

TOURISM OFFER MANAGEMENT INFLUENCE ON VISITORS' PERCEPTION IN MAŁOPOLSKA

Krzysztof BORKOWSKI¹, Marek ŁABAJ², Liliana KOWALCZYK³, Leszek MAZANEK⁴, Anna OLEKSA-KAŻMIERCZAK^{5*}

¹ The University College of Tourism and Ecology in Sucha Beskidzka; krzysztof.borkowski@wste.edu.pl, ORCID: 0000-0001-8122-525X

² The University College of Tourism and Ecology in Sucha Beskidzka; szkola@wste.edu.pl, ORCID: 0000-0003-0388-4334

³ The University of Physical Education in Krakow; liliana.kowalczyk@awf.krakow.pl, ORCID: 0009-0001-2842-8557

⁴ The University of Physical Education in Krakow; leszek.mazanek@awf.krakow.pl, ORCID: 0000-0003-2231-4089

⁵ The University College of Tourism and Ecology in Sucha Beskidzka; abk@wste.edu.pl, ORCID: 0000-0003-1847-7897

* Correspondence author

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to assess how the quality and structure of tourism management in the Małopolska region influence its evaluation by domestic and international tourists. The research aims to identify key elements of the tourism offer that shape destination perception and satisfaction, as well as to propose a method for objective measurement of destination image using synthetic indicators such as WAED (Element Attractiveness Indicator) and ZWAD (Integrated Destination Attractiveness Index).

Design/methodology/approach: The study is based on a large-scale quantitative survey conducted among 5,278 domestic and international tourists visiting the Małopolska region in 2024. Data were collected through direct interviews using electronic questionnaires. The research utilized Likert-scale evaluations of 30 elements of the tourism offer, enabling the calculation of WAED and the aggregated ZWAD.

Findings: The research revealed a generally high level of satisfaction among both domestic and international tourists regarding the tourism offer in Małopolska. The highest-rated elements included tourist information, gastronomy, and hospitality. The ZWAD index reached 4.39 overall, indicating a very positive perception of the region. Differences between domestic and international tourists were minor, with both groups consistently rating the destination favorably.

Originality/value: This study introduces a structured, indicator-based method (WAED and ZWAD) for assessing destination attractiveness from the tourist's perspective. It provides a unique empirical insight into the perception of regional tourism management in post-pandemic conditions and supports decision-makers in identifying areas for improvement and strategic planning.

Keywords: destination attractiveness, tourist satisfaction, Małopolska region, tourism offer evaluation, integrated tourism indicators.

Category of the paper: Research paper.

1. Introduction

Among the many types of tourism products, ORT (area of tourist reception = destination) is mentioned as a type of tourism product. Such a product is synergistic, i.e. that the interaction of the individual components of a place is more effective than the sum of their separate actions - so cooperation and care for the place is extremely important. It contributes to the creation of different types of tourism space.

The authors present in this article a method of assessing the level of management of a destination from the point of view of its users (tourists), which helps, on the one hand, to solve the problem of objectivising the image of a travel destination and, on the other hand, allows destination managers to take corrective action in selected areas - elements of the region's offer. Creating a true image of a destination is important for both stakeholders.

2. Research methodology

2.1. Research subject

The subjects of the research were domestic tourists (4,564 in number) and foreign tourists (711 in number) visiting Małopolska in the year 2024.

Considering the specificity of the (post-pandemic) year 2024 (as in previous years), a research sample of 5500-5000 questionnaires was used. The actual number of questionnaires analysed in 2024 was 5278 (Table 1 and 2). With a population of $N = 13$ million and a fraction estimate of $f = 0.5$, this implies an error of 1.5% with a confidence level of 95%.

Table 1.

Structure of the 2024 sample - percentage structure and in real numbers

Specification	%	Specification	N
Country	91,6%	Country	4564
Abroad	8,3%	Abroad	711
No data available	0,1%	No data available	3
Total	100,0%	Total	5278

Source: own study.

Table 2.

Age - percentage structure

Age	2024
up to 19	5,6%
20-29	30,6%
30-44	39,6%
45-60	18,7%
over 60	5,5%
Final total	100,0%

Source: own study.

The system adopted in the study for collecting data characterising the opinion of tourists staying in Małopolska was based on the method of direct interviews using tablets, with the help of which questionnaires were filled in electronically. It was assumed that a minimum of 5000 questionnaires would be obtained. This volume of survey data ensures an estimation error of no more than 1.5%, at a confidence level of 95%, for the current size of tourist traffic.

The survey covered visitors to Małopolska, defined in the UNWTO statistical recommendations as tourists (using at least one overnight stay) and one-day visitors who came for the following purposes: cognitive, leisure, professional, religious, family, health and other.

Survey time: The surveys were conducted between mid-June and the end of September 2024 according to the accepted distribution of sampling sites during each month. Nearly 5300 questionnaires were taken in 2024, but after initial verification of the correctness and completeness of the collected data, 5278 questionnaires were submitted to the database. The small number of rejected questionnaires testifies positively to the work of the interviewers.

2.2. Research area

The study area was Małopolska voivodeship (Table 3).

Table 3.

A list of the locations of the sampling sites and the number of questionnaires collected at each site and facility

No.	Location	N	%
1.	Zakopane – Krupówki/entry to Gubałówka	399	7,56%
2.	Chochółów – thermal baths/entry to Chochółowska Valley	355	6,73%
3.	Białka Tatrzańska – geothermal pools	354	6,71%
4.	Zawoja – entry to trails/Babiogórski National Park	340	6,44%
5.	Nowy Targ – entrance to trails e.g. Kowaniec - Turbacz and Gorce trails	330	6,25%
6.	Rabka-Zdrój – Pump Room/spa park/hiking trails	321	6,08%
7.	Kraków – Main Market Square	298	5,65%
8.	Kraków – Balice Airport	296	5,61%
9.	Zakopane – by the route and PKL cableway to Kasprowy Wierch/by the route to Morskie Oko (e.g. at the car park)	281	5,32%
10.	Wieliczka – Salt Mine	261	4,95%
11.	Gródek nad Dunajcem – Lake Rożnowskie	254	4,81%
12.	Niedzica/Czorsztyn – castle/barrage	248	4,70%
13.	Tarnów - town or Ciężkowice – Skamieniałe Miasto (Petrified City)	242	4,59%
14.	Ojców - entrance to Ojców National Park / town (optionally castle in Pieskowa Skała) /Kraków Dolinki Landscape Park	224	4,24%
15.	Krynica-Zdrój – town/ Pump room/ Ski station – by the viewing tower	200	3,79%
16.	Szczawnica – town/ Pump room/ cable car to Palenica/ end of rafting trip	190	3,60%
17.	Inwałd Park	186	3,52%
18.	Zator – Energylandia/parking lot at McDonald's/Zatorland	171	3,24%
19.	Olkusz – Błędowska Desert	170	3,22%
20.	Oświęcim – Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum	158	2,99%
	Total	5278	100,0%

Source: own study.

In total research were done in 20 locations. Locations were chosen based on their attractiveness and popularity. The choice of the location guaranteed differentiated and numerous research group.

2.3. A problem in the literature

In Małopolska such research (Borkowski, 2000) has been conducted since 2003 by the Intercollegiate Team of Experts of the Małopolska Tourist Organisation, consisting of: Krzysztof Borkowski, Tadeusz Grabiński, Renata Seweryn, Bożena Alejziak, Ewa Grabińska, Leszek Mazanek.

The similar research was conducted among 463 foreign tourists visiting Poland in 2014-2015 by Ghose and Johann. Their article explores how specific tour-package components and destination features influence tourist satisfaction and recommendations. Ghose and Johann show that well-organized tours (itinerary attractiveness, trip organization, guide service) and destination attributes (cultural attractions, monuments, safety) significantly boost visitor satisfaction and the likelihood of recommending the destination (Ghose, Johann, 2019).

This kind of research are also being done in other countries than Poland. For example, Johann and Anastassova analyzed how Polish package-holiday travelers perceive the quality of Bulgarian tourism offerings and how this relates to their satisfaction. Based on data from 1212 Polish tourists (2010-2013) in 14 seaside resorts, the study evaluates hotel attributes and finds Bulgarian hotels offer a competitive price–quality value that meets Polish tourists' expectations, contributing to overall trip satisfaction (Johann, Anastassova, 2014)

Using a survey (2012-2013) with 14 satisfaction indicators, Della Corte, Sciarrelli, Cascella, and Del Gaudio identified how destination attributes and services affect overall satisfaction and loyalty. Tourists in Naples were found not completely satisfied, revealing weaknesses in the tourism offer and the need for improved destination management (Della Corte et al., 2015).

Gargano and Grasso investigated tourist satisfaction and loyalty in a network of heritage villages in Sicily. Using an ordered logit model, they found visitor characteristics (e.g. age, country of origin) and services used significantly affect overall satisfaction. Moreover, satisfaction with specific aspects: local cuisine, trip price, and historical scenery has the strongest influence on tourists' intention to return (Gargano, Grasso, 2016).

An interesting finding were presented by Jimber del Río, Orgaz Agüera, Moral Cuadra and Cañero Morales, Focusing in their study on a cross-border tourism region of Dominican Republic and Haiti border. This study uses structural equation modelling to link tourists' attitudes, perceived value, satisfaction, and loyalty. Examining visitors on the Dominican Republic–Haiti border, the authors demonstrated that a positive attitude toward the border destination and high perceived value lead to greater satisfaction, which in turn fosters stronger loyalty represented through tourists' revisit intentions (Jimber del Río et al., 2017).

2.4. Research questions

Do the assessments of the 21 elements influencing the quality and management of tourism in Małopolska converge or differ in the opinions of the domestic and foreign tourist populations visiting the region? What is the reason for the differences in assessment by domestic and foreign tourists?

2.5. Research techniques

Visitors evaluating the tourism offer of Małopolska in 2024 used a five-point rating scale. Respondents rated individual elements of the destination as an area tourist product on a rank scale (on a Likert scale) from 1 to 5, where 1 meant status - 'very bad', 2 - 'bad', 3 - 'sufficient', 4 - 'good' and 5 - 'very good'. Using this scale, the subjective feeling of attractiveness of a destination in the opinion of tourists visiting Małopolska was measured, subject to further analysis. 'Using the Likert scale allows researchers to detect even relatively subtle differences in the attitudes surveyed. The advantage of this scale over simple scales is also evident in the fact that the individual items on the scale are not able to significantly influence the final result of the measurement. The items are meant to balance each other, given the constructed scale, whereas the particular properties of a simple scale can have a major impact on the conclusions drawn from the research' (Tarka, 2015, p. 287). The 30 selected components of the province's tourism product were assessed, obtaining a score for each element which was labelled 'WAED'- Destination Element Attractiveness Index. The results of the survey are presented in tabular statements with a division between domestic and international visitors introduced. The sum of the 'WAED' - Destination Element Attractiveness Indicators gives a complete indicator marked in the article as 'ZWAD' - Integrated Destination Attractiveness Index allowing to synthesise in an objectified way the image of a destination taken home by visitors. With a sample of more than 5000 respondents, borderline values of (minimum) 1.0 as well as (maximum) 5.0 are practically unattainable, so a score as close as 4.0-4.5 should already be considered very favourable for the managers of the analysed area. When interpreting the tables, it should be noted that a value of 3.0 is the inflection point of the scale and all scores above 3.0 are positive.

Given the specificity of the (post-pandemic) year 2024 (as in previous years), a survey sample of 5500-5000 surveys was used.

3. Results

The results of the study are presented in the form of graphs.

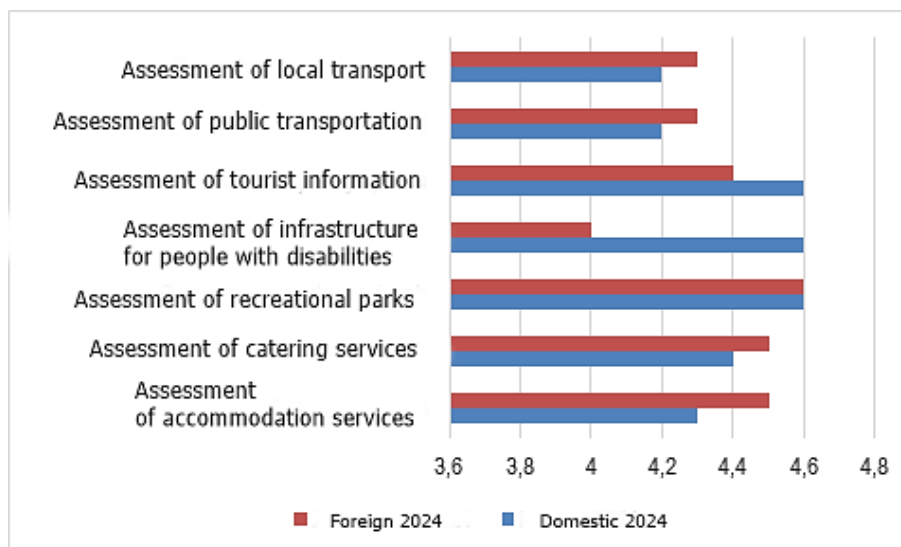


Figure 1. Opinions on tourism infrastructure in Lesser Poland voivodship.

Source: own elaboration based on survey.

The research shows that both domestic and foreign tourists rate the tourist infrastructure of Małopolska highly - with foreign tourists being slightly more enthusiastic. The regional catering facilities and the availability of tourist information received the highest marks, while the infrastructure for people with disabilities needs to be improved. Domestic tourists seem to have slightly lower expectations of local standards, but are generally positive about transport, public transport and recreational parks.

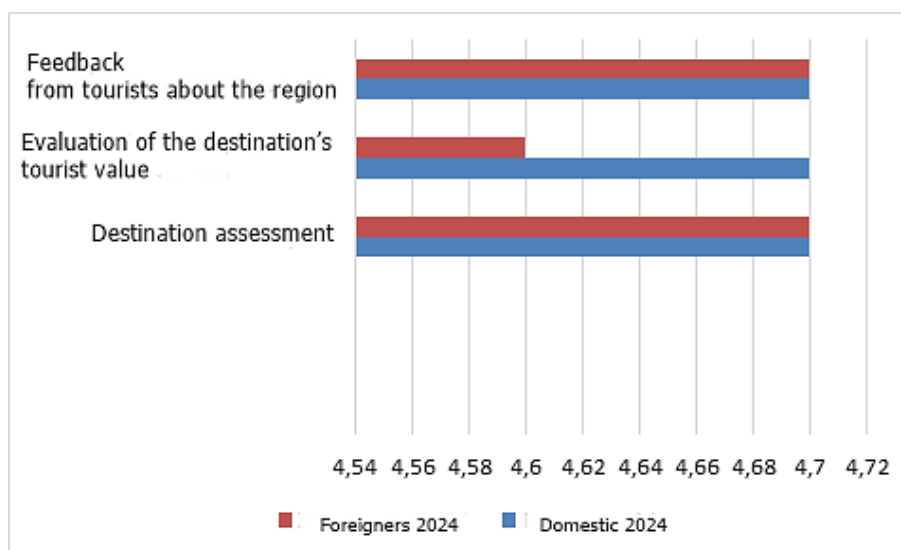


Figure 2. Tourists' opinions about the region.

Source: own elaboration based on survey.

The chart shows that both domestic and foreign tourists rate the region and its tourist attractions quite highly. All categories analysed scored above 4.5 on a five-point scale, indicating high satisfaction among respondents. Domestic tourists show slightly higher ratings (between 4.6 and 4.7), especially when it comes to tourist values and their overall opinion of the region. Foreign tourists perceive the region very similarly, although their ratings in some aspects (e.g. evaluation of a specific place) are marginally lower. However, the differences are not significant, which indicates a fairly consistent, positive impression of Małopolska on visitors from Poland and other countries.

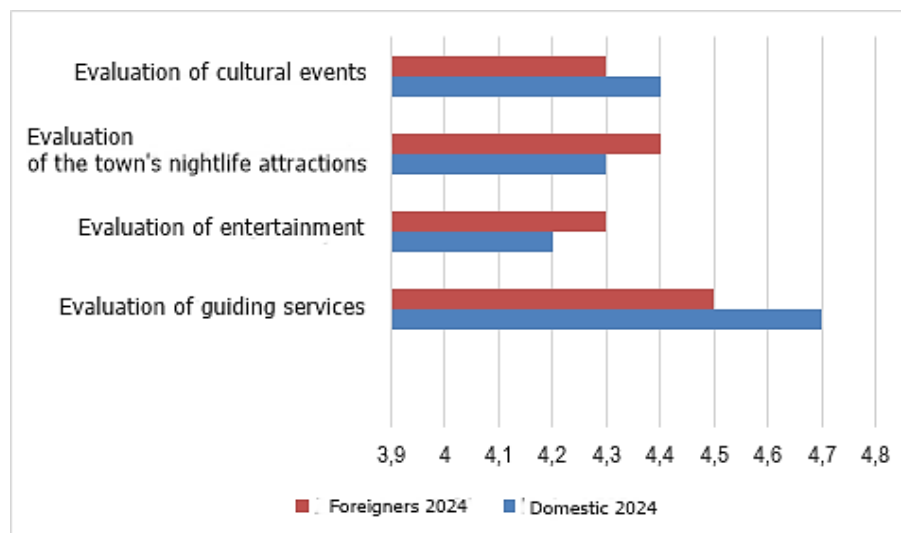


Figure 3. Tourists' opinions about services in Lesser Poland voivodship.

Source: own elaboration based on survey.

The chart shows that in 2024 both domestic and foreign tourists rate services in Małopolska highly. Cultural events and guide services received the best marks, with little difference between the groups. In the case of nightlife attractions, foreign tourists gave higher marks. All categories were rated good or very good, indicating the high quality of services in the region.

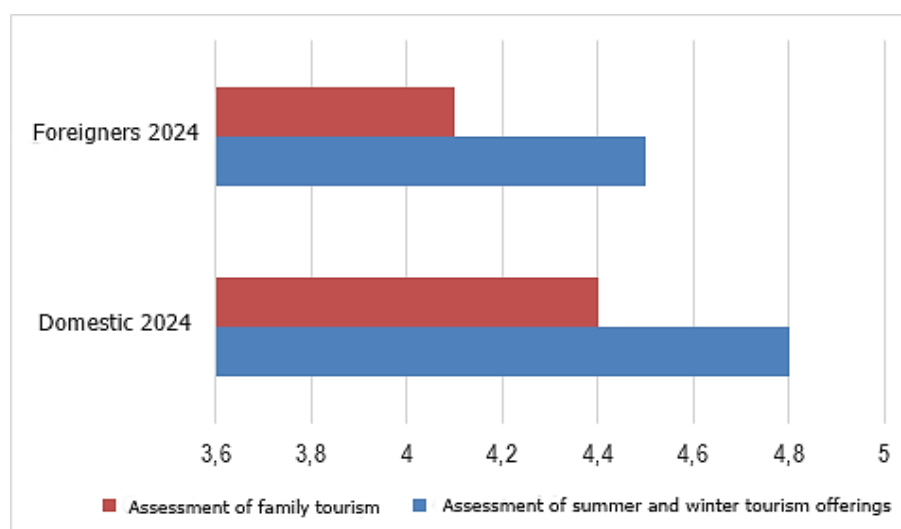


Figure 4. Tourists' opinions on forms of tourism in the Małopolskie Voivodeship.

Source: own elaboration based on survey.

The chart presented shows that domestic tourists rate both the family tourism offer and the summer and winter tourism offer in the Lesser Poland Voivodeship slightly higher. This may reflect their greater familiarity with local attractions and infrastructures adapted to the needs of families. Foreign tourists also rate all forms of tourism quite highly, paying particular attention to the picturesque landscapes and cultural richness of the region. However, the differences between the ratings are not significant, which confirms that Małopolska is able to attract diverse audiences and meet their expectations all year round.

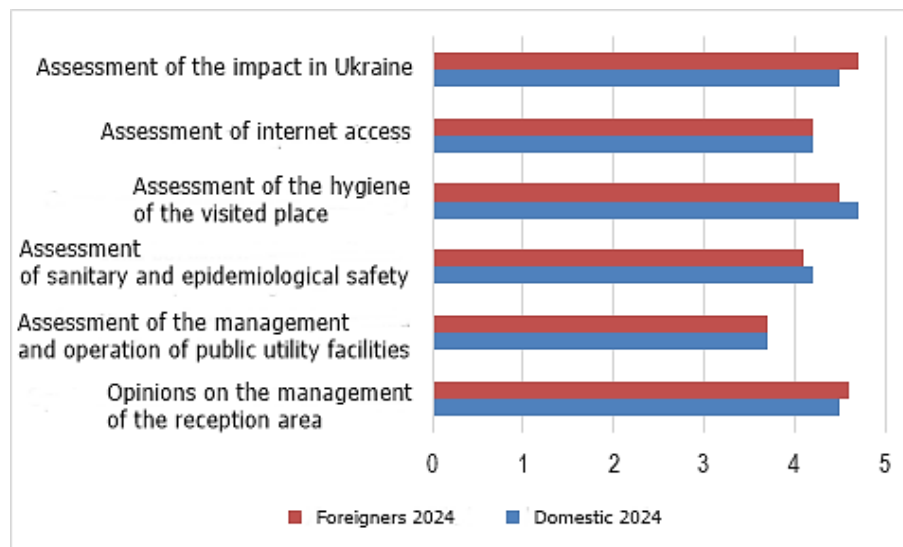


Figure 5. Tourists' opinions on the management of the reception site.

Source: own elaboration based on survey.

As the chart shows, both domestic and international tourists are satisfied with the with the management of the reception venue, especially in terms of internet access, sanitary safety and hygiene maintenance. Although guests note some impact of the geopolitical situation (war in Ukraine) on the operation of the venue, this does not significantly affect their overall rating. Internet access is rated at a satisfactory level and the high standard of hygiene maintenance is met with positive feedback, with domestic tourists giving slightly higher marks here. Sanitary and epidemiological procedures are also recognised by both groups, and the overall organisation and registration process are rated very well. In summary, despite the noticeable influence of external factors, the management of the reception site is held in high regard (Table 6).

Table 6.

Overall opinion Integrated Destination Attractiveness Index

Małopolska 2024	ZWAD Integrated Destination Attractiveness Index
Total – visitors	4,39
Domestic visitors	4,41
Foreign visitors	4,37

Source: own elaboration based on survey.

The overall opinions of the groups of the respondents, both domestic (4,41) and foreign (4,37) visitors are high. The total ZWAD Integrated Destination Attractiveness Index of visitors is 4,39.

4. Discussion

4.1. Opinions on the tourist infrastructure of Małopolska

4.1.1. Evaluation of accommodation services

Accommodation services that condition tourists' stay in the region are invariably a strong point of the tourist offer in Małopolska. In 2024, accommodation facilities were rated by domestic tourists at 4.29. The opinion of foreign tourists on this segment of services was even more positive than that of domestic tourists, as shown by the rating of 4.52. It should be noted that the facilities are very diverse in terms of type and category - from five-star hotels to agrotourism facilities. Thus, the opinion expressed in the assessment about the accommodation base, including its availability and range of services, deserves recognition and demonstrates the full acceptance of this offer by tourists.

4.1.2. Evaluation of catering services

Catering establishments and services are high on the list of the main tourist attractions of visited places and destinations. The catering offer in 2024 was appreciated by domestic visitors, who gave a rating of 4.42, and it was another consecutive year with such a high rating. Catering services were even more highly appreciated by foreign guests, reflected in a rating of 4.53. In both groups surveyed, these ratings are higher than the six-year average. It is worth noting that both groups of visitors expressed approval of the region's catering offer. This confirms that gastronomy is a very strong point in the tourist offer of Małopolska. Meeting the needs of guests, who are increasingly diverse in terms of their requirements and financial capabilities, is a major challenge for service providers. The results in the following year's survey show that the offer is being appropriately modified and adapted to meet expectations and plays a significant role in the process of promoting the region.

4.1.3. Assessment of leisure parks

In the developing tourist infrastructure of Małopolska, the offer of family amusement parks and thermal pools is very dynamic. Family trips in search of active forms of spending time together encourage the use of such forms of leisure and fun. How important this is as an element of the region's comprehensive tourist offer is illustrated by visitors' declarations regarding their main purpose of coming to Małopolska. In 2024 11% of domestic visitors surveyed indicated that this was the main purpose of their visit. Only leisure in the broadest sense was indicated more often. The offer of thermal pools used by domestic visitors, regardless of whether this was

the main or one of the purposes of their visit, was rated at 4.69. In this group of respondents, family amusement parks were slightly less popular. These facilities were the main purpose of visit for more than 6% of domestic visitors. The services on offer in the region were given a rating of 4.60. For foreign visitors, these forms of leisure and entertainment were not the priority purpose of their visit. No less than 3% declared that family amusement parks were the main purpose of their visit. Foreign visitors who visited family amusement parks gave a rating of 4.58. The rich offer of complexes and thermal pools also gained the visitors' approval and was rated at 4.50. The interest in family amusement parks and thermal pools and the highly rated offer underline the attractiveness of these complexes and their position on the tourist map of the region.

4.1.4. Evaluation of infrastructure for the disabled

Facilities for disabled travellers are a requirement of modern urban and architectural design. They are mandatorily introduced in hotel facilities, but may not be present in other accommodation facilities, where there is no obligation to introduce such solutions. Systematically introduced in public facilities, including tourist facilities, on footpaths, means of transport, service establishments, however, they are not yet a common element of tourist infrastructure. This important element of the perception of the place visited and, above all, conditioning the accessibility of places, localities or regions is being assessed by visitors. In 2024, facilities and amenities that condition people with disabilities to use the tourist offer were very well received by domestic visitors, with a score of 4.57. Such a positive perception has not been recorded in previous surveys. Foreign visitors also gave good marks to accessibility and facilities for people with disabilities, with a score of 3.99. However, given the ageing population, with the simultaneous growing need to participate in tourism, it is a necessity and duty to continuously improve all kinds of solutions conditioning accessibility for all social groups.

4.1.5. Evaluation of tourist information

The ability to take advantage of the region's tourist offer depends to a large extent on the level of tourist information and signposting facilitating access to attractions. In 2024, visitors using the services of tourist information points in Małopolska, through their rating, admitted that both access to information and the message itself met their expectations. Domestic visitors' approval was expressed in a score of 4.62, and this was the highest rating given to the information in the entire period analysed. The opinion of foreign guests about this sphere of services was also very positive, at 4.42. Maintaining a good level of the tourist information network in the region is to be commended and is the result of cooperation between regional authorities and local authorities and tourist organisations involved in the promotion of their sub-regions. Tourist information is closely linked to tourist signage, which facilitates access to tourist areas and attractions, co-creating an integrated information system. According to visitors, tourist signage also fulfilled its function, which was reflected in the high ratings given. Domestic visitors gave a rating of 4.58, which is at the level of the tourist information rating,

and foreign visitors gave a rating of 4.43. This group of respondents had not given such a high rating to signage and tourist information in previous surveys.

4.1.6. Public transport evaluation

Public transport stations: bus, train and airline stations are part of the region's assessed offer, as well as a showcase for cities and towns. In reaching the destinations visited, the organisation and service of passengers is of great importance to travellers. In 2024, all these facilities and amenities were positively evaluated by visitors. Bus stations were rated 4.0 by domestic visitors and 4.11 by foreign visitors, while the airport terminal was rated 4.18 by domestic visitors and 4.43 by foreign visitors. Only in the case of the evaluation of railway stations in Małopolska by domestic visitors was the rating lower than good and amounted to 3.95, foreign travellers were far less critical and gave a high rating of 4.42. The development of air transport, the increase in rail links and the growing interest in public transport services mean that the efficiency of services offered by railway stations/terminals will play an increasingly important role in the comprehensive tourist offer of the region.

4.1.7. Evaluation of local transport

The organisation of local transport significantly determines the accessibility of services and tourist attractions of cities, towns and the region as a whole. In 2024, domestic visitors, as in the previous year, expressed satisfaction with the local transport offer by giving a rating of 4.15. Foreign visitors' rating was even higher at 4.31. Taxi companies are also an element of local transport. The collected opinions allow us to conclude that the level of public and private transport services enabling visitors to reach their destinations and to move around within the towns and cities of the region meets the expectations of visitors to Małopolska. Access to attractions is also facilitated by parking spaces and car parks. Visitors using their own transport rated the access and level of these services. This element of tourist development and a component of the tourist offer received a score of 4.12 given by domestic visitors. Foreign visitors were more critical and rated the services offered at 3.88. This rating, although expressing full acceptance, is one of the lowest given to individual components of the region's tourist offer.

4.2. Opinion of the region

4.2.1. Place evaluation

The evaluation of a visited place is significantly influenced by the set of values referred to as the atmosphere of the place (*genius loci*) (Borkowski, Seweryn, Grabińska, 2017), a specific feature constituting its individuality, which mainly consists of widely understood historical material values and contemporary solutions and facilities characterised as tourist attractions, as well as intangible, social values expressed in the activity, hospitality and friendliness of the inhabitants. This unique element of the tourist offer invariably inspires appreciation from visitors to the region. In 2024, this was reflected in the rating of 4.73 given by domestic visitors

and 4.74 by foreign visitors. In both groups, the rating given was the highest in the entire period analysed.

4.2.2. Evaluation of tourism assets

Also, of importance in the positive perception of a visited place is the preservation of the right relationship between values, services provided and social relations. In 2024, domestic and foreign visitors, recognising the region as attractive, gave the same rating of 4.66. Also, complementary intangible values such as hospitality and friendliness of the inhabitants were appreciated by visitors, as reflected in the rating of 4.76 given by domestic visitors and 4.60 by foreign visitors. It should be noted that the region's promotion strategy focusing on cultural attractions and values is fully justified and yields positive results.

4.3. Service reviews

4.3.1. Evaluation of guide services

Visitors seeking support and enrichment of their knowledge of the region use the services of local guides, guiding at museums and sites or, in certain areas, mountain guides. In 2024, domestic visitors, like in the previous year, were satisfied with the work of guides with whom they got to know cities, towns or the region, rating their services at 4.70. Foreign visitors also had a very favourable view of the guides' work, giving a rating of 4.51. In both groups, opinions on the guides' work were higher than the average ratings obtained in the analysed period. Thus, the following research confirms that this professional group adequately reads tourists' needs and adapts to their expectations.

4.3.2. Evaluation of entertainment

The offer of the broadly defined entertainment industry significantly influences the way visitors spend their time and builds a positive image of tourist areas and destinations. In 2024, the opinion of domestic visitors on the form of entertainment provided by discos, pubs, clubs was reflected in a rating of – 4.18. In the current survey, they gave a higher rating than domestic visitors (4.31). It can be noted that opinions on entertainment services are generally positive, but the growing needs of tourists and increasing demands force them to constantly adapt their offer and take care of its level.

4.3.3. Assessment of night-time attractions

Due to the variation in the scope and form of the night-time entertainment offer, the research collected visitors' opinions on night-time attractions in a broad sense. Both domestic and foreign visitors rated night-time attractions higher than at other times of the day, giving a score of 4.34 and 4.38 respectively. However, it should not be overlooked that there is a growing problem that satisfaction with the night-time entertainment offer expressed by tourists is contradictory to the reception of this form of entertainment by local communities. In this area, it is important to monitor the phenomenon and develop solutions that satisfy both sides.

4.3.4. Evaluation of cultural events

Cultural events, music concerts or mass events are important elements that attract visitors and significantly influence the evaluation of a region's tourism offer. They are often the main destination. They shape visitors' opinions about the level of culture of a place or area. The aim of such events is to provide entertainment and to attract tourists and offer diverse cultural entertainment. In 2024, domestic visitors gave a rating of 4.36 and international visitors 4.28 and both ratings were higher than those given last year. This confirms that the cultural events on offer in Małopolska are prepared and conducted with a sense of the expectations of domestic and foreign audiences.

4.4. Opinions on tourist forms

4.4.1. Evaluation of summer and winter offer

In order to continuously improve the level of tourist attractiveness of the region, visitors opinions on the summer and winter tourist offer are solicited. Each successive year has seen an increase in positive opinions of domestic visitors about the region's summer offer. In 2024, the rating given is 4.80, which is the highest rating given by visitors to the region. The offer was also approved by foreign visitors, who gave it a rating of 4.49. It should be noted that when assessing the region's summer or winter offer, the surveyed visitors evaluate a wide range of different services included in these offers.

4.4.2. Assessment of family tourism

The region's diverse assets and attractions, extensive infrastructure, proper management and facilities for travellers with children, as well as the agritourism offer, are conducive to the development of family tourism. This form of recreation is used by 1/3 of visitors to Małopolska. It was positively received by domestic visitors, who gave it a rating of 4.35. Foreign visitors travelling with children also rated this sphere of services highly (4.12). The offer for family tourism occupies an important position in the offer of Małopolska service providers and meets the expectations of visitors. Family leisure is largely associated with the offer provided by agritourism farms. This very widespread and varied base covering comprehensive accommodation and food services, and guaranteeing a wide range of attractions and entertainment, was given a score of 4.71 by domestic visitors, and was once again one of the highest scores among all rated elements of the region's tourist offer. Foreign visitors, despite using the agritourism base less frequently, also rated the level of this offer highly, giving it a score of 4.28.

4.5. Opinions on the management of the reception site

4.5.1. Evaluation of the management of the place visited

An indicator of the level of culture and living conditions of a visited place or area is the organisation of the space, the order and cleanliness of the surroundings. These elements are easily observable and readily assessed by visitors. In 2024, the orderliness and cleanliness of

the surroundings in the visited places of Małopolska were noticed and highly rated by both domestic (4.50) and foreign visitors (4.60). This testifies to the continuing care for the surroundings by local authorities and residents themselves. However, regardless of the rating given by visitors, the statement that the cleanliness of cities, towns and areas significantly influences the opinion of the whole visited region remains valid.

4.5.2. Assessment of management and operation of public facilities

Important measures of the level of culture of the area visited also include the availability and functioning of public facilities, which include public toilets. These services in the assessed towns, places or facilities in Małopolska do not raise any objections from visitors, and their rating has remained at a similar level throughout the analysed period. Domestic visitors rated the access and cleanliness of these places at 3.68, and foreign visitors at 3.70. It can be seen that the pandemic's enforced responsibility for the sanitary condition of public places has had a positive impact on the quality of this sphere of services. At the same time, users are more sensitive and pay more attention to the observance of hygienic rules. While the sanitary condition of public toilets does not raise major concerns, the accessibility of these places is still not fully satisfactory.

4.5.3. Epidemic safety assessment

Awareness of epidemic risks is currently one of the most important aspects considered before choosing a destination. Therefore, the perception of safety in this respect in the visited place is very important. The sanitary safety component of Małopolska's tourist offer was rated at 4.20 by domestic visitors, with foreign guests giving a similar rating of 4.11. It is worth emphasising that visitors' positive perception of the level of cleanliness and hygiene of public places, which determines sanitary safety, may be an important component of promotional campaigns for the region.

4.5.4. Hygiene assessment of the place visited

The health-consciousness and growing ecological awareness of societies translates into travellers' perceptions of the quality of atmospheric air in the place visited. The opinion of visitors obtained in the surveys indicates that the quality of air in the visited towns and cities or areas of Małopolska raises no concerns. Domestic visitors gave a rating of 4.68, which is the highest rating they gave in the analysed period. Foreign visitors, who have so far had more reservations than domestic visitors, rated the air quality at 4.53. Such a positive opinion of visitors has not been recorded in previous surveys. This indicates that environmental cleanliness problems observed by local communities are not noticed by visitors to the region. The choice of places that are attractive in terms of nature and the short duration of their stay contribute to the high level of ratings. However, the statement that caring for the environment is one of the biggest challenges of any tourist destination remains valid.

4.5.5. Evaluation of Internet access

The comfort of tourists when travelling and staying in the places visited is influenced by access to the public Internet. Unquestionably, the developing Internet applications make it easier to navigate, obtain information and opinions about the places and services visited. Subsequent surveys showed that visitors found internet accessibility to be less of a problem. In 2024, domestic visitors gave this service a rating of 4.16. Foreign visitors rated Internet accessibility equally highly, with a rating of 4.24. It should be noted that Internet accessibility is currently treated not as a service, but as a natural part of the infrastructure of the place visited. Visitors' expectations of free access to the service are steadily increasing.

4.5.6. Assessing the impact of the war in Ukraine

The ongoing war in Ukraine and the persistent epidemiological threats have a very clear impact on tourists deciding where to go. Therefore, the visitors' opinion of safety in the place visited, which consequently contributes to an assessment of safety in Małopolska as a whole, is important in shaping the image of the region and promoting the places visited. It should therefore be clearly emphasised and publicised that visitors feel very safe during their stays in Małopolska, which is reflected in the rating of 4.46 given by domestic visitors. The level of safety in the visited place and region was rated even higher (4.66) by foreign visitors, who had more concerns before arriving in Małopolska than domestic travellers. It seems reasonable that such a good opinion, especially of foreign visitors, regarding safety must be used in the promotion of tourism.

5. Conclusions

Tourism infrastructure in the Małopolska Region and the issue of tourists' subjective assessment of tourism services has not yet been described and analysed in many articles. The research results presented above can in principle be referred to only one publication. However, Mazanek L., Borkowski K. and Kruczek Z. made a general evaluation of tourism services in the city of Kraków based on research conducted between 2010 and 2020 (Mazanek, Borkowski, Kruczek, 2021). The authors focused primarily on the overall perception of the urban destination by all respondents. The data presented in the aforementioned article showed that Kraków was rated by tourists as an attractive destination with a high level of tourism infrastructure until 2019 (a record pre-covid year). Relating this information to the results related to tourists' opinion of the entire Małopolska Voivodeship in the next record year 2024 (excluding the capital of the voivodeship), it should be noted that the region itself is also rated highly in terms of preparation and tourist attractiveness. In many cases these ratings are on an upward trend, so it can be concluded that Małopolska is constantly developing and adapting to new trends and the needs of demanding tourists (Borkowski et al., 2025).

Using the 'WAED' and 'ZWAD' indicators, it is possible to obtain for each segment of the tourist stream an image assessment of this type of haunted destination. A condition for the success of the assessment is a representative sample that allows generalisation beyond the sample.

The study sought to answer two key questions: do the assessments of the 21 elements influencing the quality and management of tourism in Małopolska converge or differ in the opinions of the domestic and foreign tourist populations visiting the region? And what is the reason for the differences in assessment by domestic and foreign tourists? Regarding the first question, an adequate answer would be an analysis of the Integrated Destination Attractiveness Index, which overall for both tourist populations is 4,39, which is high. The distribution by population is corresponding for domestic visitors it is 4.41 and for international visitors it is 4.37. Both indicators are high, indicating a good evaluation of the destination visited. As the differences in ratings are small, there was no basis for analysing the reasons.

The authors believe that it is worth continuing further research in this area.

References

1. Borkowski, K. (2000). Untersuchung der Beurteilung touristischer Leistungen durch Touristen, die Polen Besuchen. Das Bild der Qualität und Art Ihrer Übermittlung. In: R. Matlović (Ed.), *Urbánne a krajinne štúdie NR 3. Urbánny vývoj na rozhraní milénii* (pp. 355-365). Prešov: Filozofická fakulta Prešovskej Univerzity – Instytut turizmu a hotelowego zarządzania, ISBN 80-88885-80-9.
2. Borkowski, K. (2013). Wizerunek destynacji turystycznej – Element produktu turystycznego. *Zeszyty Naukowe WSTiE w Suchej Beskidzkiej*, 3, pp. 56-78. Retrieved from: https://zn.wste.edu.pl/ZESZ_NAUK/zn3.pdf, 08.05.2025.
3. Borkowski, K. (Ed.), Grabiński, T., Mazanek, L., Seweryn, R., Alejziak, B. (2025). *Ruch turystyczny w Małopolsce w 2024 r. Raport krótki*. Kraków: Małopolska Organizacja Turystyczna. Retrieved from: https://www.malopolska.pl/file/sites/Raport_badania_ruchu_turystycznego_2024.pdf, 08.05.2025.
4. Borkowski, K., Seweryn, R., Grabińska, E. (22-23.02.2017). The Significance of Genius Loci in Tourism (On the Example of Krakow in The Years 2012-2016). *12th International Conference: Topical Issues of Tourism. Tourism As A Crossroads of Knowledge*. Jihlava (Czech Republic): Peer-reviewed Conference Proceedings. Retrieved from: https://www.studiatouristica.cz/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Conference_Proceedings_2017.pdf, 08.05.2025.

5. Della Corte, V., Sciarelli, M., Cascella, C., Del Gaudio, G. (2015). Customer satisfaction in tourist destination: The case of tourism offer in the city of Naples. *Journal of Investment and Management*, 4(1-1), pp. 39-50, doi: <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.jim.s.2015040101.16>
6. Gargano, R., Grasso, F. (2016). Analysis of the factor that affect tourist satisfaction: A case study on "The most beautiful Sicilian Borghi". *Reports on Economics and Finance*, 2(1), pp. 51-59, doi: <https://doi.org/10.12988/ref.2016.623>
7. Ghose, S., Johann, M. (2019). Measuring tourist satisfaction with destination attributes. *Journal of Management and Financial Sciences*, 34, pp. 9-22, doi: <https://doi.org/10.33119/JMFS.2018.34.1>
8. Jimber del Río, J.A., Orgaz Agüera, F., Moral Cuadra, S., Cañero Morales, P. (2017). Satisfaction in border tourism: An analysis with structural equations. *European Research on Management and Business Economics*, 23(2), pp. 103-112, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iedeen.2017.02.001>
9. Johann, M., Anastassova, L. (2014). The perception of tourism product quality and tourist satisfaction: the case of polish tourists visiting Bulgaria. *European Journal of Tourism Research*, 8, 99-114, doi: <https://doi.org/10.54055/ejtr.v8i.153>
10. Mazanek, L., Borkowski, K., Kruczek, Z. (2021). Assessment of tourist services in Krakow in the light of surveys conducted in 2010-2020 [Ocena usług turystycznych w Krakowie w świetle badań sondażowych prowadzonych w latach 2010-2020]. *Prace Komisji Geografii Przemysłu Polskiego Towarzystwa Geograficznego*, 35(4), pp. 128-144, doi: <https://doi.org/10.24917/20801653.354>
11. Tarka, P. (2015). Własności 5- i 7-stopniowej skali Likerta w kontekście normalizacji zmiennych metodą Kaufmana i Rousseeuwa. *Taksonomia*, No. 385, *Klasyfikacja i analiza danych – teoria i zastosowania*, p. 287.