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## ВПЛИВ ГЕОГРАФІЧНОГО ПОЛОЖЕННЯ НА ПРОМОЦІЙНІ ЗАХОДИ МІСТ ТА ТУРИСТИЧНИХ ПІДПРИЄМСТВ В РЕГІОНІ БАЛТІЙСЬКОГО МОРЯ

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Поняття “географічне положення” є ключовим для всієї системи географічних наук. Географія зародилася як наука про методи визначення і фіксації місцеположення об’єктів на земній поверхні відносно один одного або в системі координат. Визначення місцеположення об’єкта не тільки допомагає відшукати його, але і пояснює деякі властивості та прогнозує його розвиток. Важливим елементом географічного дослідження є встановлення і аналіз зв’язків між об’єктами, які визначаються їх розміщенням. В статті проаналізовано вплив географічного положення приморських територій Балтійського моря на промоційні заходи, що застосовуються містами та туристичними підприємствами регіону.

Для більшості туристів, що приїжджають в Прибалтійський морський регіон, географічне положення відвідуваних місцевостей відіграє ключову роль у виборі цієї території як туристичної дестинації. У статі зроблено припущення, що міста та туристичні підприємства Прибалтики будуватимуть свою рекламну політику, акцентуючи на приморські природні умови місцевості. Головними об’єктами дослідження були туристичні підприємства (готелі та ресторани) в межах регіону Балтійського моря та вісім прибалтійських міст. Внаслідок проведеного дослідження встановлено, що географічне положення має вирішальний вплив на промоційні заходи міст і туристичних підприємств в регіоні Балтійського моря; зі зростанням величини міста вплив природних факторів на рекламну політику зменшується.

*Ключові слова:* регіон Балтійського моря, промоційні заходи, географічне положення.

Promotion is an important part of the marketing mix of a business enterprise. The purpose of promotion is to inform, persuade and influence the prospective customers. According to Michalski [1], promotion has a bilateral characteristic, i.e. promotion is not only limited to the message contained in the advertisement, but it consists of a feedback from potential clients. Promotion or communication process has four basic instruments: advertisement, sales promotion, personal selling and public relations, although in the era of Internet this typology may alter in the near future [7]. Tourism enterprises use a specific blend of promotional tools, adjusting its usage to the identified market segment [6]. The following factors influence the promotional mix of a firm: nature of a market, nature of a product, stage of product’s life, availability of funds, effectiveness of promotional tools. In tourism enterprises personal selling seems to be of smallest importance, because potential customers are remote location. Eminent exception are study tours, exhibitions when firms attempt to reach intermediaries rather than individual clients.

The content of a promotional message is primarily shaped by customer needs and wants. In case of tourism enterprises, they are determined by the aim of journey tourists are undertaking. It is to note that the products and services offered by tourism enterprises are not a main motivator of travel for tourists, although they are some exceptions when a service become

tourism attraction itself. Mundt [2] distinguished two basic travel motivators: place and transaction. Place refers to all the attractions that are to some extent unique to the particular destination such as monuments, cultural artifacts, natural resources etc., while transaction means that a main motivator is a business, meeting or attendance in a conference or an event. Of course tourists may have multitude reasons of stay in a destination, e.g. one can participate in a chess tournament and at the same time would like to spend some time on the beach. Cities where ‘place tourists’ prevail, are named according to Mundt as tourism cities in wide sense, while cities where the former type is dominant are called tourism cities in a narrow sense (fig. 1).

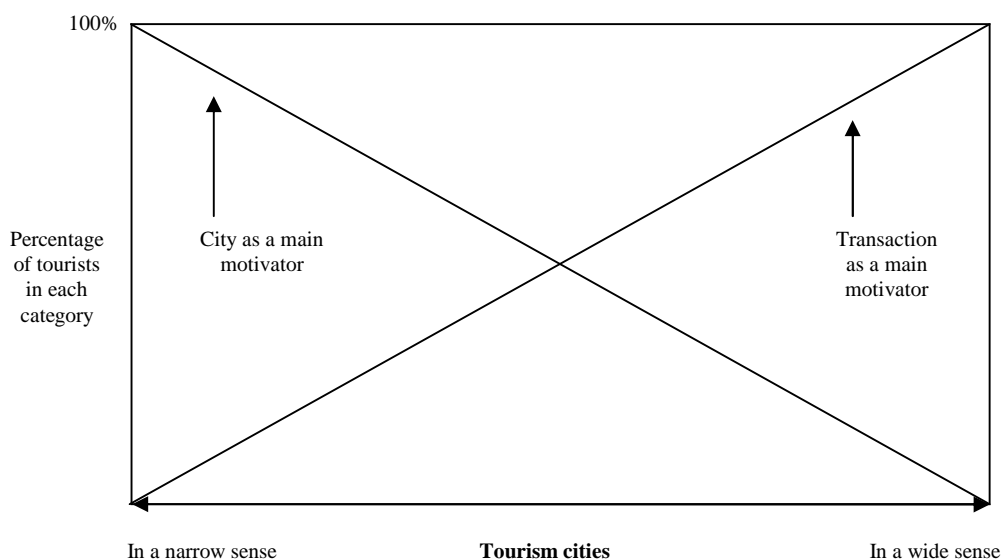


Figure 1 Tourism cities in a narrow and wide sense.

Source: [2]

Tourism enterprises which operate in the coastal regions gain numerous advantages because of this location. First and foremost sea creates a special climate which facilitates traditional 3S tourism with all its consequences. Moreover sea may be used as an additional transportation corridor, maritime industry may vastly change character of regions and naval location may facilitate marketing activities with other regions with akin tourism product.

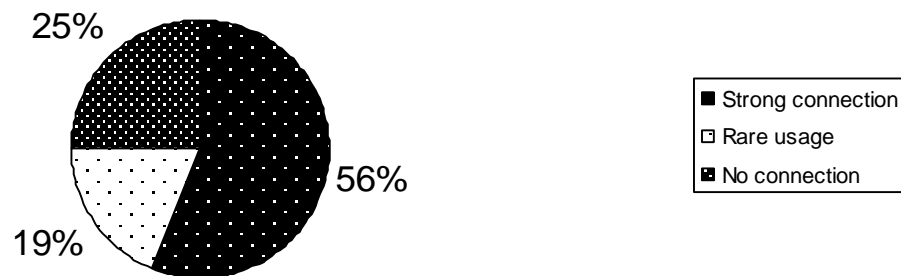
Geographical location is traditionally used in marketing of many tourism enterprises. This element appears in enterprises' names, their products, design and even in organizations they form. All those elements are conceived to assure potential tourists that sea as a main attraction is situated nearby. Then, in many cases, a company name promises a complementary, to the main attraction, service, e.g. fish in a restaurant. On the other hand, implementation of a geographical elements to the promotional policy may not facilitate companies' endeavors to build outstanding brand.

Promotional activities of tourism enterprises around the Baltic Sea

For the purpose of this study a self-filled questionnaire has been chosen as a most effective research tool. Questionnaire has been sent via Internet twice to 1095 tourism enterprises in all countries around the Baltic Sea. 97 responses have been obtained from which 2 questionnaires were eliminated because they lacked answers. The study was aimed at the enterprises which are focused at incoming tourism: two thirds of remained responses came from hotels while the rest was constituted by restaurants. Apart from Russia responses were gained from all countries in the region, albeit very low response rates have been observed in Latvia and Denmark. Among 95 qualified questionnaires 28% were from Estonia, 21% – Sweden, 15% – Poland, 12% - Finland, Lithuania, 9% - Germany, 3% - Latvia and 1% came from Denmark.

The main question was formulated as follows: ‘Does your company use elements bounded with Baltic Sea in your promotional activities?’, and respondents might choose one of three answers (fig. 2). A majority of enterprises declared no connection between their promotional activities and Baltic Sea proximity and only 19% admitted to use it intensely (fig. 2). The obtained results contradict therefore with the assumption described in the introduction.

Figure 2 Declared connection between promotional activities of tourism enterprises



and their coastal location

Source: Own elaboration

Noteworthy differences have been observed among enterprises which operate in cities of different size (fig. 3). Among all enterprises 31% have come from cities which population is under 100 thousand, 29% were from cities which have between 100 and 400 thousand citizens and 40% operates in metropolises over 400 thousand.

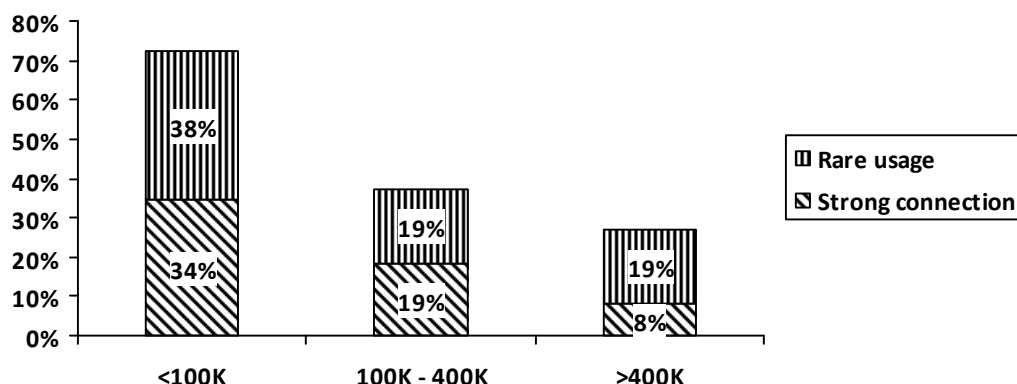


Figure 3 City size and connection between promotional activities and coastal location  
<100K – cities with less than 100 thousands inhabitants

Source: Own elaboration

The bigger is the city in which tourism enterprises conduct their business, the less important is the connection between Baltic Sea proximity and their promotional activities. Among enterprises which operate in cities below 100 thousand inhabitants the share of companies declaring tight or loose bond of promotion with the sea was 72% while in cities over 400 thousand citizens the same share was only 27%.

A population of a city a tourism company operates in, seem to be a deciding factor influencing inclusion of Baltic Sea elements into promotional campaigns of researched enterprises. Results of the survey precluded that other factors affect composition of results from figure 2.

Neither size nor type (hotel or restaurant) of a tourism enterprises seemed to have a significant influence over the results. Among firms which employ less than 10 people 56% indicated no connection at all (the same as average, see fig. 2). Same indicator for firms with employment between 10–49 and over 50 were 61% and 52% respectively. Also GDP did not seem to influence the obtained results. In countries which entered European Union in 2004 57% enterprises admitted to have no bond between promotion and its coastal location, while the same number in so-called ‘old EU countries’ has been on the level of 54%.

Besides the influence of coastal location over the promotional message in the questionnaire enterprises were asked about their exact promotional undertakings. According to the findings the enterprises which declared a strong or loose bond were slightly more active in terms of public private cooperation (table 1).

Table 1

## Various promotional activities conducted by tourism enterprises

Group of promotional tools	Promotional instrument	Enterprises which declared strong or rare usage of coastal location in promotional policy	Enterprises which no connection between promotion and coastal location	Difference
Advertisement	Advertisement in city guides	80,49%	75,00%	5,49%
Advertisement / sales promotion	Participation in city card Project	19,51%	7,69%	11,82%
Sales promotion	Participation in tourism fairs	63,41%	50,00%	13,41%
Sales promotion	Frequent participation in mass events in region	90,00%	78,85%	11,15%
Public relations	Sponsoring of local sport associations	34,15%	19,23%	14,92%
Public relations	Participation in regional tourism organizations	58,54%	63,46%	-4,92%

Source: Own elaboration

Enterprises which declared connection of their promotional activities with coastal location take part much more often (2,5 times more often) in the city card project and more often decide to sponsor local sport. Slightly more often they take part in tourism exhibitions, participate in mass events and advertise in local tourism guides. On the other hand enterprises which declare no connection participate more often in local tourism organizations.

A high share of tourism enterprises participating in city card project among the firms that indicated strong or loose connection of their promotional activities with the coastal location might be surprising, because this project is characteristic rather to cities than to small towns and villages. This finding should therefore be interpreted with care, especially if one considers that an overall number of enterprises declaring to be a city card participant have been just twelve. In case of mass events or fairs participation the differences might stem from maritime character of this occasions.

#### Primary motive of stay and promotional policy in tourism

In 2004 according to UN WTO the most popular reason of traveling was leisure tourism (52%). Visiting friends and relatives (VFR), religious or health purposes was most important to 24% of tourists population, while business travel accounted only for 16% of tourism market. Page and Hall [3] provide completely different data for tourism in urban areas where the most popular reason of stay is business (46%), leisure (27%) and VFR (8%). Similar finding are provided by Polish Institute of Tourism [4]. Business travel is therefore most important for city tourism while in other areas it plays a rather marginal role. In case of business travel the decision where to go is often made not by a tourist itself, and primary reason of travel is rather transaction than place. This prevalence of business travel in greater cities also in Baltic Sea Region might explain reluctance of incorporation of coastal elements in promotional activities in many enterprises operating there. It seems therefore that 3S tourism, nautical traditions are the key elements that are associated with Baltic Sea, while transportation corridor and regional and cultural context may have be only of secondary importance.

The influence of coastal location over the promotional activities of tourism enterprises in Baltic Sea Region is inversely proportional to the number of inhabitants in cities in which these firms are operating. It results from the purpose of stay, which differs according to the city size. The survey revealed also that tourism enterprises which declared strong or loose connection of their promotional activities to the coastal location conduct also a slightly more active promotional activities.

A survey indicated lower than expected level of connection between geographical location and promotional activities of tourism enterprises. However, it should be noted that the Internet pool has been based on the self-filled questionnaire, which means that the 'connection' has been defined by the entrepreneurs themselves. Therefore for better understanding of the problem it is advised to conduct further research where questionnaire will be accompanied by an observation. Moreover, an akin research among tourism enterprises in non-coastal location would indicate whether coastal location has a particular influence over the promotional activities in tourism enterprises.

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#### **GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES OF CITIES AND ENTERPRISES IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION**

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For a great majority of tourists visiting cities around Baltic Sea for leisure or VFR (visiting friends and relatives) motives its coastal location seem to play a vital role. Hence, it is to be assumed that tourism enterprises shaping their promotional message would stress the sea proximity and coastal character of the city they operate. The aim of the article is to validate this hypothesis.

*Key words:* geographical location, Baltic Sea region, promotion.

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