INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF THE CULTURAL TOURISM PRODUCTS BASED ON THE VALUE CHAIN

Abstract

The dynamic growth of cultural tourism around the world in recent years has generated unmet market needs to create the proper management of products based on the cultural heritage of past and present generations. The first part of the article presents the essence of cultural tourism products with special emphasis on quality and the brand of these products. The second part of this article describes the integrated system of cultural tourism products management related to the value chain, which is based on unique author's contribution. The introduced model of creation and management of cultural tourism products is focused on the pro-quality approach. This approach, enhanced with supportive promotion, will lead to the creation of the brand and should help to gain competitive market advantage.

Keywords: cultural tourism products, management, value chain, tourism brand, integrated tourism management

1. Introduction

Cultural tourism is one of the oldest types of tourism and since the dawn of human history accompanied the man, mostly through the pilgrimage to the holy places recognised by different religions and cultures. However, the concept of „cultural tourism" has been known and used in theory and practice of tourism only in the second half of the eighties of the XX century [1]. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), the broadly understood cultural tourism constitutes 35-40% of the whole tourism market in the world and it develops at a rapid pace of 15%**,** i.e., three times faster than tourism in general [2]. The literature is dominated by two extreme approaches to the cultural tourism. In the narrow understanding, cultural tourism is limited only to exploring the monuments of the material culture. The broad approach allows to consider all manifestations of culture, and therefore it is more appropriate to characterise the modern tourism movement, where the often today's created attractions are an important element [3]. Cultural tourism is based on the contacts and getting to know the spiritual and material cultural heritage of different societies around the world. This heritage provides a great value and diversity of cultural contents, which mostly refer to the people and their creations. Recipients of these values, that is tourists, want to witness and experience the attractive events: listen to a concern, see a play, participate in folk festivals, regional festivals, get to know the cultural heritage objects and try the regional delicacies. This is the way the cultural space is created, which is attractive for tourists, and with good development it can become a significant source of income for the communities of the given place or region. However, the use of this potential depends on the efficient management of the preparation, distribution and sale of cultural tourism products.

The aim of the study is to present the systemic management of cultural tourism products following the qualitative approach based on the so-called value chain. The study reviewed the literature and studies connected with the essence of cultural tourism products, the brand, and the next links in the tourism value chain of cultural tourism products were proposed and discussed.

2. The essence of cultural tourism products and their quality and brands

Cultural tourism developed when both travel (tourism) and culture were formed in the tourism product and commercialised.

In economics it is assumed that everything that is on the market and deserves attention, gets purchased, used or consumed, and meets someone's desires and needs is a product [4]. Referring to tourism, it can be said that everything that is the subject of exchange on the tourism market is a product. So, the tourism product is, among others a place to stay in a hotel, dinner in a restaurant, holidays, kayaking, rented tourism equipment, a hiking trail, or the prepared culinary party. In the Polish tourism literature, the concept of the *product*, which is largely constituted by the services, initially aroused opposition of the linguists who believed that it is reserved for the creations of the material nature. Currently, this term has become one of the most important tools ranging from the market approach to the goods and tourism services [5].

The tourism product is what can be considered supply that meets the needs and preferences of tourists. In terms of marketing, the product is every object of the purchase or sale transaction [6]. Such an approach to the tourism product is one of the basic ones in the literature and is determined by the narrow approach. According to M. Courtis [7], the tourist product is a variety of goods and services offered by companies of the tourism industry. C. Kaspar and B. R. Kunz [8] call the set of material objects and services, which the tourist uses or consumes during his trip. ~~the supply~~. These definitions, however, ignore the tourism assets, which are very important for the functioning of tourism, and which the tourist uses during his trip.

According to A. Rapacz [9], the tourism product is a set of tourist assets (natural and touring), while in the broad sense it is the whole set of goods and services (next to tourist assets) allowing the tourist to travel to the place of tourist attractions, the stay and their use. From the point of view of a tourist – the tourist product covers the whole of the lived experience from the moment one leaves home to ~~the~~ return [10].

Currently, the tourism market offers many tourist product categories, which differ in certain characteristic features resulting from the essence of the product. Among others, there is a tourist product; namely a thing, service, event, party, object, place, trail and area. Each of these types of product can be classified to one or two groups. The tourist product – a service and the tourist product – a thing belongs to the basic products (simple); others are the integrated products [11].

The definition of the cultural tourism product, accenting the lived experiences, are presented, among others, by B. Mayer [12], describing it as the sum of experiences, which the tourist gets during and after its consumption, taking into account the fact that the main motive for tourism is the elements connected to culture. **The cultural tourism product** is – according to the author – the original composition of various goods and cultural attractions and the related services, allowing the tourist their performance during the travel or the stay at the destination. The tourist cultural product is most often created around the unique assets or cultural attractions. The core of this product, around which the tourist offer is created, is most often the historic object, architecture, folklore, traditions, cultural events or their unique combination. K. Gralak draws the attention to the importance of the unique image of the place, using the local immaterial culture, legends, traditions and customs in the creation of products [13].

The cultural tourism product integrates elements, which primarily attract tourists with some uniqueness and the extraordinary aspect of anthropogenic qualities, but also they promote the satisfaction of needs connected with the travel and stay in the destination [14]. In other words, the length of stay of cultural tourism product is a set of utilities forming the package of goods and services that promote travelling allow for cultural purposes. Its most important element are the resources of the culture of the reception location, with both material and immaterial dimension, which concern the past and the present.

The product in the cultural tourism constitutes the basic elements and complementary elements. The basic elements include historical buildings, local tourist attractions, places of religious worship, historical events, anniversaries, legendary figures, famous people, industrial objects, cultural events, festivals, artistic events, art galleries, museums, cemeteries, the current cultural offer (events, cinemas, theatres, museums, opera), regional cuisine and folklore. Complementary elements are accommodation and catering facilities, communication availability, national roads, rail connections, bike, motorcycle parks, amenities (e.g. playgrounds for families with children, tourist information system, cultural and labelling of attractions, security system,

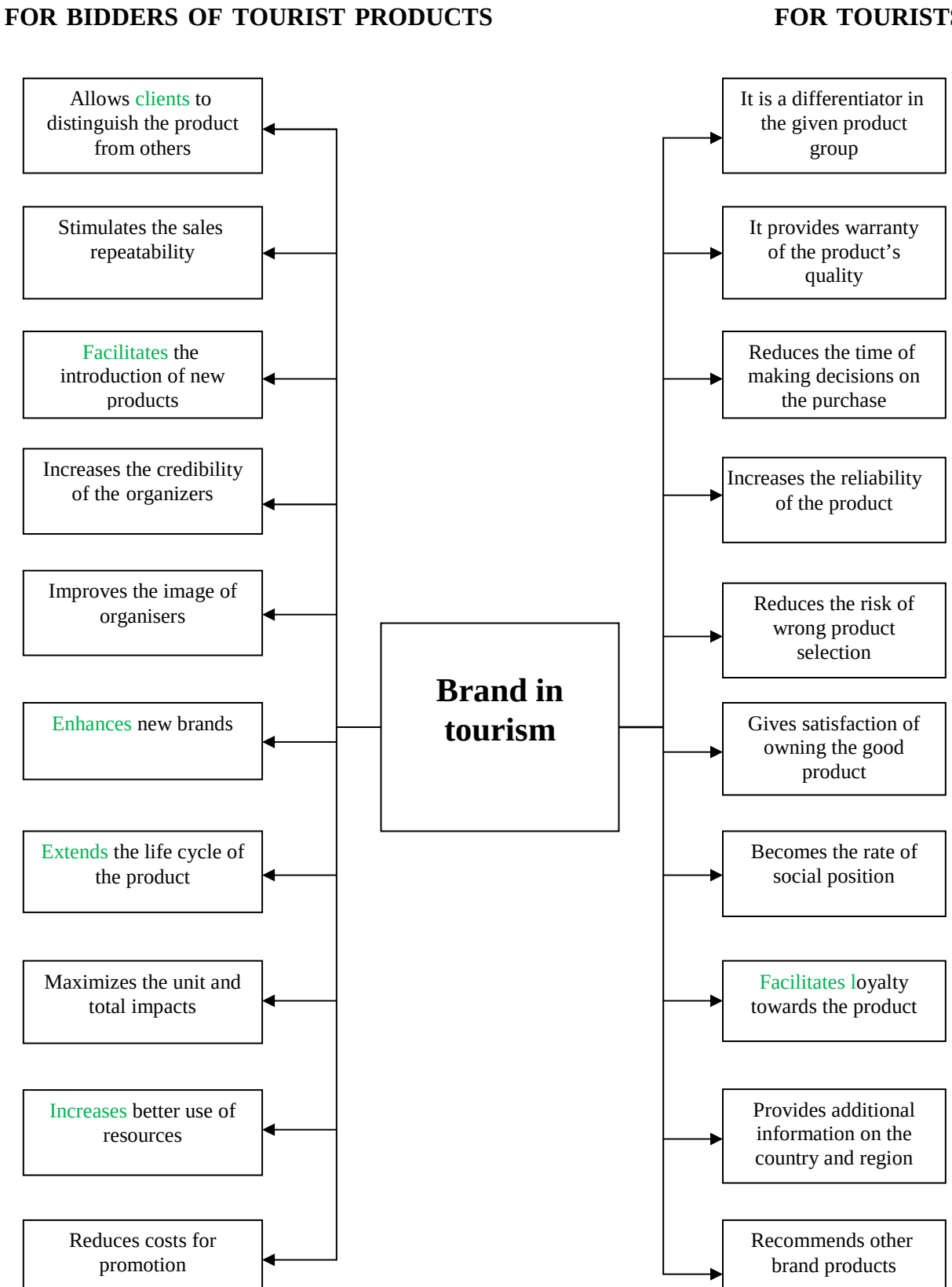
favourable social climate, image of the location, condition of the natural environment, its purity and area attractions [15]. The combination of these elements allows one to specify the tourist attractiveness of the given region. However, one should remember that such an assessment is closely connected to the offered tourist product and the segments of tourists, who are recipients of the given offer, i.e. on one hand there can be regions of rich history and developed tourism infrastructure, and on the other – places of rich natural beauty, with the basic tourist facilities. Each of these places, despite having different and partial values, can be treated as tourist attractions for the selected groups of consumers. Basic elements directly impact the generation of the tourism movement (point of arrival), while the complementary elements affect the development and competitiveness of the given tourist product, including the feelings and assessment of the tourist. Products of the cultural tourism are the integrated products namely a party, object, place, trail or an area.

The optimal tourist product in cultural tourism, however, should mostly refer to and satisfy the tourists' needs [16]. The product for the cultural tourism should be packaged to create the most attractive and competitive for diverse clients with the constantly changing preferences and tastes. One has to remember that for many motivations of the tourist trips, the cultural heritage in diverse forms and shapes is an important element of the tourist product. In the creation of the cultural tourism products critical elements are among others, the state and availability to the cultural objects and good information about these objects or cultural events. The chance to obtain numerous benefits, both for the product creators, and the tourists, is the formation of **tourism brand cultural products.** The tourist product can be selected by a tourist from among other products, and then purchased, in the case when it is of a relatively low price, or high quality and brand. The low price usually does not guarantee the tourist the high standard of services and other values critical ~~for~~ to derive satisfaction from the purchased tourist product. Therefore, more and more tourists search for brand products characterised by high quality, mostly in the field of services and the catering-accommodation base.

In the literature there are many definitions of the brand. The most common is the definition proposed by *American Marketing Association*, determining the brand as the name, symbol, pattern or their combination, created in order to identify the goods and services of the seller or their groups and their differentiation from the offers of competitors [17]. Most often the brand is understood as the name, symbol or term~~s~~ whose purpose is to differentiate the product or

company on the market [18]. The brand in tourism is to facilitate the good location of the tourist product against the competitive products. It gives competitive advantage against competing products establishment.

Figure 1. Benefits flowing from the use of the brand in tourism



The brand (also in tourism) plays important functions namely: information, identification, warranty, practical and self-representative [20]. The brand also provides numerous benefits both to the creators of products and the consumers, that is tourists. The most important benefits, which according to J. Majewski and B. Lane [21] are brought by the brand in tourism are distinction from other products, shorter process of decision-making on thee purchase, information on the manufacturer, country or region, warranty of the product quality, stimulation of repeatability and obtaining a higher price for the product. The benefits flowing from the brand for the creator, R. Seweryn [22] also pays attention to, among others are the possibility of the legal protection of the unique product features (the exclusive right to use the brand for an indefinite period), greater attractiveness of the product and its image, as well as loyalty of customers and the possibility of a better promotion of obtaining higher profits. Summary of the multiple benefits resulting from the use of the brand in tourism has been presented in figure 1.

Based on the previous considerations on the tourist products and the brand, it can be stated that brand products of cultural tourism should:

- contain the original name of the product, characteristic in its kind in accordance with the specificity of the product, used in different languages and on different markets;
- inform about the product, its features and attributes and benefits and advantages resulting from the valuable assets of the cultural and historical heritage of the given place or region;
- facilitate the identification of the product and its noticing and differentiation from competitors' products through the specific cultural attractions;
- have the best product image, acquired (developed) among the customers-tourists, who are aware of the brand,
- raise the self-esteem of the tourist and strengthen the lifestyle, created by using the specific brand associated with certain values.

In the process of creating brand products of cultural tourism the most important thing is to find and to properly manage the cultural assets, which can make the region more attractive, and even – as it is argued by T. Jedrysiak – unrivalled [23]. It can be argued that every region has a unique specificity [24] and optimal use of the available resources becomes the unique brand. It should also be noted that the formation of brand products of cultural tourism should not affect the rules of the social coexistence, culture, respect for history, tradition, religion, place and security, laws of nature and economic regularities, including the financial situation of

potential clients. It has to be internally consistent, homogenous whole, because then there is a possibility of obtaining greater economic effects due to tourist arrivals, development of the tourist infrastructure and improvement of the financial situation of residents.

Before a product of cultural tourism is created, and then the brand product, one has to perform a series of activities. The first activity is the tourism development of the place, trail, and thus the development of tourist services, which will be rendered there (e.g. guide services, accommodation, catering). It is also necessary to determine the ~~castomers~~consumers,~~-~~that is the target segment, to which the product is directed. Next, the tourist offer is prepared, the selection of forms and by marketing tools is made and the channels of distributions are created. Such a developed product can be the element of the tourist offer of the region or the whole country, and if the right reputation is earned, it can become a brand product.

3. Tourism chain of cultural tourism products values based on the integrated management

The idea of the integrated management is based on the concept of the continuous improvement which was created by W. E. Deming. He developed the series (called the Deming cycle) in which he distinguished the following stages namely: planning, realization, control and ~~replace by~~ corrective actions. The integrated management developed in the 1980s of the XX c. as the part of the business management theory. It means the intensive, long-term efforts aimed to change all components of the organisation to produce its best possible product, according to the consumer's needs [25].

According to G. Golembski [26] the integrated management system in relation to tourism can be defined as the pursuit to the management model in the areas of tourism penetration, as a result of which we obtain the increase of satisfaction of the visitor with the warranty of the economic development of these areas, environmental protection and life quality of the local community. In this definition the key place is occupied by the area of tourist destination. The term of the area as the freely limited space in the country acting as the tourist function, does not contain the strictly determined criterion of delimitation. Hence, the hierarchically higher spatial unit is the tourist region. The fully developed tourist region acts through the defined system of spatial organisation, based on the set of service equipment, closely adapted to the existing environmental conditions and social relations. The scope of functions of the tourist region depends on the type and degree of the natural environment attractiveness, recreational

overloads system in relation to urban centres, existing tourist traditions and the current management system.

The integrated tourism management system provides high quality of rendered tourist services, minimisation of the negative impact on the environment with the simultaneous maintenance of the existing environmental values and security of employees and customers (tourists)[27]. As a result of the integrated management ~~we obtain~~ there is an increase of ~~the~~ satisfaction of the tourists visiting the given area with the warranty of the economic development of these areas, environmental protection and life quality of the local community. The integrated management system is the complex approach to the whole problem of organisation. It is the implementation of the complex of projects theory Gagne's [28], which – as it was worded by praxeology creator Tadeusz Kotarbiński – "*all parts together create the whole, due to the functioning of the common goal*"[29].

The integrated cultural tourism management system covers the whole heritage and cultural environment, which is the sum of human achievements in the material and immaterial sphere. It is a testament of culture of the life of societies of the city and village, the expression of the desire to recognise, understand and interpret the contents (signs and characters). This system includes the present and past of the heritage (area), material and immaterial state of the heritage deposited in the area. It gives a warranty of its survival and indication the primary and secondary goals. The integrated cultural tourism management system in the city, according to D. Milczyńska-Hajda, should indicate hierarchy of goals in the sphere of the urban life [30].

In the integrated approach, the attention is focused most of all on the proper shaping of the cultural tourism product from the supply side and not the unsuccessful attempts to channel the tourist movement being the result, and not the cause of the potential developmental problems. While the tourism demand is not treated as an independent factor and located in the city or region but as a phenomenon, whose size and structure can be controlled in a long period. According to P. Zmyślony [31] the attributes of the integrated cultural tourism management are:

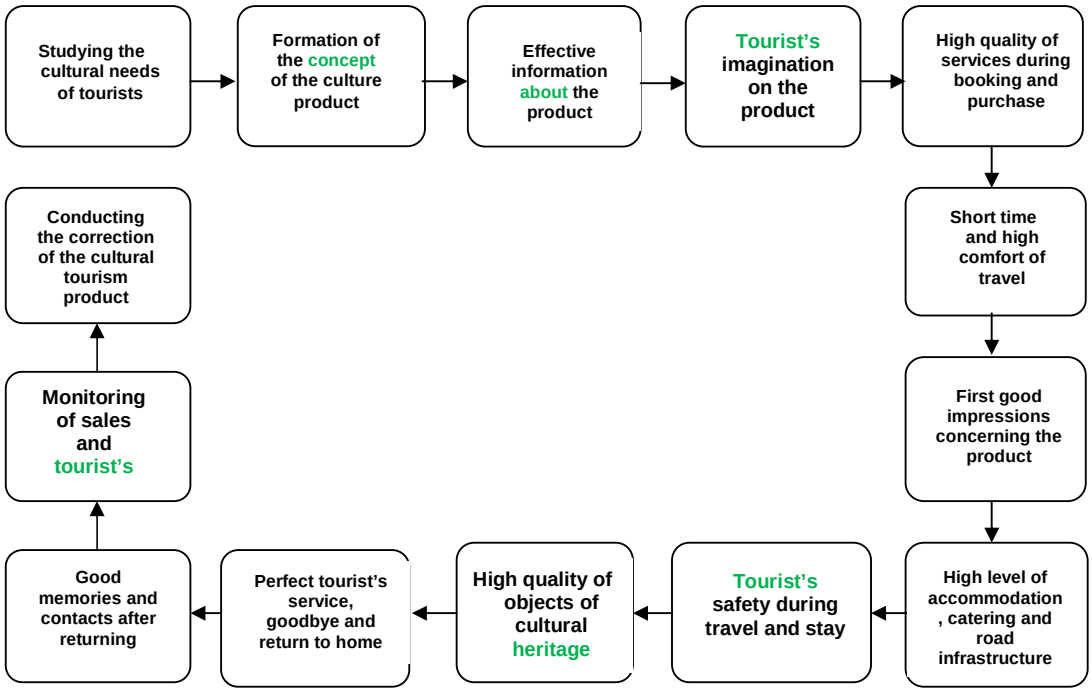
- emphasis on the optimized qualities instead of maximizing the offer's quality;
- striving to maintain the integrity of the combined tourist and cultural functions with other socio-economic functions of the city or region;
- creation of the partner structure based on the tourism-cultural chain of values (according to the concept of the tourism chain of Weiermair calues);
- ensuring the flow of information between particular partners creating the offer of cultural tourism in the city;

- maintaining the balance between the product development and the spatial dispersion of the economic benefits resulting from its rendering;
- long-term horizon of actions and permanent monitoring of their effects.

In the integrated approach to the shaping of the product of cultural tourism we need the complex and professional approach in terms of methodology, hence the formation and management should take into account a series of stages (links) which together create the **tourist chain of cultural tourism product values** (figure 2).

The cultural tourism product should be therefore, designed, created and well managed, so that it becomes more competitive on the market, taking into account the consumers' (tourists) needs on diverse tastes and changing tastes.

Figure 2. Tourist chain of cultural tourism product values



Source: Own study based on: K. Weiermair, *On the Concept and Definition of Quality in Tourism*, w: *Quality Management in Tourism*, P. Keller (ed.), vol. 39, AIEST, St. Gallen 1997, p. 40 [32].

The set of a series of values, actions and services is the total value of cultural tourism product. **The study of tourists' needs** of their motivation should be connected with the study of possibilities of the creation of the cultural product, and this is the resources of cultural

heritage, material and immaterial. The primary research can be used (usually in the field), secondary research (using results of other studies) and information of analyses conducted by the specialised research centres, including the studies of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (~~WNWTO~~UNWTO) e.g. in the field of tendencies and world trends. The market studies aim to indicate the needs and preferences of tourists, as well as the orientation regarding the competition and the legal, technical and organisational possibilities.

Creation of the cultural tourism product concept is the creation of a document which should be prepared by the specialised service provider or at least with its cooperation. The prepared concept should contain, among others inventory of the given area with the description of cultural values, detailed description of the product development concept, set of the most important investments, which should be conducted before and during the implementation of the product and description of the marketing communication process. Reliable and careful preparation of the concept depends on the implementation of the whole project connected with the creation of the cultural tourism product.

Effective information on the product is connected with the broadly understood promotion. In the rapidly expanding world of computerisation and mechanisation, one should be adjusted primarily on the information and promotion on the Internet. However, with one cannot forget about the radio spots, television spots and folders. For the information and promotion to bring benefits it should be: complete, current, reliable, available, easy to find, formally diversified, recognised in a simple, effective system and promote able for the further development.

Tourist's idea on the product is born from the general perceptions of the person or group of people on the product's services [33]. Ideas are created in the imagination of the tourist and reveal themselves in some mental approaches and they shape the *image* of the destination place of the travel with the people inhabited there. The ideas depend on the aforementioned effective information, but also on the whole marketing campaign, which should be professionally prepared with the friendly approach to the tourists' needs. Changes in the tourists' ideas are the effect of promotional actions and should take place simultaneously with the changes in supply and undertaken in order to adjust it to their needs.

High quality of services in the purchase and booking, high level of accommodation, catering and road infrastructure, perfect tourist service, goodbye and return home are connected most of all with the quality of services and the condition of the tourist and paratourist infrastructure. Important here are, among others high level of personal culture, communication,

safety, courtesy, good manners, external appearance. The substantial preparation of people operating the given cultural tourism product is also very important. It is essential to prepare well in the field of organisation and methods of service, fluency in using different materials, and also modern electronic devices, such as computer, fax, mobile ~~and~~ radio~~,~~ and telephone.

Short time and comfort of travelling are provided by well preparation of transport services (rail, road transportation, civil aviation and shipping). The high level of these services is always a great value. A helpful factor in the scope of increasing the transport quality becomes the introduction of the quality management system and standards of the ISO 9001-2000 series. It can be argued that it is the style of management which is adjusted to the requirements of the modern market.

The first good impressions on the product are very important and have an effect on the whole tourist length of stay. These impressions are determined, among others by the aesthetics of the environment and customer service by the service providers. They affect the degree of customer's trust to the service provider. Very important for the tourists is the high standards of toilets, purity, aesthetics, access to the Internet. Good impression can also be made by a welcome letter and a small gift of specially prepared flowers in the accommodation location.

Tourist's safety during the travel and stay is a factor to which the tourists planning their tour. Therefore, tourism organisers, in cooperation with the right services of public order should take care, among others, of the protection against unfortunate, unpredicted events that interfere with the travel and stay, and even the attacks of some organised groups. The safety of tourists consists also of the medical coverage, good technical conditions on tourist and paratourist devices, high quality of road paving and sidewalks and the security of trails against the potential attacks.

High quality of cultural heritage icons is the well-maintained, restored wealth of culture, like: temples, castles, museums, theatres and concert halls. Concern for the maintenance and improvement of quality of these goods is a very important link ~~in proving~~improving the quality of the tourist product. It is important that the good labelling of tour routes, their equipment with multimedia support systems, for both individual and group learning of the cultural heritage.

Good memories and contacts after the return result from the quality of tourist services, which impact enhances the satisfaction of tourists. This promotes return of both the tourist in the previously visited place/region and re—using the brand tourist product. The satisfied tourist encourages family, friends and acquaintances to visit destination. Good memories after the return from a travel are a good marketing tool. It is often used during discussions around

friends. Satisfied tourists are kind of "ambassadors" of tourist products and talk about their positive experiences at least to five people [34].

Monitoring of sales and the changing tourists' needs and **conducting the correction of the cultural tourism product,** are actions affecting the life expectancy of the tourist product and improvement of its value. It is about the need to adjust to the changing tastes, tourists' preferences, new possibilities concerning the distribution channels and supply and other changing conditions on the market. One can never finish the works on the product at the moment of its shaping, even if the sales is satisfactory. The market and sales must be permanently observed, and the product if needed should be subjected to modifications to become more attractive, enriched with new elements. Correction should also apply to the marketing actions such as promotion and pricing policy.

The presented tourist chain of values of brand products can be further improved and the number of links can be increased. Some links, e.g., "goodbye and returning home" can be divided into smaller ones. Weakening or falling out of any link in the tourist chain of values of cultural tourism products can cause the breaking of the chain and lead to serious negative effects for tourist companies and all entities creating the given tourist product. This product in a short period of time can cause the loss of customers' trust and stop functioning on the market over time. For this reason, it is important to care over the high level of services and all actions connected with the formation and management of brand tourist products at every stage.

4. Summary and conclusions

Today, cultural tourism is one of the fastest growing types of tourism in Poland and in the world. Is no longer new or niche [35], so there is a real need for the good preparation and effective management of cultural tourism products. Since today's tourists are better educated, they travel in search of new experiences in the world of tourism destinations. The answer to these needs of tourists is the formation of brand cultural tourism products which are characterised by among others, high quality, good image and the possibility of repeatability of sales and obtaining the higher price for the product. Brand cultural tourism products are also the warranty of high competitiveness of the tourism offer and promotion of the town and region.

High quality and brand of the cultural tourism products are based on the integrated management in tourism, which consists of the adjustment of the type and standard of services to the expectations of customers in particular links of the presented chain of values. The integrated cultural tourism management, like any other system of management, develops in the

evolutionary way [36], therefore, it is important to be ready to make constant, deliberate changes resulting both from the changing tastes of tourists and the conditions resulting among others, from political actions, the changing law, functioning of the economy. The introduced model of creation and management of cultural tourism products is focused on the pro-quality approach. This approach, enhanced with supportive promotion, will lead to the creation of the brand and should help to gain competitive market advantage.

It should also be noted that only the attention to all entities and amenities that affect the quality and brand of the tourist product can bring about the final success. It will be the material success, which is connected with satisfaction, contentment, joy and happiness, of both tourists and the service providers, that create and promote cultural tourism products management.

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