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Correlations between individual factors and long-term nature of tourist trips amongst urban single people

Authors' Contribution:
A – Study Design
B – Data Collection
C – Statistical Analysis
D – Data Interpretation
E – Manuscript Preparation
F – Literature Search
G – Funds Collection

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Key words*: single person, tourism activity, long-term trips, socio-demographic factors*

Abstract

Background: *The analysis of socio-demographic factors that determine the duration of tourist trips among urban single people.*

Material/Methods: *The research included 598 randomly selected single people from Warsaw and Poznan. The study was conducted using the survey method. The relation between trips for ≥ 10 days and the variables characterizing the demographic structure of the respondents were assessed using log-linear analysis. The significance of the impact of the factors examined in the analysis was determined by chi-squared test.*

Results: *Single people from Poznan with secondary and higher education are, respectively, more than 4-fold and 7-fold likely to go on longer trips (≥ 10 days) than shorter ones (< 10 days). Highly educated single people from Warsaw (compared to those with secondary education) are 1.25 times more likely to travel for ≥ 10 days than for < 10 days. The likelihood for long trips also increases several times among people who have income > PLN 2,000 (3 times in Poznan, 7 times in Warsaw) and those declaring income < PLN 1,500 (1.6 times in Poznan, 1.5 times in Warsaw). In the case of respondents from Warsaw, being a man doubles the likelihood of traveling for ≥ 10 days.*

Conclusions: *Participation of urban single people in long-term trips is a reflection of contemporary trends in the market of tourist services. However, it is necessary to conduct a comprehensive analysis of leisure time behavior of single people. It is crucial in the quest to satisfy the tourist desires of today's consumers of leisure services.*

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Introduction

The issue of leisure time management is of great importance to the open scientific debate on the impact of megatrends in modern civilization on the various spheres of human life [1]. Recently, special attention has been paid to the involvement of people in active forms of leisure time activities, such as physical recreation and active tourism. With regard to health-oriented recommendations and the attractiveness of these forms for a new type of society, which is called an information society, post-modern society or knowledge society [2], it is necessary to expand our knowledge and determinants of the level of participation in these forms [3], especially with consideration for the determinants of personal nature [4].

Global megatrends, which include a significant increase in the number of aging people (including single women), single people (resulting in a growing number of one-person households) and consumer lifestyles, certainly determine the level, quality and style of people's lives, including their leisure time behavior [4, 5]. This also requires undertaking innovative action (research, plans, strategies, programs) aimed at fulfilling the needs of emerging social environments.

The latest results of the 2011 National Census of Population and Housing show that such environments consist of a growing group of singles: single people who have never been married, or are no longer married or in any other relationship (e.g. heterosexual or homosexual relationship, consensual union) due to their partner's death, dissolution of marriage, or divorce [6]. According to the Central Statistical Office, more than 45% of people in cities run their own one-person households [7].

In supporting the scientific thinking that stresses the role of global megatrends in shaping the level, style and quality of life (with an increasing emphasis on active rest as well), the authors of this study have analyzed determinants of tourist activity amongst urban single people in the context of the duration of their trips. The inspiration came from a visible tendency to prolong time off from work [8].

In Poland, the average duration of long journeys in 2006-2009 (summer holidays and vacation) was 9-10 days; in 2010 it was much higher, nearly 11 days [9]. Depending on seniority in the workplace, in 2011 the average Pole was entitled to approximately 20-26 days of vacation time [10]. However, beginning on 1 January 2004 it became possible to alter vacation time entitlement and the number of allocated days off depending on daily working time [11]. Until that date, daily working time had equaled 8 hours, so the vacation time entitlement of an employee had been the same. Currently, daily working time can be more or less than 8 hours, which allows the conversion of vacation time and, at the same time, free but rational time management. It has been noted that workers shorten their summer holiday and vacation trips by a few days and take time off on days close to public holidays, Saturdays, or Sundays (statutory holidays). This creates an opportunity for additional time off (up to nine days). The phenomenon of "extending" weekends has been observed in Poland with increased frequency. In 2011, there were eight weekends of this kind; in 2012, seven. The website of Holidays Calendar[1] states: "in 2011, we have 8 long weekends, 4 of which need only one additional day off to be taken. If you plan your vacation carefully in order to fit into these dates, you will get a total of 28 days off." Furthermore, "In 2012, we have 7 long weekends, 5 of which need only one additional day off to be taken. If you plan your vacation carefully in order to fit into these dates, you will get a total of 27 days off."

It seems that having shorter but more frequent tourist trips is slowly becoming an integral part of today's lifestyles of Poles, as well as Europeans in general [12]. This is a tendency that corresponds with changing economic and financial conditions.

Taking this into account and distinguishing trips typical of vacation from extended weekend "trips," the authors of the present study have classified the trips as lasting <10 days and ≥10 days. These trips vary not only in the duration of stay away from home, but also the nature of undertaken activities. As opposed to holidaymakers going on long trips, a weekend tourist looks for peace, but

[1] www.kalendarzswiat.pl/dlugie_weekendy/2011; http://www.kalendarzswiat.pl/dlugie_weekendy/2012 Accessed on 15.08.2012.

cannot escape the weekly rush, so therefore undertakes diverse and changing forms of activities; additionally, active ways of spending leisure time are preferred. Spending free days actively (physical recreation and active tourism) is a clear sociocultural tendency resulting from increasing public awareness of the importance of a healthy and active lifestyle, as well as a desire to experience new sensations and improve one's qualifications and skills (while not giving up on broadly understood entertainment).

In analyzing correlations between individual factors and the duration of tourist trips (for <10 days and ≥10 days) in the case of single people from large Polish cities – Poznan and Warsaw – the authors hope that the presented research results will contribute to providing this growing group of single consumers with relevant offers and programs that meet their individual travel desires. The authors also believe that the study will help to improve knowledge of this issue.

Material and methods

The study involved 598 randomly selected single men and women from Warsaw and Poznan. The sample consisted of representatives of six social and professional groups: (1) public officials, senior officials, activists, (2) managers, professionals of various sciences, educators and others, and those from unclassified groups, (3) junior professionals in trade and services, (4) manual laborers, (5) professionals of middle positions in different specialties, and (6) university students and pupils [13].

The research was conducted following the summer tourist season (November 2007 and 2008) and the winter tourist season (March 2008 and 2009). In order to select the test group, a two-stage sampling system was applied. The first step consisted of a random selection of institutions that employed people engaged in a particular profession from among the institutions of that type in Warsaw and Poznan. The exception was the group of retail workers, in which case streets with a large number of commercial buildings were selected.

The second stage consisted of sampling a certain number of persons in each institution. In small institutions, all the employees completed the survey, while in larger institutions hiring or training more people, a 10% sample group was chosen.

In each randomly selected university/school, one group/class was drawn and all the students/pupils present that day in the language classes/lessons were included in the research.

The study was conducted using the survey method. Direct (standardized) interviews were conducted according to a specific plan by trained and supervised interviewers. The percentage of refusals to answer survey questions was small, and did not exceed the range of 3% to 5%. The questionnaire (modified after pilot studies) included questions about one's participation in tourism over the last year, the net trips (participation in at least one tourist trip during the studied period), and their duration (<10 days and ≥10 days). In this paper, we analyzed the correlations between socio-demographic factors and trips of <10 days and ≥10 days. In addition to information on participation in tourism, the interviewers collected data on the subjects' gender, age, education, profession, and income. Based on these data, the respondents were assigned to categories: gender (women, men), age (aged 18-19, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-60 years old), education (primary/vocational, secondary, higher), income (≤PLN 1,500, PLN 1,501-2,000, >PLN 2,000 net per single household per month). The number of the respondents in given categories is presented in Table 1.

The rate of tourist activity was assessed on the basis of the percentage of people going on tourist trips for <10 days and ≥10 days, compared to the whole study population.

The correlation between the rate of tourist activity and factors characterizing the socio-demographic structure of the surveyed singles (gender, age, education, social class, professional group and income) was assessed using log-linear analysis. In order to determine the optimal model for testing, the values of the chi-squared test for the main effects without interaction were calculated, and then the extended models with the higher-order interactions were analyzed. The significance of the analyzed correlations in the test model was evaluated based on partial associations and marginal associations. Partial associations indicate whether the given interaction affects the fitting of the model, when all other effects of the same order are already in the model.

Marginal associations, in turn, enable a comparison of the model without any interaction with the model, including only the given correlation. The obtained results are presented using fractions and odds ratios with 95% confidence intervals. The analyses were performed using the STATISTICA 9.0 PL statistics software package. The significance level of $p < 0.05$ was assumed in assessing the significance of effects.

Table 1. The numbers of respondents (n = 598) studied within a given category of socio-demographic factors

Factors	Poznan		Warsaw	
	n	%	n	%
Gender				
Men	122	40.8	122	40.8
Women	177	59.2	177	59.2
Age				
18-19 years	9	3.0	9	3.0
20-29 years	160	53.5	160	53.5
30-39 years	79	26.4	79	26.4
40-49 years	25	8.4	25	8.4
50-60 years	26	8.7	26	8.7
Education				
Primary/vocational	10	3.3	10	3.3
Secondary	103	34.4	103	34.4
Higher	186	62.2	186	62.2
Professional groups				
Public officials, senior officials, activists	8	2.7	51	17.1
Managers, professionals of various sciences, education and others, and unclassified subjects	99	33.1	17	5.7
Junior professionals in trade and services	55	18.4	157	52.5
Manual workers	9	3.0	49	16.4
Professionals of middle positions in different specialties	80	26.8	9	3.0
University students and pupils	48	16.1	16	5.4
Income				
≤ PLN 1,500	82	27.4	175	58.5
PLN 1,501-2,000	44	14.7	34	11.4
> PLN 2,000	165	55.2	36	12.0
No answer	8	2.7	54	18.1

Results

Single residents of both Poznan and Warsaw relatively more often ($p < 0.05$) declared participation in tourist trips lasting ≥10 days (69.2% and 73.5%, respectively) than <10 days (28.4% and 20.1%, respectively). Residents of Poznan with higher and secondary education relatively more often ($p<0.05$) chose those kinds of trips (74.7% and 63.1%, respectively) rather than the shorter trips (35% and 22.6%, respectively; Table 2). In the case of residents of Warsaw, the situation was similar (Table 3). The portion of people participating in trips lasting ≥10 days was 76.4% among the highly educated, and 68.9% among secondary school graduates. In the group of single people in Warsaw, there were also significant differences in the long-term nature of their stays depending on their gender. Men declared going on longer trips (≥10 days) relatively more often ($p < 0.05$; 81.8%) than on shorter trips (14.5%). Such differences were not observed for women. Both in the groups of Poznan residents and Warsaw residents, single people with highest and lowest incomes left for ≥10 days relatively more often ($p < 0.05$; 91.4% and 71.3%, respectively).

Analyses of partial and marginal associations confirmed that among the studied variables describing the residents of Poznan, income was the factor that significantly determined the trips for 10 days or more (Table 2). The odds ratios, calculated for the analyzed variables, showed that in relation to people with income of PLN 1,501-2,000 (54.5%), the odds of longer trips increased almost threefold among people with income >PLN 2,000 (75.2%), and about 1.6 times among people with income ≤PLN 1,500 (64.6%). It was similar in the case of education: persons with secondary and higher education had, respectively, more than four times and seven times greater odds for such trips.

Table 2. Determinants of tourist trips among Poznan singles (n = 299) in 2007-2009. Odds ratios (OR) and limits of 95% confidence interval (95% CI) of trips ≥10 days

Factors	Trips				p	OR	95% CI
	<10 days		≥10 days				
	n	%	n	%			
Gender					NS		
Men	39	32.0	80	65.6		1.35	0.81-2.24
Women	46	26.0	127	71.8		1	-
Age					NS		
20-29 years	51	30.2	114	67.5		1	-
30-39 years	17	21.5	59	74.7		0.64	0.34-1.21
40-49 years	7	28.0	18	72.0		0.87	0.34-2.21
50-60 years	10	38.5	16	61.5		1.40	0.59-3.29
Education					NS		
Primary/vocational	7	70.0*	3	30.0		1	-
Secondary	36	35.0	65	63.1*		4.21	1.03-17.30
Higher	42	22.6	139	74.7*		7.72	1.91-31.19
Professional groups					NS		
Public officials, senior officials, activists	3	37.5	5	62.5		1.68	0.37-7.55
Managers, professionals of various sciences, education and others, and unclassified subjects	25	25.3	70	70.7		1	-
Junior professionals in trade and services	20	36.4	34	61.8		1.65	0.80-3.37
Manual workers	2	22.2	6	66.7		0.93	0.18-4.93
Professionals of middle positions in different specialties	22	27.5	57	71.3		1.08	0.55-2.11
University students and pupils	13	27.1	35	72.9		1.04	0.48-2.28
Income					0.048		
≤ PLN 1,500	27	32.9	53	64.6*		0.61	0.29-1.30
PLN 1,501-2,000	20	45.5	24	54.5		1	-
> PLN 2,000	36	21.8	124	75.2*		0.35	0.17-0.70

Due to possible data deficiencies for income, the number of respondents may vary between individual factors.
**Significant differences (p < .05) between the trips for < 10 days and ≥ 10 days; odds ratios (OR) were computed with reference to the subjects travelling for ≥10 days.*

Among the residents of Warsaw, men were twice as likely to go on trips for a longer period (≥10 days; Table 3). Compared to secondary school graduates, persons with higher education were 1.25 times more likely to go on longer trips (OR = 1.25 [0.68-2.32]). Similarly to the residents of Poznan, people with the lowest (71.3%) and the highest (91.4%) income mostly went on long trips. In relation to respondents with income of PLN 1,501-2,000, those with income > PLN 2,000 had an almost seven times greater chance for longer trips; 1.5 times greater among those with income ≤ PLN 1,500.

Table 3. Determinants of tourist trips among Warsaw singles (n = 299) in 2007-2009, odds ratios (OR), and limits of 95% confidence interval (95% CI) of trips of ≥ 10 days

Factors	Trips				p	OR	95% CI
	<10 days		≥10 days				
	n	%	n	%			
Gender					0.033		
Men	16	14.5	90	81.8*		0.50	0.26-0.96
Women	38	24.1	107	67.7		1	
Age					NS		
20-29 years	27	19.0	106	74.6		1	
30-39 years	20	26.3	53	69.7		1.48	0.76-2.88
40-49 years	3	12.5	20	83.3		0.59	0.16-2.13
50-60 years	4	15.4	18	69.2		0.87	0.27-2.79
Education					0.026		
Primary/vocational	-	-	6	75.0		-	-
Secondary	23	22.3	71	68.9*		1	-
Higher	31	19.7	120	76.4*		1.25	0.68-2.32
Professional groups					NS		
Public officials, senior officials, activists	10	19.6	39	76.5		0.93	0.41-2.10
Managers, professionals of various sciences, education and others, and unclassified subjects	2	11.8	15	88.2		0.48	0.10-2.24
Junior professionals in trade and services	26	20.3	94	73.4		1	
Manual workers	14	28.6	29	59.2		1.75	0.81- 3.77
Professionals of middle positions in different specialties	2	22.2	6	66.7		1.21	0.23-6.33
University students and pupils	-	-	14	100.0		-	-
Income					NS		
≤ PLN 1,500	33	21.0	112	71.3*		1.45	0.61-3.48
PLN 1,501-2,000	9	29.0	21	67.7		1	
> PLN 2,000	2	5.7	32	91.4*		6.86	1.35-34.93

Due to possible data deficiencies about income, the number of respondents may vary between individual factors.
**Significant differences (p < .05) between the trips for < 10 days and ≥ 10 days; odds ratios (OR) were computed with reference to the subjects travelling for ≥ 10 days.*

Discussion

Single people, a very interesting segment of the market today, are quite a highly heterogeneous social group. Singles – the ones "by choice," in particular – appreciate self-fulfillment in their job, contacts with friends, and higher education (especially those living in the large urban areas). They lead an active social life, and they prefer and pursue active forms of leisure time activities [14]. Compared to the general European population [12], including Poles [9], they present a specific and also high level of tourist activity [15]. They participate in modern 3E tourism (excitement, entertainment, education), and their trips are cosmopolitan, especially in the case of men [12]. Researchers speculate that single people will participate in both national and foreign tourism [16].

In the case of this social group, it is hard to agree with K. Podemski's judgment that they are: "(...) not only tourists peeping at Europe through the windows of a coach, but also travelers struggling with "strangeness" of other European nations and their own identity" [17]. Research shows that the tourist behavior of single people may vary [4], because – according to Gross, Brien, and Brown [18] – their behaviors are related to their self-expression. However, it does not seem that single people are bothered with the experience of "culture shock."

The rate of tourist activity of single people is influenced by many different factors, including the socio-demographic ones [15]; presumably, it is strongly correlated with social emancipation [19]. In the studied group of urban singles, the study found a high rate of tourist activity, especially for long trips (≥10 days). Despite the emerging trends (more frequent, but shorter trips), singles from both Poznan (69.2%) and Warsaw (73.6%) relatively more often declared going on longer trips than shorter ones (for less than 10 days). This seems to be the result of running a one-person household, which, first of all, minimizes family responsibilities, and secondly, provides opportunity for self-determination of one's own needs and disposal of one's resources. The income in a one-person household is available to only one person and need not be spent only on necessities, but also on bigger expenses, investment, and savings [6].

Obviously, it could also be frequently seen among single people that the chance for longer trips grew with increasing levels of income [20]. The present analysis showed that in the group of Poznan residents and the group of Warsaw residents, it is mostly single people with the highest income who leave for ≥10 days (75.2% and 91.4%, respectively). Compared to those with middle income (PLN 1,501-2,000), people declaring an income of > PLN 2,000 were almost 3-fold (in the case of Poznan residents), and even 7-fold (in the case of Warsaw residents) more likely to go on such trips. Due to higher earnings, the residents of Warsaw in general have more opportunities to participate in tourism. They treat tourist activity as a permanent part of their lifestyle [21]. Despite their lower income, people from the Wielkopolska Province also declared that their economic status allowed them to take part in activities in their free time (including participation in recreation at weekends and during holidays) [22].

While the correlation between high income and the long-term nature of tourist trips does not come as a surprise, it is interesting that this regularity is also present among the persons with the lowest income (≤ PLN 1,500). Among the residents of Poznan, this group was 1.6 times more likely (1.5 times among the residents of Warsaw) than the people with middle incomes to go traveling for ≥10 days. It seems to be a result of calculations, especially among the residents of Poznan, widely regarded as thrifty people, and the purchase of travel services that are consumed over a long period of time.

Travel of long duration (≥10 days) is also determined by another frequently mentioned factor [23]: the level of education. Individuals with higher and secondary education compared to less educated people were much more likely to go on longer trips. In the case of single people from Poznan, the likelihood was over 7-fold and 4-fold higher, respectively. Single people from Warsaw who received primary/vocational education did not declare going on trips for <10 days at all, while the respondents with higher education were 1.25 times more likely to go on long trips than those with secondary education. This commonly known pattern has been confirmed in this study, too. Highly educated individuals have specific cultural ambitions, including tourist aspirations [24].

The factors that significantly determined the duration of trips for urban single people, in principle, did not differ between the respondents from Poznan and Warsaw. The only exception was the correlation typical of residents of Warsaw between the duration of trips and the residents' gender. Men were twice as likely to go on trips for ≥10 days. It is also commonly known that men are more active tourists [25, 26]. According to Biernat [27] and Lubowiecki-Vikuk [6], single men also tend to consume tourism services more than single women. However, it is hard to pinpoint a specific reason for this state of affairs. It is very probable that shorter trips are chosen by single women because of their predilection for one of the forms of health tourism, i.e. spa and wellness [28]. Nevertheless, a comprehensive analysis of leisure time behaviors of single people is necessary to answer this question.

In summary, the participation of urban singles in long-term travel is a reflection of today's trends in the market of tourist services. However, the present research showed that people included in a social category depending on gender, education and income also take part in weekend tourism, though to a smaller extent. This is crucial in the quest to satisfy the tourist desires of contemporary consumers of leisure services.

Conclusions

One of the characteristics of urban single people is their heterogeneity. Building a model of tourist behavior of this market segment based only on socio-demographic factors is neither complete nor fully justified. Broader knowledge related to these issues will contribute to a better understanding and meeting the travel needs of singles.

It is recommended that empirical studies be extended to smaller territorial units, especially rural areas. The research requires not only a proper sampling of single people (which is an extremely difficult task), but above all, an interdisciplinary scientific approach. On the basis of physical culture sciences, a researcher is not fully equipped to perform a comprehensive analysis of the leisure time behavior of single people. Therefore, cooperation with academics of social sciences, especially psychology, sociology, economics and education, is advisable.

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