

CONDITIONS AND POSSIBILITIES OF UNDERTAKING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN THE “BESKIDZKA 5” TOURISM CLUSTER

*Wojciech Chudy, The Jerzy Kukuczka Academy of Physical
Education in Katowice*

Valeri Krutikov, Tsiolkovsky Kaluga State University

SUMMARY

The content of reports is summarized part of the doctoral thesis, incurred as a result of years of research of the author. The study was conducted in the field of physical activity of the society carried out in specific geo-spatial boundaries which is called the tourist cluster “Beskidzka 5”. For these reasons, the “Beskidzka 5” tourism micro-region is an appropriate area for measurement, analysis and evaluation of possibilities of undertaking physical activities. Thus, the subject matter of this thesis results on one hand from the need to develop all aspects of physical activity in order to promote active attitude towards exercises in everyday life, and on the other hand - from the need to define the role of the tourism cluster in strengthening of physically proactive attitudes. Analysis of empirical material gathered as a result of the study confirmed that the spatial diversity of the infrastructure makes the existing possibilities of undertaking physical activity in the area of the “Beskidzka 5” cluster complementary to each other and act together as highly attractive tourist product of the discussed area.

Keywords: tourism cluster, physical activity, “Beskidzka 5”

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INTRODUCTION

The thesis discusses conditions and possibilities of undertaking physical activity in the “Beskidzka 5” tourism cluster. This subject for analysis and evaluation was selected in the context of the possibilities to undertake physical activity in the tourism cluster, and the case study includes five municipalities of the Silesian province, called “Beskidzka 5”, considered as a tourism cluster and a tourism micro-region.

The need to discuss this matter stems from issues caused by modern, health adverse model of human life. As a result of civilisation changes, societies in the multitude of daily duties, limit physical activity and have less and less physically active lifestyles. At the same time, however, there are observed some health

supporting trends, which direct attention of some parts of the society to correct “healthy” food and authentic physical activity. There is observed increasing openness of the society to satisfy the natural physiological needs of humans and conscious attention to physical fitness. This supports higher willingness to being exposed to various forms of physical activity undertaken in spare time (Chudy-Hyski, 2014) either after work and school, or during tourist trips, which are a kind of variation from daily routine and induce physically active behaviours.

METHODS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For the purposes of the analysis there was selected the “Beskidzka 5” area, which is the tourism micro-region emerged from voluntary initiative of five municipalities: Brenna, Istebna, Szczyrk, Ustroń and Wisła. From the physical activity point of view, “Beskidzka 5” allows staying active during leisure time, which results from variety of natural constituent of municipalities and their innovative organizational structure. The “Beskidzka 5” micro-region along with its technical and social infrastructure; its tourist, anthropogenic and natural advantages; tourism, recreation and sports development and local political entities operating on its territory, is an example of a tourism cluster. Such a cluster is characterized by concentration of tourist traffic as well as participating individuals pursuing physical activity, entities it consists of, its advantages and its infrastructure, all interconnected to support development of tourism and recreation and to promote sports. To all its participants the cluster offers a joint offer taking the form of a tourist product. It is an innovative approach to the development of tourism, which creates conditions for doing physical activity in a different way than before. Now this activity becomes comprehensive, complementary and mutually integrated. A tourist is given a comprehensive, but diverse opportunities to take physical activity.

For these reasons, the “Beskidzka 5” tourism micro-region is an appropriate area for measurement, analysis and evaluation of possibilities of undertaking physical activities.

Thus, the subject matter of this thesis results on one hand from the need to develop all aspects of physical activity in order to promote active attitude towards exercises in everyday life, and on the other hand - from the need to define the role of the tourism cluster in strengthening of physically proactive attitudes.

The range of problems arising from scarcity or lack of physical activity in human life, the consequence of which appear to be modern diseases of the ci-

vilization, requires a methodical approach and development of physical activity models for those undertaking this activity (Drabik, 1995, 19–21). Solving of the problem by spatial location of the study in the area of tourism cluster allows to identify trends of physical activity development and to determine conditions under which this activity is undertaken. This is an innovation, as it takes into account an innovative approach to exercises by offering a specific tourist product which is shaped in the organizational system of actors participating in the tourist network, i. e. in the cluster which has not been known in Poland so far.

In human life physical activity is essential in improving their fitness, and some aspects of the activity affect functioning of many businesses. Therefore, this issue can also be seen from the point of view of local economy, and how it affects sport. tourism and recreation service providers, as consumer spending of people pursuing physical activity are for them a source of income. There are also benefits for employers, because fitter people usually demonstrate relatively higher productivity. Without concerted actions undertaken by the tourism cluster actors in both the economic and political domain the conditions allowing to increase the number of possibilities to undertake physical activity will not be met (EU Physical Activity, 2008).

The main objective of the thesis is to evaluate possibilities of undertaking selected forms of physical activity by tourists, taking into account existing conditions for being active. This thesis is also to develop models and identify attitudes in this regard in the area of the “Beskidzka 5” tourism cluster.

The spatial range of the thesis is the area of the five municipalities that jointly implement the initiative under the name of “Beskidzka 5”. These are the municipalities of: Brenna, Istebna, Ustroń, Wisła (Cieszyn county) and Szczyrk (Bielsko-Biała county) – all located within the administrative boundaries of the Silesian province. The former two of these are rural communes, while the others are urban ones. For the purposes of the thesis the municipalities participating in the cluster form the spatially smallest research unit.

In such defined study area the scope of the analysis deals with the problem of possibilities of undertaking physical activity in the tourism cluster. This is a complex issue, as it takes into account diverse nature of physical activity, resulting from different forms of activity like sport, tourism and recreation activity.

As a research tool to evaluate possibilities of undertaking physical activity there was used a questionnaire. This was the methodology used to test respondents pursuing physical activity in the “Beskidzka 5” tourism cluster. Moreover, the data obtained from the municipalities forming the cluster was used to assess

the determinants and directions of development of physical activity in the cluster.

Different research methods were applied to achieve the objectives of the study. With respect to the cognitive goal of the thesis, descriptive and qualitative analysis was particularly applied as a study instrument. This analysis allowed to identify determinants of physical activity in the tourism cluster.

The thesis consists of four chapters, an introduction and conclusions. The first chapter covers issues of physical activity, taking into account recreational physical activity. The second chapter identifies external and internal determinants of recreational physical activity development. The third chapter presents selected theoretical aspects of the cluster concept, taking into account the specific example of the tourism cluster and characterises the “Beskidzka 5” tourism cluster which is the subject of the thesis. The empirical part of the thesis is included in chapter four, which analyses the study population by its preferred and undertaken forms of physical activity and assesses the existing conditions in the “Beskidzka 5” tourism cluster. To develop a typology of tourists visiting the analysed area in that chapter there was applied the author’s methodology.

The thesis is supported by a variety of domestic and international references on physical activity, the economics of tourism, the economics of the region as well as the social and economic policy with particular emphasis on tourism policy.

Within the study subject matter covering conditions and possibilities of undertaking physical activity in the area of the “Beskidzka 5” tourism cluster there was interpreted the concept of physical activity with particular emphasis on individual forms and ranges of undertaking the activity.

Physical activity is usually defined as “any form of body movement caused by muscle contractions when energy expenditure exceeds energy levels at rest” (EU Physical activity, 2005; Gruszkowska, 2005, 11; Muszkieta, Napierała, 2011, 156). This broad definition and many other definitions indicate that physical activity includes all forms of exercises such as recreational physical activity (including recreational and sport forms of activity or even dancing), professional sport, home physical activity (individual or group recreational activities undertaken during a day) and out-of-home activity (tourist physical activity undertaken outside the place of residence during stays longer than 24 hours) (Kozłowski, Nazar, 1995, 80–120; Caspersen, Powell, Christenson, 1985, 100–121).

Any physical activity of humans is determined by various abilities of each individual and existing conditions (exogenous and endogenous) (Bouchard, Shephard, 75–90).

Human activity, health and lifestyle are interrelated. The human body was designed to move, hence it requires regular physical activity to be able to operate efficiently. It has been proven that a sedentary lifestyle is a risk factor for development of many chronic diseases, including cardiovascular diseases, which are the main cause of death (Hyski, 2014). In contrast, active lifestyle brings many social and psychological benefits, and there is a direct relationship between physical activity and life expectancy indicating that physically active populations tend to live longer than inactive populations. People with a sedentary lifestyle after intensifying their physical activity report better physical and psychological condition and have higher life satisfaction level.

There is evidence that anyone who increases their level of physical activity, even after long periods of inactivity, can achieve health benefits regardless of age. Thus, the European Union suggested its Member States to develop national plans supporting physical activity in order to stimulate change of unhealthy habits and promote awareness of health benefits of physical activity. These plans should take into account the environment, habits and cultural conditions of each country. The study subject perfectly fits into the current program framework of the European Union and becomes potentially interesting for the society and business.

CONCLUSION

As a result of analysing conditions for undertaking physical activity in the “Beskidzka 5” tourism cluster there were developed cognitive conclusions and conclusions for application. Summarising the study results it can be concluded that the known conditions and the scope of undertaken forms of physical activity create specific opportunities to determine possible directions for development of the discussed area. The study results confirmed the notion that innovative organizational form such as the tourist cluster, and its subjective and spatial structure, as well as its infrastructure development contribute significantly to the development and diversification of the possibilities of undertaking physical activity.

In order to achieve the intended objective of discovering physical activity determinants in the tourist cluster in cross-genre (including some forms of physical

activity) and spatial (including the area of the municipalities forming the tourism micro-region) approach there was analysed the literature and own research results (surveying of tourists). Analysis of empirical material gathered as a result of the study confirmed that the spatial diversity of the infrastructure makes the existing possibilities of undertaking physical activity in the area of the “Beskidzka 5” cluster complementary to each other and act together as highly attractive tourist product of the discussed area. The observed diversity of the area in terms of infrastructure development, on the one hand allows to offer a tourist product to people even significantly different in terms of the preferred forms of physical activity, and on the other hand, it creates the possibility of a comprehensive physical development for those interested in a comprehensive undertaking of various forms of physical activity and using of various advantages and tools offered by the cluster. Indicated benefits cannot be offered by a uniform area the development of which is not properly diversified to meet expectations and needs of fans of various specific forms of physical activity.

As a conclusion, it may be indicated that the diverse potential of the municipalities forming “Beskidzka 5” and developed models of tourists (visitors) should form the basis for region development policy suitable for the observed trends and market preferences.

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FIZINIO AKTYVUMO „BESKIDZKA 5“ TURIZMO KLASTERYJE SĄLYGOS IR GALIMYBĖS

Wojciech Chudy, Valerij Krutikov

Santrauka

Straipsnyje apibendrinti autorių fizinio aktyvumo tyrimai, kurie buvo atlikti turizmo klasteryje „Beskidzka 5“. Šis turizmo klasteris – tai mikrogeografinis regionas, tinkamas atlikti fizinio aktyvumo vertinimo ir matavimo tyrimus. Tyrimu siekta skatinti ir propaguoti pozityvų požiūrį į fizinį aktyvumą gyvenime, parodyti turizmo klasterio galimybes tai pasiekti. Tyrimo rezultatai ir gauti empiriniai duomenys bei jų analizė parodė, kad turizmo klasterio „Beskidzka 5“ esanti infrastruktūros įvairovė yra patrauklus turizmo produktas plėtoti įvairialypes žmogaus fizinio aktyvumo galimybes.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: turizmo klasteris, fizinis aktyvumas, „Beskidzka 5“