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Title: “The development of the innovative educational method of ACCESSIBLE tourism in Central Europe” – ACCESSIBLE

Head of the Polish research group: prof. Alina Zajadacz

Team: dr Łukasz Halik, dr Matylda Siwek, dr Paweł Sowa

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland

Alina Zajadacz

ACCESSIBLE TOURISM - A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON THE SUBJECT IN POLAND

The literature review includes scientific publications and tourist manuals that have been developed mainly in the last ten years, in relation to tourism available in Poland. The selected publications focus primarily on tourism for people with disabilities and the elderly, and, in broader contexts, also on the needs of people traveling with children.

Publications devoted to the **tourism of people with disabilities** are very diverse, from theoretical approaches (a.o. Zajadacz 2015), review studies (a.o. Lubarska 2018), empirical research (a.o. Popiel 2014; Żbikowski, Siedlecka, Kuźmicki 2019; Magiera 2020; Trybuś 2023) to practical tourist guides addressed to this group of recipients (a.o. Kapusta 2018). The paper: *Evolution of models of disability as a basis for further policy changes in accessible tourism* (Zajadacz 2015) presents a new, critical perspective on the selected models of disability, the key to which is the search for optimal solutions in the development of accessible tourism. The analysis performer indicated the need for a synthesis of paradigms at the core of the conceptualisation of particular models, including those often regarded as being contrary (medical and social). The results of studies would give tourism providers important data on an increasingly competitive tourism market, and also affect changes in how PwD, the elderly, are viewed, from the category of “relatively poor” to “attractive, using a wide range of services”.

A. Lubarska (2018) in the chapter entitled: *Overview of the classification of barriers and constraints to tourism for people with disabilities* attempted to answer the question what classifications of barriers to tourism for people with disabilities are used by researchers. Author „described the differences in classification and to determine the most frequently used ones. For this purpose, the classifications of barriers to tourism for people with disabilities proposed and used by Polish and foreign researchers have been included. This was done by analysing the available classifications from the 1980s to the 2018, in the case of expressions in foreign languages – also translating them into Polish for comparison. The result is a summary of classifications of barriers used by different researchers. The results suggest that the majority of authors base their research on similar classifications” (Lubarska 2018: 71).

M. Popiel (2014) referred to one of the most **popular tourist cities** in Poland - Krakow. Their results are presented in the article under the title *Paving the way to accessible tourism on the example of Krakow*. This paper generated relevant knowledge about the travel needs and barriers of people with disabilities, in order to assess the current level of accessibility in the tourism sector in Krakow, especially in accommodation options, museums, offered services on selected examples. „The research was carried out based on literature review and a questionnaire and interviews with disability tourists in Krakow. Most the tourist were satisfied with the level of customization of services and attractions to their needs, however they also drew attention to the lack of common regulations regarding accessibility, especially in the private sector” (Popiel 2014: 55).

J. Żbikowski, A. Siedlecka and M. Kuźmicki (2019) in turn, focused their research on **rural areas** and discussed their results in a paper titled *Determinants of tourist activity of people with disabilities living in rural areas*. The aim of the conducted research and analyzes was the attempt to assess the impact of selected factors over tourist activity of people with disabilities and factors related to the immediate environment of people with disabilities. A total of 5 000 respondents were subjected to the quantitative research. Participants of the research were adults with legally recognized disabilities. In the research, there was used the method of a diagnostic survey. In the conclusions, the authors presented, that “tourist activity of disabled people living in rural areas in Poland concerns only about 50% of respondents. Leaving the place of permanent residence in a free time is the most often declared by young and middle-aged people with higher, secondary and postsecondary education, professionally active, married people with

mental and sensory disabilities. Factors stimulating participation in tourism are the level of education and professional activity of respondents. In the assessment of respondents the important factor is also a general family situation” (Żbikowski, Siedlecka, Kuźmicki (2019: 401).

A. Magiera (2020) in the paper: *Leisure time of people with disabilities* presented a broader context of the determinants of tourism for people with disabilities, which is free time. The purpose of this study was to identify forms of free time and the possibility of their use in terms of the needs and preferences of people with disabilities. It was important to show the forms of leisure time, which are used and willingly chosen by the people with disabilities, as well as the important role of tourism and theater in the lives of people with disabilities. „The goals were achieved by: literature review, statistical data, and the research results based on the author’s survey addressed to the disabled people from the Nursing Home Care in Poraj. The attention was paid to the importance of popularizing the concept of leisure, as well as making more effective use of it” (Magiera 2020: 68).

K. Trybuś (2023) also referred to the broad context of determining the tourism of people with disabilities in her article under the title: *the Influence of Personal Qualities of Disabled People on Their Tourist Activity*. „The purpose of the study conducted by the author was to determine the impact of a group of selected characteristics on the tourist activity presented by people with disabilities. The method of a diagnostic survey and the technique of distributed and electronic questionnaire were used in the study. The analysis of the research questionnaire content allowed selecting questions (X variables) describing the specific aspect of tourism activity performed by the disabled for which a procedure based on analysing correlations between these variables and the characteristics of the respondents will be carried out (Trybuś 2023: 162).

Tourism of people with sensory disabilities (including deaf people, blind people) was the subject of research. Its results can be found in publications such as (Manczak, Bajak 2020; Zajadacz 2012; Zajadacz 2014; Zajadacz, Szmal 2017, Zajadacz, Lubarska 2019).

I. Manczak and M. Bajak (2020) presented the results of their research **on deaf and blind** people in an article entitled: *Beacons in museums: the case of people with disabilities sensory*. The authors emphasized that “access to culture of the people with disability is an important issue that may determine the directions of development of the museum institutions.

These institutions play an important role in the process of shaping cognitive and aesthetic sensitivity as also the dissemination of the values of history, culture and science. These tasks should be performed regardless of the degree of efficiency of the person interested in their activity. Modern technologies which, combined with the development of the competences of museum staff and activities adjusting the actual museum space, can play a fundamental role in the process of equalizing opportunities for disabled recipients of culture with a perspective of the importance in this area” (Manczak, Bajak 2020: 83). The authors have identified the importance of beacons in the market communication of the Museum of King Jan III’s Palace at Wilanów and the Princes Czartoryski Museum in Krakow with people with sight and hearing impairment. In-depth interviews were carried out in the listed museums using the analyzed solution. The authors confirmed the accepted thesis “that beacons support the process of market communication with sensorically disabled tourists visiting museums.” (Manczak, Bajak 2020: 83).

A. Zajadacz presented the results of her ten-year research¹ in a monograph entitled *Tourism of Deaf People. A Geographical Perspective* (2012) and the issues of tourist information adapted to the needs of **deaf people** are discussed in detail in the articles: *Sources of tourist information used by Deaf people. Case study: the Polish Deaf community* (2014) and *Accessible Tourism for Deaf People in Poland: The SITur and SITex Programs as Proposals for Accessible Urban Information* (Zajadacz, Szmal 2017). From the theoretical, cognitive and practical aspect, the book (Zajadacz 2012) deals with the issue of accessibility of tourism to deaf people using sign language. It presents the results of the author’s research into particular traits of tourist activity of deaf people, analysed against the background of the reference group of hearing individuals in Poland, with the social model of disability taken into consideration.

From the theoretical perspective (Zajadacz 2012), an attempt was made to: (1) identify the nature of the phenomenon of tourism viewed as an object of multi- and interdisciplinary research; (2) develop a model for actions aimed to stimulate tourism activity of deaf individuals. From the cognitive point of view, the subject of the research was the characteristics of tourism of deaf people in Poland. To date, no thorough research into this area has been carried out in

¹ Research study financed from resources allocated for scientific purposes in the years 2008–2010, carried out as part of the “Tourism of Deaf People and possibilities of its stimulation through a multimedia Tourism Information System” project grant (N N114 208334).

Poland, and practitioners have repeatedly proposed that this gap should be filled. Filling this gap is a prerequisite for creating an accessible and satisfactory tourist offer meeting the expectations of individuals with a particular kind of disability. Such research has also been long-awaited by the community of deaf individuals, whose representatives have frequently asked a very important (in the age of universal design) question: why are not the needs of people constituting a language minority included in the Tourism Information System, or taken into account when designing tourist facilities and tourist services? The main research problems addressed by the author involved providing answers to the following questions: Q1: Is tourism activity (participation in tourism) of deaf people in Poland similar to that of hearing individuals? Q2: Do the characteristics of tourist activity of deaf people differ from those of hearing individuals? If yes, in what respects? Q3: How to prepare a tourist offer and how to provide tourist information so that the needs of deaf tourists are satisfied?

From the cognitive aspect, the main aim of the study (Zajadacz 2012) was to identify the specificity of tourist activity of deaf people against the background of the pattern of tourist activity of hearing Poles. The specific goals included: G1: identifying the characteristics of tourist behaviour of Poles in the period between 2004 and 2010 on the basis of secondary sources, such as data obtained from: the Institute of Tourism (IT) in Warsaw, the Central Statistical Office (GUS), and the Social Opinion Research Centre (CBOS); G2: identifying the similarities and differences between tourist behaviour of the deaf and hearing sections of the Polish population (including tourist activities pursued at weekends, on public and religious holidays, and during a vacation) on the basis of questionnaire-based interviews whose results were submitted to quantitative statistical analysis. The following hypotheses were formulated: H1: Participation of deaf people in tourism is not different from that of the whole of society. H2: The main factor preventing deaf people from participation in tourist activity is communication barriers. The research was carried out between 2004 and 2010. The main tools for data collection were questionnaire-based interviews carried out concurrently in both the deaf individuals (n=292) and hearing ones (n=1780) in Poland. To analyze the data, the following statistical methods were employed: statistical significance level (p), cluster analysis, regression analysis (odds ratio), and Pearson's Chi-square test for two proportions (structure indices). Calculations were made using STATISTICA software.

From the practical aspect, the book (Zajadacz 2012) is intended for tourism organisers, tourist accommodation managers and institutions responsible for the development of tourism (local, regional, and national ones) as a source of knowledge about the specificity of the segment of tourism comprised of sign language users; it also offers guidelines for creating Tourist Information Systems adapted to the needs of this particular group of tourists. Furthermore, it attempts to encourage deaf individuals to active participation in creating Tourist Information Systems and preparing tourist offers aimed specifically at sign language users.

The final conclusions refer to the theoretical, cognitive and practical aspects of tourism of deaf people discussed in the book. The various views presented in the book point to the fact that, although tourism is a very fast developing branch of industry (both quantitatively and in terms of diversity of its forms), the very nature of this phenomenon has not changed. The central elements of the system of tourism delineating the scope of research are: (1) man (an individual or a group of people) – the subject of tourist activity; (2) the object of tourist activity – tourist destination or tourist destinations, determining the tourist route; (3) interactions between the subject and the object of tourist activity, occurring in the process of travelling; (4) tourist infrastructure, which may or must support the process of travelling, as well as facilities and tourist and paratourist services adequate for the character of the trip; (5) tourist information essential for planning trips and during trips (Zajadacz 2012: 256, 2014).

The author has shown that “the development of tourism, its importance for the quality of man’s life and for the economy, has stimulated the progress of research conducted by representatives of numerous scientific disciplines. Initially, this research was of multidisciplinary character, but with time, as it developed and the relevant terminology and methodology became more uniform, the interdisciplinary approach began to prevail, and it is still the dominant one. Further development of interdisciplinary research aimed at consolidating the theory and methodology of studies on tourism may secure full autonomy for the science/sciences of tourism as a separate scientific discipline. Undoubtedly, this autonomy would, to a large extent, help solve problems requiring complex research, connected, among other things, with planning and managing tourism development in various spatial scales, as well as with tourism of the disabled” (Zajadacz 2012: 256).

In addition, the results of the research on the characteristics of tourist behaviour of deaf people were used as a basis for developing a model of a system of actions aimed to stimulate

tourism activity of deaf individuals (Zajadacz 2012: 219), which points to the need to take action in three areas. The first one, in keeping with the social model of disability, includes: changes intended to adapt the environment to the needs of disabled people, equalizing opportunities for access to education and the labour market, and social integration. The second area concerns the very essence of tourism – adapting tourist offer and tourist information to the specific needs of sign language users. The third area (the central point of the model) is connected with the stimulation of the community of deaf people aimed at improving their situation with regard to the level of education and economic status, better social integration, more involvement in the process of preparing tourist offer, and, in providing tourist information. The importance of adapting a Tourist Information System to the needs of deaf tourists led the author to develop a model of the structure of a database in a Tourist Information System (Zajadacz 2012: 222; Zajadacz 2014; Zajadacz, Szmaj 2017) adapted to the needs of sign language users, based on the idea of a cooperation network, whose important link is the community of deaf people, as well as on the potential of Information Communications Technologies (ICTs). In the cognitive dimension, the comparative analysis of the traits of tourist behaviour of deaf and hearing people (including tourist activities pursued at weekends, on public and religious holidays, and during a vacation) shows that tourist activity (participation in tourism) of deaf Poles is not significantly different from that of the hearing section of the society.

The findings (Zajadacz 2012) revealed both differences and similarities between the characteristics of tourist behaviour of both groups. The unique traits of tourist behaviour of deaf people include: (1) greater popularity of: trips to visit one's family and friends; trips with friends; trips made in spring and autumn, i.e. beyond the peak (summer) season; two-week trips; means of transport such as train; accommodation at one's family, friends, spa hotels, hostels; forms of recreation involving visiting exhibitions and art galleries; (2) greater: importance of such factors as easy access and good opportunities for improving one's health when choosing a tourist destination; interest in places of religious worship, going on pilgrimages, taking part in rallies and hikes, rehabilitation stays; focus on domestic destinations; pursuing – beyond one's place of residence – the same kind of leisure activities as those pursued at home; barriers preventing deaf people from going on tourist trips, such as: lack of interesting offers available at travel agencies or lack of reliable information enabling deaf individuals to plan trips on their

own; (3) less favourable attitude to social integration during tourist trips with hearing individuals (consequently, recreation in public places is less popular among deaf people).

The traits of tourist behaviour common to both deaf and hearing people, identified also on the basis of data on tourist activity of Poles obtained from IT, GUS and CBOS, and encompassing the period between 2004 and 2010, include: considerable influence of variables such as age, education and professional activity on the choice of tourist destinations; predominance of individual trips or trips with family and friends; use of sources of tourist information, of which the most popular ones are the Internet and the opinions of close-ones and friends; predominance of trips made in the summer season, with seaside being the most popular destination; financial problems pointed out as the main factor preventing deaf individuals from going on trips.

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A major problem when performing a comparative analysis using statistical data obtained from IT, GUS and CBOS is the heterogeneous research methodology employed by these institutions, as well as a lack of information on whether the surveyed samples (representing the whole Polish society) included disabled individuals. Information on the degree and kind of disability ought to be included in the group of those basic variables (such as age, education and income) which are taken into account in the analysis of tourist activity and in the segmentation of the tourist market. The scope of the study makes it possible to corroborate the initial hypothesis (H1): “participation of deaf people in tourism is not different from that of the whole of society”, the similarity lying in the very fact of going on tourist trips. As regards the traits, however, this participation, apart from common attributes, is also characterized by traits which are unique to the community of deaf people, which makes it possible to identify the needs of this group with regard to creating an accessible and satisfactory tourist offer meeting its expectations. Hypothesis H2, “the main factors preventing deaf people from participation in tourist activity are communication barriers”, was not directly confirmed. Just like the hearing section of the population, also deaf people pointed to financial problems as the main hindrance. However, it was shown that the specificity of this kind of disability may affect the economic status of deaf people, who are worse off than hearing individuals. The data on deaf tourists using sign language ought to find practical application since: (1) it may help improve the quality of life of deaf individuals; (2) it may help tourism managers win over a new group of clients; (3) it may help create a universal tourist offer and a universal Tourist Information System thanks

to a cooperation network based on the idea of stimulating tourist activity, as well as the resourcefulness of deaf people and changing mentality of tourism and leisure organisers (perceiving deaf people as both clients and competent workers or partners, particularly in the field of providing services for individuals and groups of people using sign language). A quantitative approach was adopted in the study. The comparative analysis included a set of traits common to both studied groups. To identify factors determining the behaviour of deaf people during their free time also other characteristics should be taken into account, e.g. the type of their immediate social environment (among other things, whether there are any hearing people in their immediate family). Additional qualitative research should be done on issues relating to tourist satisfaction, which are only rarely brought up in the context of disabled people. Furthermore, the model of the structure of a database in a Tourist Information System adapted to the needs of sign language users should be tested in experimental conditions in cooperation with representatives of: (1) scientific centres conducting studies on tourism with particular focus on information and communications technologies; (2) the Polish Tourist Organisation; (3) deaf people and institutions for deaf individuals, e.g. the Polish Association for the Deaf; (4) entrepreneurs and providers of tourist services. The results of such experiments and tests might help define optimal rules for the practical application of the proposed solutions (Zajadacz 2012).

Tourism and recreation of the blind was the subject of research of, among others A. Zajadacz, A. Lubarska, the results of which are published in the monograph entitled: *Sensory gardens as universal places of recreation adapted to the needs of blind people in the context of human-environment relations* (Zajadacz, Lubarska, 2020). Its main conclusions are also presented in the article: *Sensory gardens in the context of promoting well-being of people with visual impairments in the outdoor sites* (Zajadacz, Lubarska 2019). The aim of the study was to define the conditions that have to be met to ensure that a sensory path or a sensory garden is a universal space, which supports well-being in the outdoor sites to the blind and partially sighted. There were two methods used: field inventory of parks as well as interviews with blind and partially sighted people. The research was carried out in 2018 in 16 locations in Poland. The study confirmed the usability of previous recommendations in the field, especially regarding stimulation of the senses of hearing, smell and touch. The access to the place and the composition of the garden as well as the choice of plants must be planned in a way that allows the independent usage of the blind and partially sighted, which includes contrasting colours and

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elevated elements. Basic facilities in terms of spatial orientation, safety and information must be provided. However, the attractiveness of the garden in terms of entertainment and the well-being of visitors is also of great importance (Zajadacz, Lubarska, 2019: 1).

Tourism of **older people** has been presented in numerous studies (Bąk 2012; Grzelak-Kostulska, Hołowiecka 2012; Kunysz et al. 2017, Markiewicz-Patkowska, 2018; Żmuda-Pałka, Siwek 2019, Borzyszkowski, Michalczak 2021).

I. Bąk (2012) in the article entitled "Tourism in the face of an aging society" drew attention to the demographic changes taking place in European society and their consequences on the tourism services market. The author identified the specific characteristics of tourism of elderly people. In her conclusions she emphasized that the increasing number of elderly people in the population structure is not only a challenge for economic and social policies, but also a powerful new challenge for market of goods and services. „Growing in its own mass the buyer power of the participants in this age group will increasingly affect the market of goods and services related to daily life and non-routine goods and services particularly in healthcare, catering and tourism. Moreover, the article analyses tourism activity in Poland. The basis of the study were statistics on tourism travel for people aged 65 and more” (Bąk, 2012: 23).

E. Grzelak-Kostulska and B. Hołowiecka, (2012) also analyzed „*Senior tourism in Poland – socio-demographic conditions*”. The authors have attempted to analyze the factors which significantly influence tourist activity of the elderly in Poland. „The scope of the analysis included the selected conditions, both of a global character (demographic modernization, social modernization, globalization and technological progress) and individual determinants of tourist activity (age, health, professional activity and financial situation)” (Grzelak-Kostulska, Hołowiecka 2012: 108).

P. Kunysz et al. (2017), conducted detailed research on a local scale among the inhabitants of the city of Rzeszów, located in the eastern part of Poland. Their results were discussed in the article entitled *Participation in Tourism and Physical Recreation of Elderly People Rzeszów Inhabitants*. The authors focused on to show participation of elderly people in tourism and physical recreation as well as the motivations affecting their behaviour at one's leisure. The conducted research showed „that pensioners are most often motivated to exercise physical recreation by the desire to rest in the contact with nature and to improve one's health.

Through movement they feel joy, relax and peace of mind as well as, what is very important, they matter an effective spending their free time and regeneration of their psychophysical strengths. Practical implications: analysing the research findings one may conclude which forms of physical activity and tourist trips are preferred by seniors from Rzeszów” (Kunysz et al. (2017: 217). The authors emphasized that “exercising tourism and recreation also contributes to the seniors’ participation in the society’s life what positively affects their psychophysical frame of mind and, what is related thereto, contributes to an increase in the quality of their life” (Kunysz et al. (2017: 217).

Markiewicz-Patkowska et al. (2018) in her article entitled *Senior tourism in the context of the economic status of the retired in Poland* defined the notion of a senior, presented the changing forms of tourist activity undertaken by seniors in various periods of the 21st century in the context of their economic situation. The conclusions stated that one should expect that the conviction of the seniors with reference to the benefits of active recreation and tourism will translate into the popularisation of the healthy, active lifestyle (Markiewicz-Patkowska et al. 2018: 106).

M. Żmuda-Pałka and M. Siwek (2019) presented the results of their research in the publication entitled *Senior Tourism – Opportunity and Challenges of Accommodation Facilities in the Context of an Aging Population, Based on the Example of Krynica-Zdrój in Poland*. The article noted that „demographic changes related to the aging of the population affect many aspects of our lives. The prolonged life expectancy, the decreasing number of births and the development of medicine and universal access to medical services mean that the age structure of the population is changing. A wide group of recipients is a chance for development for many enterprises connected with senior and spa tourism” (Żmuda-Pałka, Siwek 2019: 177). The purpose of the research was to show perspective of the development of the senior tourism in a spa town Krynica- Zdrój. The work involved the analysis of Internet offers of accommodation facilities in terms of the specially prepared, dedicated programmes for seniors (the types of supply, discount packages, possibilities of activity and leisure, as well as facilities and accommodation facilities for the elderly). Taking into account the entire accommodation base in Krynica-Zdrój the analysis concerned: accommodation facilities including 4-star hotels, 3-star hotels, guesthouses, sanatoriums, holiday resorts, wooden houses, private accommodation, shelters, and a hostel. „The research shows that the market for senior tourism is not yet fully

formed. Senior tourism has been surpassed by health tourism, well-developed in Krynica-Zdrój. Owners of facilities should, however, pay attention to and specify a diverse number of offers for seniors. By expanding the company's range of services addressed to seniors, it is possible to improve the promotion of the accommodation facility, thus increase the sale of accommodation" (Żmuda-Pałka, Siwek 2019: 177).

J. Borzyszkowski and W. Michalczak (2021) in the article entitled *Tourism policy for seniors. An overview of selected practices* analysed models of impacting the senior tourism market. The article contains a review of activities resulting from tourism policy that have been undertaken at various levels and by different entities. „In particular, the authors describe selected activities aimed at increasing tourist activity of seniors in Europe in order to determine to what extent these experiences can be useful in other settings and why such initiatives should be implemented in Poland. Based on the results of their desk research, the authors formulate recommendations for tourism policy in Poland” (Borzyszkowski, Michalczak 2021: 81).

The topic of accessible tourism in a broad context relating to the needs of **people with disabilities, the elderly, and those visiting with children** has been addressed in many publications (a.o. Zajadacz 2017; Zajadacz, Lubarska 2019; Szał, Terlecka, Zajadacz, Lubarska, Minkwitz, 2021). A. Zajadacz A (2017) in the paper: *Attitudes of Future Tourism Sector Employees Towards Organise Accessible Tourism* drew attention to the very important role of the tourist services sector in the implementation of the principles of the development of accessible tourism. The aim of the paper was to show a theoretical approach to the evolution of concepts perceiving disability, taking into account the medical, social, and geographical models, as the basis for the development of principles concerning the organisation of accessible tourism for people with disabilities (PwD). The main research objective was to identify the current attitudes of future, potential employees in the tourism (tourism and recreation students at the time of the study) towards accessible tourism. „The study was based on surveys performed in May 2013 at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (UAM, Poland) and the State University in Irkutsk (ИГУ, Russia), a total sample of 216 people. The main section of the survey contained four questions regarding issues such as: optimal ways to organise tourism products for people with a disability; attitudes towards spending leisure time together with people with a disability; and specific requirements concerning the introduction of various types of improvements in tourism products aimed at people with a disability. In both cases, the results revealed that future tourism employees hold attitudes which are prevalingly open and positive

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towards the needs of tourists with disabilities. However, the hypothesis that the main factor influencing a reluctance to enter into contact with PwD is a lack of experience in this area, resulting in insufficient knowledge of what conditions the behaviour of PwD, was also confirmed. This is a highly significant conclusion which should consider if mandatory educational programmes in the field of tourism and recreation studies are to be improved” (Zajadacz 2017: 49).

Several articles, including: titled as *Development of a Catalogue of Criteria for Assessing the Accessibility of Cultural Heritage Sites* (Zajadacz, Lubarska 2019) and titled: *Assessment of the adaptation of tourism supply of cultural heritage objects for the elderly in the context of accessible tourism* (Szał, Terlecka, Zajadacz, Lubarska, Minkwitz, 2021) also present the criteria for assessing the accessibility of cultural heritage sites as tourist attractions from the point of view of the needs of several social groups: persons with disabilities, elderly people and visitors with children. In this catalogue three basic components are of key importance: physical/technical preparation, tourist information system and the skills and competences of the staff serving guests. The first part of the article is a review, discussing the concept of accessibility as well as the barriers and constraints that may exist in cultural heritage sites from the perspective of the groups of visitors concerned. The second part focuses on the presentation of the postulates for the development of a catalogue of criteria for the assessment of accessibility on the example of the case study of the Piast Trail – main historical thematic route in the Wielkopolska region. The contents of the article constitute a knowledge base useful in the process of equal opportunities in access to historical and cultural heritage. They also serve as guidelines for improving the quality of services in tourist facilities. The catalog of these criteria was used in practice to prepare an audit of the accessibility of tourist attractions on the main cultural tourism route in Wielkopolska, which is the Piast Route. the audit results in the form of information cards for individual objects are posted on the website: <https://szlakpiastowski.pl/dostepnosc>².

For many places, towns and regions, tourist guides addressed to the environment of people with disabilities have been developed. An example is the author's guide P. Kapusta *Guide to Krakow for disabled tourists* (2018), updated many times.

² Access: 10.09.2023

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Recently, many textbooks, collections of good practices in the field of social accessible tourism, addressed to the tourism industry, have also been published. Examples include monographs edited by: Z. Głąbiński (2020): *Efficiently for the disabled*, A. Zajadacz (2020): *Accessible tourism. Recommendations for the tourist services sector* (2020) or A. Stasiak Social (2021): *Social tourism in Poland. Good practice guide*. These publications are most often the effects of projects financed from public funds or regional tourist organizations.

Summary

The publications are of a diverse nature, ranging from theoretical approaches, through presentations of the results of empirical research of cognitive and applied importance, to guides to good practices and tourist guides addressed to the tourism industry and tourists themselves.

Over the last decade, a change in nomenclature has been observed, related to the evolution of the perception of the needs of people with disabilities. Availability has become a common term in Polish language in the context of meeting these needs. In relation to tourism, there was also an adaptation of the term taken from English "accessible tourism", in favor of previously used names such as "tourism without barriers", "tourism for disabled people" or "tourism for all".

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