughout the Muslim world. Still prominent today are Mecca and Medina in what is now Saudi Arabia.

During the Renaissance, it is notable that travel for non-religious purposes was being undertaken on a larger scale in relative terms. Renaissance people were interested in both nature and culture. By the reign of Elizabeth I of England (1558–1603), travelling to numerous attractions was already fashionable. Later the Grand Tour phenomenon took root in the British Isles. These were voyages to the continent undertaken by young Englishmen of aristocratic descent aiming to refine their manners and acquaint themselves with the culture and famous cities of France, Italy, Greece or the Alps. During these voyages, it was deemed necessary to visit the attractions of the day, mainly historical sites, galleries, collections or works of architecture.

² CASSON L., *Travel in the Ancient World*, Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1994. ISBN 0-8014-4808-3

³ KRUCZEK Z., *Atrakcje turystyczne. Fenomen, typologia, metody badań*. Proksenia Kraków 2011, s. 200, ISBN 978-83-60789-36-0

The need to make travel arrangements led to the appearance of the tour courier, the ancestor of today's tour leader, who organised passages, sorted out accommodation and left tips. In the 17th century, we can observe a revival in the popularity of journeys to take the waters and health resorts established earlier by the Romans (e.g. Bath and Buxton in Great Britain, Wiesbaden and Baden-Baden in Germany and Vichy in France). Visits to health resorts (or spas) triggered an avalanche of second-rate attractions actively occupying the leisure time of guests at health resorts. Bath was the only place outside London in those days to open a public theatre. Supplementary attractions were most often parks and gardens, ballrooms, promenades and band shells. By the end of the 18th century there were already many heritage sites beginning to develop objects of infrastructure and facilities with tourists in mind. Apparently in Poland of the mid-19th century there was a fashion for excursions to Carpathian or Sudeten health resorts (*La Belle Époque*).

The Industrial Revolution led to the appearance of many social and technological conveniences which facilitated access to attractions. The impact of these developments was communicated in particular through greater comfort and higher speed when travelling from cities to recreational areas. In Europe and North America this was followed by the rapid development of railways. The high population concentration in large industrial centres triggered a need for recreation in the interests of health. In the mid-19th century coastal resorts developed, offering opportunities for bathing in the sea and mineral water cures. In Great Britain, such resorts as Brighton and Scarborough rapidly developed, while Bath became a fashionable holiday destination for Londoners. Here, piers and gardens were constructed and various sites were fitted out for open air concerts. In France, in the famous Mediterranean Riviera region, the rapid development of such attractions as casinos can be observed while in Europe (mainly in the Alps) and North America the first ski stations and areas for mountain hiking came into being.

With the onset of the 20th century came the development of attractions based on such events as the organisation of the modern Olympic Games. The development of mass motorisation set in motion by the assembly line production of Ford automobiles, and also the decision of employers to introduce paid public holidays and holiday allowances, led to a growth of interest in local tourist attractions offering relaxation, adventure and entertainment. Interest in exotic destinations and wild nature led to the appearance of modern zoological gardens and safari parks, not only in Africa but in Europe or North America. Weekend recreation centres offered cheap, self-catering accommodation (e.g. camping sites), mass catering, swimming pools, dance halls and sport facilities, and these were located near to urban agglomerations. If such a centre attracted several thousand visitors, it then became a tourist attraction. The trend for developing attractions was paralleled by increases in leisure time, mobility and spending power. After the Second World War, a kind of boom in tourist attractions can be observed. Many investors, but also tourism organisations and associations and local governments, backed the creation of themed tourist attractions. The entertainment industry decided to create theme parks modelled on Disneyland. Farms, factories and mines (often on the verge of collapse) committed themselves to the creation of new attractions based on their historical heritage value. This was accompanied by the appearance of huge shopping centres and marinas converted into tourist attractions. The last 20 years of the 20th century brought unprecedented tourist attraction development.

They doubled in number during this period in many countries⁴ It is safe to speak of a tourist attraction phenomenon. They continue to rise in number, satisfying the needs of tourists and tourism operators. There are many reasons for this historically unprecedented development of attractions. These include⁵:

- a growth in society's wealth,
- increased leisure time in the form of paid holidays and two-day weekends,
- the development of technology connected with modern reservation systems,
- increased mobility due to the development of motorisation,
- the popularisation of attractions in the media,
- intensive marketing of destinations carried out by governments, local communities and tourism enterprises,
- the development of holiday packages, increasing the comfort of journeys, even to remote places.

Analyses of the evolution of tourist attractions draw attention to social and technological transformations as well as visitors' changing needs. This short survey suggests that attractions are produced, discovered, created or managed to keep pace with consumers' needs and tastes, while attraction development is of interest to the national tourist boards of countries receiving tourists, tourism regions (DMO's) and the entire tourism industry.

Contemporary Trends in the Creation of Tourist Attractions

Dynamically developing modern tourism has a continual need for new attractions, i.e. destinations for millions of customers who have already visited the recognised attractions. As these tourists have been everywhere, it takes a lot to impress them. A rich and versatile tourism offer (only these have any chance of standing out from thousands of others) should be based on a search for original attractions and when these are found wanting, the creation of new ones. By necessity, the creation of these primarily involves culture and technology, for the number of natural attractions is limited and those that exist have already been identified.

The attractions emerging these days are tied into a new model for the evolution of tourism, the three E's (*Entertainment, Excitement, Education*), which has supplanted the traditional three S's model (*Sun, Sea, Sand*). The emerging new attractions are meant to entertain, excite (in a sense to frighten), to raise adrenaline levels and to educate by provoking thought and reflection. Such entertainment and educational ends are served by the theme and amusement parks that have developed as a result, the most important example being Disneyland⁶.

The first Disneyland was created in California, and the next ones in Florida, Japan, Hong Kong and Paris (Euro Disneyland). Other important attractions that appeared in the second half of the 20th century include the Pompidou Centre, the Arctic Center located by the Arctic Circle in Rovaniemi, the Greenwich Waterfront, the Oxford Story and the Smurf Park in Belgium.

The magic date of 2000 induced the residents of our globe to prepare "something special". One of the forms this initiative took was the erection of new buildings. The excitement accompanying the New Millennium celebrations most strongly affected the

⁴ STEVENS, T., 2003, *The Future of Visitor Attractions*, [in:] *Managing Visitor Attractions: New Directions*, A. Fyall, B. Garrod, A. Leask (eds.), Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford, 2003, pp. 284–298. ISBN 978-1844801985.

⁵ SWARBROOKE J, op.cit. p. 18

⁶ KRUCZEK Z., *Amusement Parks as Flagship Attractions. Development and Globalisation*, [in:] "Economic Review of Tourism", Vol. 44, No. 3, 2011, ISSN 0139-8660, p. 156–163.

inhabitants of Great Britain. One of these buildings was the Millennium Dome. Besides the buildings erected to mark the approach of the New Millennium, architectural complexes of international importance appeared with predefined roles. One example would be the Olympic complex in Sydney or the grandly designed exhibition halls for Expo 2000 in Hannover. Another method for introducing architectural transformations to mark the year 2000 was the conversion of already existing buildings. A renovation was completed of Bethlehem's Grotto of the Nativity, while in the Vatican, the Russian artist Alexander Kornoukhov laid a 100-million-piece mosaic (this project was billed as one of the most ambitious artistic undertakings of the 20th century).

Another method of creating new attractions is compiling lists of modern wonders. The Swiss millionaire and traveller Bernard Weber announced a worldwide popularity poll to determine new wonders of the world on his New7Wonders Foundation website. A jury composed of the most distinguished architecture and art experts selected 21 objects out of the 77 that were nominated for final voting. Propositions for the inclusion of objects on the list were sent in by SMS and email. In many countries, for example in Brazil, inhabitants were mobilised to vote, for the government was banking on attracting large-scale promotion for the nominated object and increased revenue from tourism.

On the magic day (all the sevens – 07.07.2007) at a grand gala in Lisbon graced by the presence of astronaut Neil Armstrong, soccer star Ronaldo and singer Jennifer Lopez, accompanied by the secretary-generals of the UN, Kofi Annan and UNESCO, Federico Mayor, the Seven New Wonders of the world were announced. The jury's verdict aroused very strong emotions. The Egyptians were outraged by the Pyramids' exclusion from the list, while many experts lamented the absence of Angkor Wat and were surprised by the qualification of the mediocre statue of Christ the Redeemer.

UNESCO officially dissociated itself from the ranking. It was stated that... *the list of seven new wonders of the world is the product of a private initiative and the outcome of votes and quizzes; it has nothing in common with the preservation of unique objects of international heritage, either cultural or natural.*

In 2010, a campaign was launched to select the Seven Natural Wonders. For the first time, natural objects in Poland competed to be named a natural wonder, in this case the Białowieża Forest and Masurian Lake District. Masuria, splendidly promoted by the Polish Tourist Organisation and local organisations (using the apt slogan "Masuria, Wonder of Nature"), reached the actual final.

Determinants of the Tourist Attraction Market

A market is a totality of sale and purchase transactions as well as the conditions under which they take place. In a competitive market, prices and quantities of goods are continually being established. It is also a fixed community of economic entities interested in performing sales-purchase operations on particular goods, values or services. Part of the community is represented by supply (producers) and the other part by demand (consumers). The juxtaposition of supply and demand at a specific place and time leads to the establishment of a price value representing a sales entity, which in turn causes sales-purchase transactions to come to fruition.

The market-based approach is a crucial element in tourism development. The coremarket attributes of attractions are their proximity to large cities (the primary source of tourists), accessibility, opening times, daily visitor attendance and accompanying services. On the basis of this information we can assess the quality of any attraction, paying attention to

such criteria as: authenticity, uniqueness and pulling power, i.e. the number of tourists, hence the income generated by attraction managers⁷.

It might be asked which factors will influence the tourist attraction market in the future. A distinction can be made between a group of factors producing the external conditions for tourism and those factors linked to tourism phenomena. The first group undoubtedly includes a group made up of political, economic, sociocultural and technological factors (to mention the most important).

In addition, changes occurring in tourism itself (internal conditions), new trends, fashions and forms of behaviour carry consequences for the tourist attraction market. One of the most important factors shaping the tourist attraction market is developments in the media, especially television⁸.

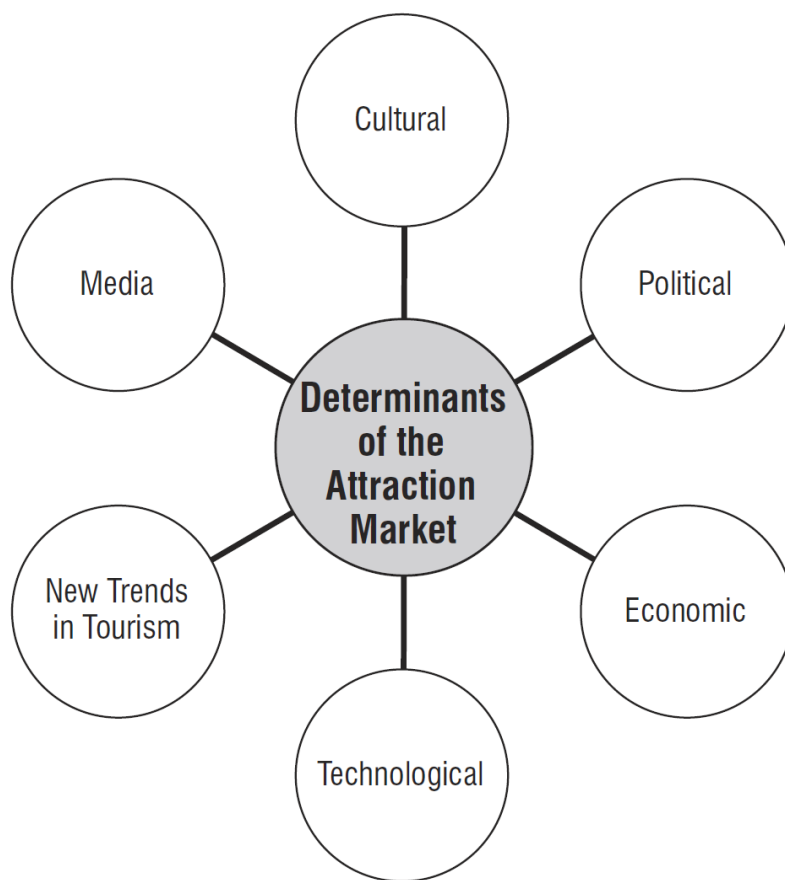


Figure 1. Model of Tourist Attraction Market Determinants
(source: Kruczek Z., 2008)

⁷ NOWACKI M., *Ocena jakości produktu atrakcji turystycznej z wykorzystaniem metody Serqual*, "Turyzm", 12/1 (2002). p. 55-74, ISSN 0860-1119.

⁸ KRUCZEK Z., *Czynniki determinujące rynek atrakcji turystycznych*, [in:] *Nowe trendy rozwoju turystyki*, G. Gołembski (ed.), Wydawnictwa PWSZ, Sulechów, s. 379-386, 2008. ISBN 978-83-60792-24-7.

Political Factors (e.g. changes in Europe, continental integration, terrorism and travel security risks). These factors influence the geography of travel and visitor attendance at attractions located in safe tourism regions. Problems of a political tenor have a significant influence on tourist traffic in a given country. In the eyes of tourists, places in the grip of conflict or natural disasters lose their positive image as safe and attractive destinations. This results in a drop in the number of tourist arrivals and income. Tourism development plans are postponed to a later date (e.g. in Israel, Pakistan and Sudan).

But a new tourist attraction might arise precisely because of this kind of situation. For a new type of tourist is appearing – so-called “conflict” or “war” tourists – i.e. tourists travelling to places in the grip of war or conflicts. These people are notable for their willingness to participate in, or rather observe, unsettling events and to be part of them.

Such tourists desire to be part of the shifting cards of history, and seek emotional thrills by going to dangerous places, often risking their lives in the process. The same applies to places affected by such natural disasters as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, tsunamis and floods. For some tourists with particular interests, these can become tourist attractions. After the December 2004 tsunami in South-East Asia, many tourists appeared to examine the devastated terrain and even today the traces of this catastrophe are shown to tourists in Thailand or Sri Lanka as tourist attractions.

Economic Factors (common currencies in Europe and the world, the situation in developing countries, the accumulation of capital, globalisation). Dubai is an excellent example. The wealthy sheik of this emirate saw an opportunity for the country’s economic development (following the exhaustion of crude oil reserves) in tourism. In order to attract tourists, he invested millions of petrodollars in the creation of new tourist attractions designed to shock the whole world (the tallest building, the most expensive hotel, the Ski Dubai skiing station, artificial islands shaped like palms or maps of the world, a replica of the terracotta army, and so on). Tourist attractions generate profits from admission tickets and the provision of catering, accommodation, transport, cultural and recreational services. Taxes paid by tourism managers replenish local budgets. Attractions create a huge employment market in tourism services⁶. Visitor expenditure exerts a multiplier effect in local and regional economies (food production, catering, souvenir production).

Sociocultural factors (including changing family models, aging communities, the issue of the disabled and nature conservation). These factors have an impact on the creation and adjustment of attractions to meet ecological requirements and make them accessible to the disabled and elderly.

Technological factors (advances in communication and telecommunication, virtual reality, the home cinema, computer technology). Engineering and technology have been drawn into the process of creating new attractions, for example the construction of the tallest buildings, the most astonishing structures or means of transport which become attractions simply by being used. The most exclusive attraction is currently space flight, although the number of clients is limited in this case by the high cost, but in the not too distant future, as flying costs are reduced, we will certainly be able to speak of space tourism.

Final Conclusions

The current trend for attraction development is strongly linked to more leisure time becoming available, the rise in human mobility and people becoming wealthier. After the Second World War, we can observe a kind of boom in tourist attractions. Not only investors

but also tourism associations or organisations and local government backed the creation of themed tourist attractions. The leisure industry decided to create theme parks modelled on Disneyland. Farms, factories and mines become involved in the creation of new attractions based on the historical value of their heritage. Huge shopping malls and marinas converted into attractions for tourists appeared.

The last 20 years of the 20th century brought unprecedented tourist attraction development. They doubled in number over this period in many countries. It is safe to speak of a tourist attraction phenomenon, and the market for attractions is dynamically developing to satisfy the needs of tourists and tourism organisers. Attractions are continually being created, discovered and managed in line with users' needs and tastes, while attraction development is of interest to the central government administrations of countries receiving tourists, tourism regions and the whole tourism industry

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