

USE OF TOWS ANALYSIS IN TOURISM AND RECREATION STRATEGY PLANNING BY A COMMUNE GOVERNING THE HOSTING AREA

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ABSTRACT | The objective of the authors of this paper is to present the possibility of application of TOWS analysis which is based on a formula different from the commonly known, although not fully used, SWOT method, in tourism and recreation strategy planning in the hosting area. The article presents the duality of the methods due to their complementary and substitution character. The authors also indicate to differences resulting from the perspective of perception of the same groups of factors depending on the applied method. The utilitarian character of TOWS analysis is presented, which combined with SWOT analysis makes it possible to choose the appropriate variant of the strategy.

Introduction

Development of tourist reception areas is interconnected with local development strategies. They determine the investment or tourist development targets which are expected, in a perspective, to generate given revenues from the realized tourist activity. As a result of the dynamic development of the tourist market, each, even the smallest territorial self-government unit, is interested in gaining certain benefits therefrom. Tourism entails a growth of consumption in hosting areas,

which in turn influences the revenue effects. At the same time, there appear external negative effects resulting from an intensive exploitation of rare goods, strong environmental impact and generation of revenues connected therewith as well as environmental aspects (PN-EN ISO 140001, 2005).

The strong orientation of territorial self-government units towards development of tourism, even those which have not perceived their territory in tourist reception categories so far, causes creation of competition:

- between hosting areas representing similar tourist values,
- within the hosting area, due to strong competition between the entities acting as service providers.

All that creates a necessity to apply strategic management methods and tools embracing: strategic analysis, formulation of the strategy, implementation of the strategy as well as strategic control. One might venture a conclusion that diligence in preparation of the first stage, i.e. the strategic analysis, has an impact on the quality (understood as compliance with the expectations) of the whole undertaking defined as strategic management in the area of tourism (PN-EN ISO 9000, 2006). It also has a fundamental impact on the quality of life in the hosting areas (Puciato, 2008, p. 230).

The subject literature describes several leading methods of the strategic analysis. The most utilitarian character is that of portfolio methods which are simple to apply, such as SWOT or SPACE, but also McKinsey, ADL, Hofer's method or BCG matrix (Gołębiowski, 2001).

The purpose of this article is to present the possibilities of application of TOWS analysis which is a less known form of SWOT analysis, in a commune's tourism and recreation strategy planning.

Selected tasks of a commune in the scope of tourism and recreation

Development of the tourist industry and the resultant bigger possibility of obtaining revenues (diversification thereof) is the basic determining factor for most of the communes with regard to realization of tasks connected with tourism. Irrespective of the revenue growth intentions, a commune is obliged to carry out relevant activities by respective laws, realized as commune's own tasks. A commune is obliged, *inter alia*, to keep records of camping fields and other facilities which provide accommodation places (Dz.U. 2004, nr 223, poz. 2268 z późn. zm.). Records of such facilities should be regularly up-dated so that tourists can be sure that the given facility continues to provide the specified services. Relevant information should be available in commune information centres or public information bulletins. Another topic closely connected with tourism is the package of tasks which are obligatory to a commune, and which concern the protection of cultural objects, relics, physical culture facilities, including recreational areas and sport facilities" (Dz.U. 2001, nr 142, poz. 1591 z późn. zm.).

Each commune has a statutory duty to maintain tourist facilities, develop the tourist and recreational infrastructure and to ensure safety to visitors. Realization of tasks in the field of tourism often consists in a close co-operation with private entrepreneurs and supporting them in their day-to-day business activity. Communes may make their land plots available for construction of tourist

facilities, as well as to spend additional funds for development of the infrastructure necessary for tourists. Territorial marketing is of great importance as it helps solicit investors/businessmen willing to carry out a business activity in the scope of tourism in the hosting area administered by the commune (Szromik, 2005).

Another very important task of a commune in the field of tourism is to ensure safety to people using tourist trails and people seeking recreation in places designated for that purpose. This task is realized by the local governments in collaboration with state administration bodies, managements of national parks.

Another duty is to map out trails and keep them properly maintained. However, communes are only obliged to maintain tourist trails which cross terrains being their property. It may happen that trails or parts thereof run through private properties. In such situations, a commune is obliged to conclude lease agreements with owners of such properties. It is also obliged to pay an appropriate remuneration to the property owners for the usage of their property.

The final duty is the promotion of the region. It mainly consists in informing and effective persuasion and encouraging of the tourists to avail themselves of the tourist hosting area. Informing about anthropogenic, climatic and other aspects should be most effective. An important role in the tourist promotion is played by the method of announcing the attractions of the local tourist area and effective channels of information about its potential rather than the hosting area or the tourist product themselves. This is the reason why communes entrust such activities to specialized tourist organizations representing tertiary sector of the economy. It is mainly their task to promote regions and self-governments (Goranczewski, Szeliga-Kowalczyk, 2015).

The local government administration must co-operate particularly with the local community in the scope of creation/shaping the tourist policy which constitutes an element of the spatial planning policy. The objective of this kind of approach is to improve the material situation of the people inhabiting the tourist hosting areas through development of the local economic prosperity, etc. (Kaczmarek, Stasiak, Włodarczyk, 2005, p. 322).

Strategic management of tourism and recreation in a commune – premises and determinants

The strategic management in the field of tourism and recreation should be focused on a clear formulation of the goals resulting from the mission and vision of the overall strategy of the commune, as well as values accepted by all the interested parties. It concerns in particular the local community/inhabitants who are interested in meeting the requirements in the scope of:

- ecology and environmental protection,
- sustainable growth of the hosting area (Ansperger, 2013, p. 149),
- running of the tourist business in an ethical way (based on the principles of competition, transparency of proceedings),
- abiding by the rules of the law and other requirements (concessions, permits) etc.

The communal strategic management is of a multi-aspect character. This is composed of a number of entities, organizational forms or activities connected with realization of own and

ordered tasks. The specificity of the formulation of a strategy by a commune also consists in the fact that (Gawroński, 2010, p. 32):

- most of areas are regulated by the rules of the law,
- the strategy should be formulated on the basis of a common interest of various interested parties,
- communes are public life institutions, hence effectiveness is not the most important condition in realization of some of their tasks.

In order for the strategy realization to be correct, it is necessary to establish the following processes (Goranczewski, Szeliga-Kowalczyk, 2015, p. 62 and n.) (Tables 1, 2):

- observation of the changing surrounding, needs and expectations of the interested parties, including inhabitants and tourists, which concerns in particular the consistent, uniform vision of tourism and recreation in the commune,
- infrastructural support, in this the natural resources which decide about attractiveness of the tourist and recreation reception,
- translation of the mission/vision of the commune to measurable, parameterized goals in the field of tourism and recreation,
- evaluation of the risk in the scope of exploitation of the environment in the hosting area, as well as the risk for the communal tourist activity itself,
- extrapolation of the strategies followed so far in order to avoid errors and conflicts resulting from divergences of interests of particular interested parties,
- monitoring of the strategy parameters and, based on those, implementation of corrective or strategy improvement actions.

While implementing the strategy it is necessary to make it operational, i.e. to translate the strategic and/or operational goals to detailed actions. In case of strategy of tourism, it is necessary to coordinate the goals of the tourist economy of the commune in the hosting place as a whole, and also the goals of particular entities carrying out activities connected with servicing of the tourist traffic. It often requires the goals to be configured and also adjusted to one another (PN-ISO 10007, 2005).

All the above-mentioned tasks aim at integration of efforts to create a potential brand of a tourist product and a consistent vision of the tourist hosting area in order to generate expected benefits.

Formulation of a commune's strategy in its hosting area requires to have in place correct communication processes determining (PN-EN ISO 9004, 2010, point 5.4):

- continuity of communication,
- ensuring of an effective feedback information,
- reaction to changes in the surrounding.

Methodical elaboration of a strategy is always affected by way of a *consensus* achieved by all the interested parties. This is of a particular significance in the self-government administration where interests of particular social groups, individual persons or interests of a group client clash (e.g. those of inhabitants), etc. (Goranczewski, 2011, p. 221–242).

Table 1. Schematic diagram of TOWS analysis

Factors			
External negative	Weight $\Sigma = 1,0$	External positive	Weight $\Sigma = 1,0$
Threats (T)		Opportunities (O)	
Factor 1	0,3	Factor 1	0,4
Factor 2	0,3	Factor 2	0,3
Factor 3	0,2	Factor 3	0,2
Factor 4	0,1	Factor 4	0,1
Factor 5	0,1		
Internal negative	Weight $\Sigma = 1,0$	Internal positive	Weight $\Sigma = 1,0$
Weak points (W)		Strong points (S)	
Factor 1	0,6	Factor 1	0,4
Factor 2	0,3	Factor 2	0,2
Factor 3	0,1	Factor 3	0,2
		Factor 4	0,1
		Factor 5	0,1

Source: own elaboration based on: (Wehrich) 1982; Romanowska, Gierszewska (2009); Oblój (2014).

Table 2. TOWS *versus* SWOT interaction and the type of strategy

	TOWS	SWOT	Strategy type
1.	Will the opportunities strengthen the strong points (strengths)?	Will the application of strong points allow for utilization of the opportunities?	Maxi-Maxi Aggressive
2.	Will the threats have an influence on weakening of the strong points?	Will the application of strong points allow for liquidation or overcoming of the threats?	Maxi-Mini Conservative
3.	Will the utilization of the opportunities allow for overcoming of the weaknesses?	Will the weak points make it impossible to utilize the opportunities?	Mini-Maxi Competitive
4.	Will the threats highlight the weak points?	Will the weak points strengthen the impact of threats?	Mini-Mini Defensive

Source: own elaboration based on Oblój (2014).

Undoubtedly, the planning processes are of a key importance in strategy building, and first of all the reliability in data gathering. The planning processes include (PN-ISO 10005, 2007):

1. Investigation of the tourist potential, including such phases as:
 - gathering of information, including: preliminary research, description, specification and inventory taking of all that determines the tourist and recreational attractiveness.
 - streamlining of the information, in this, point grading (in tourism geography, it is an evaluation of suitability of an investigated area for tourism and recreation) (Sołowiej, 1992).
 - integration of the gathered information with application of portfolio methods.
2. Identification of the needs and expectations of the interested parties, mainly tourists and the local community (inhabitants of the hosting area).
3. Configuration with other plans – compatibility/consistence with area strategies composing the overall strategy.

4. Determination of resources necessary for realization of the strategy, in this:
 - human,
 - material/natural/infrastructural/anthropogenic,
 - informational.
5. Determination of legal and other requirements connected with the possibility of development of tourism and recreation in the hosting area
6. Determination of the time of realization of the plans.
7. Determination of the scope of the necessary capital outlays, purchases, etc. connected with the realization of the strategy.

While creating a strategy it is necessary to take into account those features/attributes which will cause that the tourist reception area and/or tourist product will meet given competition conditions, such as:

- planning and tourist strategies compliant with the law in force,
- sustainable development, health, safety, ecology, environmental protection,
- availability of transport, information, accommodation and recreational infrastructure,
- price competitiveness of entities realizing the tasks in the field of tourism and recreation,
- resources, including human capital, cultural values, natural resources, personal features, traditions of the dwellers of the tourist hosting area (Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report, 2013).

Characteristics of tows analysis

The TOWS method is a reverse SWOT analysis, which is a result of the change of sequence of proceeding in the scope of analysis of particular factors, beginning from the external ones, i.e. from the surrounding of the organization (outside to inside method).

SWOT method is commonly used in formulation of strategies in the field of tourism and recreation. Paradoxically, its common use is not tantamount to a common knowledge of the method. Its use is almost always fragmentary, which constitutes a basic methodological negligence (Goranczewski, Puciato, 2010, pp. 45–55). SWOT analysis is the first step in formulation of the tourism development strategy, because it constitutes a comprehensive evaluation of the current situation constituting the starting level and integrating all the relevant information (Holloway, Robinson, 1997, p. 39):

- economic, social and political issues,
- current shape of the markets, market trends, methods and tools of promotion and sale,
- characteristics of the competition, market share,
- effectiveness of the realized tourist activity. etc.

In case of SWOT analysis, the first to be evaluated are the internal *strengths* (strong points) and *weaknesses* (weak points) (SW). In TOWS analysis the first to be evaluated are external factors, i.e.: *threats* – external negative factors and *opportunities* – external positive factors (TO)

(Romanowska, Gierszewska, 2009, p. 189). In the literature of the subject there additionally appears a variation of the SWOT method, i.e. WOT's-up (Sharplin, 1985).

With regard to tourism hosting areas the TOWS matrix contains:

1. Threats – (external negative factors) include: changes of the tourists' preferences; diminishing of the safety level (terrorist, crime threats, etc.); dynamic growth and increase of competitiveness of neighbouring areas or areas representing similar values which make the place attractive; lack of investors and sources making it possible to invest and/or restitution of the tourist infrastructure; instability of the currency rates both at the destination place and in the tourists place of living.
2. Opportunities – positive external factors generating the possibilities of economic development and prosperity thus causing a growth of individual incomes and consumption; growth of the effectiveness of exploitation of resources through optimization thereof; easier availability of transport; availability of sources of financing of the necessary investments.
3. Weaknesses – weak points (factors making the development of tourism difficult). They include a poor condition of the infrastructure; bad financial standing of the territorial self-government unit in which tourist and recreational attractions are situated (debt level, project financing possibilities); unclear proprietary situation of the land, etc.
4. Strengths – strong points, such as: anthropogenic advantages; natural values including landscapes; well-developed tourist infrastructure; availability of financial and human resources making it possible to organize a good tourist service; conditions which make it possible to go in for tourism all year round, etc.

The TOWS matrix is composed then of four fields identical to those in SWOT method where particular factors are specified and given weights. In case of SWOT analysis there appear hybrid solutions consisting in introduction of two more fields of the matrix dividing the surrounding factors (both positive and negative) to:

- macro-surroundings,
- micro-surroundings.

Thus, a six-field matrix is created, which presents factors streamlined in accordance with the above described scheme (Mazurkiewicz, 2002, p. 81 and n.).

Similarly to the SWOT analysis, also in TOWS method there is no need to specify all factors in detail. One should concentrate on the most important ones which are of significance in the choice of appropriate strategy of action.

What is fundamental in the TOWS analysis is determination of (Wehrich, 1982):

1. Influence of the opportunities on the strong points, or answering the question: to what extent will the external positive factors have an influence on the strengths (strong points) of the unit? How and with what intensity will they cause their strengthening?
2. Impact of the threats on strong points. Strength of the impact of the threats on the strong points of the self-government unit which is to realize the strategy in the field of tourism.
3. Influence of the opportunities on the specified weaknesses. To what extent the external positive factors are able to eliminate the weak points?

4. Impact of the external negative factors (threats) on the identified weaknesses. Will the threats make the weak points even weaker and if yes, to what extent?

As it can be seen in the above table, a juxtaposition of particular pairs of factors in disparate relations leads to different interactions, and subsequently to a possibility of arriving at different results in the scope of importance of particular factors which have an influence on application of an appropriate strategy of action.

In order to carry out a TOWS analysis one needs to fill four correlation tables. This aims at identification of all possible interactions in the following configuration of the factors (Obłój, 2014, p. 279 and n.).

- opportunities/strong points,
- threats/strong points,
- opportunities/weak points,
- threats/weak points.

The last stage of a TOWS analysis presents, in a tabular form, the results containing the sum of interactions and the sum of products of weights and numbers of correlations (see Table 5).

Because of the difference of perception (from inside to outside *versus* from outside to inside) a full picture of the strategic situation may need an additional SWOT/TOWS analysis, i.e. testing of interactions, enriching the look of the same factors from a different perspective. Such an advanced analysis is carried out when there is no consensus as to how to interpret the scale and significance of particular factors or when they are unpredictable. As a result, the risk of taking an improper decision as to the choice of the type of strategy, most adequate to the identified situation, is diminished. Thus, conditions for an effective realization of the strategy are created. Such an approach makes it possible to base the management processes on facts/empiric premises (*evidence-based management*) rather than on conjectures (Łobos, Puciato, 2013, p. 14).

Application of tows analysis in an exemplary strategy of a commune situated in a touristically and recreationally attractive place

Table 3 presents a TOWS matrix with specified factors and their weights with regard to an exemplary strategy of development of tourism and recreation in a selected commune.

According to the instruction contained in the previous chapter, the method consists in filling of four interaction tables. Due to the article volume limitations, below one can find an example, one of them in relation to the opportunities – strong points relations.

Table 4 should be treated visually, as a pattern for making further ones in an analogous way, according to the scheme described in the previous chapter, i.e.: threats → strong points; opportunities → weak points; threats → weak points.

Table 5 presents the results arrived at in the above example (shaded area in Table 5) and other results possible to be obtained after filling the remaining correlation tables. Table 5 also presents the results of SWOT analysis carried out with application of reversion of factors with regard to TOWS analysis (in order to make a SWOT analysis, one should, similarly to the described TOWS

Table 3. TOWS matrix

Opportunities	Weight	Threats	Weight
Rich cultural offer of the region	0,3	Competition from the side of other communes in the field of organization of cultural and entertainment events	0,3
Possibility to obtain subsidies for projects from EU funds	0,3		
Growth of incomes of the society	0,2	Degradation of the natural environment	0,3
Fashion for an active spending of leisure time	0,1	Deepening of the peripheral position of the commune by way of a worsening condition of the roads and liquidation of further transport connections	0,2
Promotion of local tourist products	0,1		
		Emigration of young people seeking better earnings	0,1
		Change of tourists' preferences	0,1
Strong points	Weight	Weak points	Weight
Reputation of Commune XYZ	0,3	Poor condition of the infrastructure of the facilities and insufficient availability of equipment	0,3
Big number of addressees of the offer (tourists, boarders)	0,2		
Closeness of a well developed recreational-sport base	0,2	Low budget and insufficient investments financed by the state budget	0,3
Rich and affordable hotel and catering base	0,2	Lack of a strategy of support of local tourist-oriented products	0,2
Presence of events of a regional, national and international character	0,1		
		Insufficient utilization of natural values in the context of sport activity	0,1
		Small number of sport facilities	0,1

Source: own elaboration.

Table 4. Correlations in configuration opportunities – strong points

StrongPoints	Opportunities						Weight	Number of correlations	Product of weights and correlations
	Rich cultural offer of the region	Possibility to obtain subsidies for projects from EU funds	Growth of the society's income	Fashion for an active spending of a leisure time	Promotion of local tourist products				
Tourist reputation of commune XYZ	1	1	0	1	1	0,3	4	1,2	
Big number of recipients of the offer (tourists, lodgers)	1	0	1	1	1	0,2	4	0,8	
Closeness of well developed recreational – sport basis	0	0	0	1	1	0,2	2	0,4	
Rich and affordable accommodation and catering base	1	1	1	1	1	0,2	5	1	
Presence of events of a regional, national and international character	1	1	0	0	1	0,1	3	0,3	
Weight	0,3	0,3	0,2	0,1	0,1				
Number of interactions	4	3	2	4	5				
Product of weights and interactions	1,2	0,9	0,4	0,4	0,5				
Sum of correlations							36		
Sum of products								7,1	

Source: own elaboration based on Oblój (2014).

analysis, fill four correlation tables). As results from the data contained in the table below, such a reversion and the following different perspective of perception of particular factors changes the number of interactions and the sum of products and their weights. Due to this reason, in situations of high uncertainty in the decision-making process it is worth to carry out a TOWS/SWOT analysis in order to be able to evaluate the summed-up data (column 7 and 8 of the table below) and based on that to make a choice of the most optimal variant of the strategy.

Table 5. Collective statement of the results of TOWS/SWOT analysis

Configuration of factors	Results of TOWS analysis		Configuration of factors	Results of SWOT analysis		Collective statement of SWOT + TOWS	
	sum of interactions	sum of products		sum of interactions	sum of products	sum of interactions	sum of products
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Opportunities/Strong points	36	7,1	Strong points/Opportunities	40	8,1	76	15,2
Threats/Strong points	42	8,3	Strong points/Threats	30	6,1	72	14,4
Opportunities/Weak points	34	6,6	Weak points/Opportunities	34	6,5	68	13,1
Threats/Weak points	34	6,6	Weak points/Threats	34	7,6	68	14,2

Source: own elaboration based on Oblój (2014).

The information presented in Table 5 shows that with regard to TOWS analysis (columns no. 2 and 3) most correlations/interactions were recorded in connection with a significant impact of threats on strong points of the hosting area and/or the commune formulating the strategy, which would indicate to the necessity to apply the conservative strategy (see Table 2). As the presented example shows it is not reflected in the SWOT analysis made (column 5 and 6). Having the above in mind, in order to select a correct variant of the strategy one should sum up the obtained results of SWOT + TOWS (column 7 and 8). Calculation made this way shows that the optimal variant will be the maxi-maxi strategy (Table 2).

Summary

Effectiveness in realization of strategic tasks in the field of tourism and recreation is only possible where, in the phase of formulation of a strategy, appropriate analytical tools are applied. The TOWS analysis presented in this article may be applied as a substitute or as a complementary element accompanying the better known and disseminated SWOT analysis. In difficult situations, the decision-making process requires triangulation to be obtained, i.e. it is necessary to apply different methods which are used for obtaining consistent data which constitute the basis for conclusions. In case of formulation of a strategy in the hosting area it may consist in a look from different perspectives proposed by the two methods. They refer, however, to the same factors divided into the

same areas in order to interpret the same set of data (Stańczyk, 2015). A methodological approach to the formulation of a tourist development strategy in the hosting area, especially in the scope of planning, also consists in application of standard tools described in chapter 3 of this article.

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WYKORZYSTANIE ANALIZY TOWS W PROJEKTOWANIU STRATEGII TURYSTYKI I REKREACJI W GMINIE ADMINISTRUJĄCEJ OBSZAREM RECEPCYJNYM

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE | strategia gminy, rozwój turystyki, TOWS

STRESZCZENIE

Celem autorów artykułu jest przedstawienie możliwości zastosowania analizy TOWS, będącej odmienną formułą powszechnie znanej, choć nie w całości wykorzystywanej metody SWOT w projektowaniu strategii rozwoju turystyki i rekreacji na obszarze recepcyjnym. W artykule przedstawiono dualizm metod ze względu na ich komplementarność i substytucyjność. Wskazano także na różnice wynikające z perspektywy postrzegania tych samych grup czynników w zależności od zastosowanej metody. Zaprezentowano utylitarny charakter analizy TOWS, która w połączeniu z analizą SWOT umożliwia dokonanie wyboru odpowiedniego wariantu strategii.