

Socio-Economic Profile of Polish Tourists in Dalmatia and Its Significance for Shaping Sustainable Tourism in Historic Cities

Kamila Ziolkowska

Weiss, Uniwersytet Komisji Edukacji Narodowej

Abstract

Dalmatian Coast has for many years remained one of the most popular international destinations among Polish tourists, with Croatia ranking among the leading travel choices of Poles. According to CBOS data, in 2023 Croatia was visited by 11% of all Polish tourists travelling abroad for at least two days. The growing interest in the region's natural assets, rich cultural heritage, and historic urban centres significantly contributes to the dynamic development of tourism in Croatia, while simultaneously raising important questions regarding sustainable tourism management.

The aim of this study, conducted under the title "*Socio-Economic Profile of Polish Tourists in Dalmatia and Its Significance for Shaping Sustainable Tourism in Historic Cities*," is to identify the main attractions perceived as most valuable by Polish visitors to selected historic and cultural cities of Dalmatia, including Dubrovnik, Zadar, Trogir, Split, Šibenik, and Zaton. The research focuses on determining the primary travel motivations, socio-economic characteristics, and behavioural patterns of Polish tourists, as well as assessing their overall satisfaction with tourism infrastructure and service quality in the examined destinations.

The empirical study was based on a survey conducted among 244 respondents. The findings indicate that the most frequently visited cities were Split (216 respondents), Trogir (192), and Dubrovnik (184). The dominant travel motivations included rest and relaxation (93%), sightseeing in historic cities (77%), and experiencing local cuisine and culture (73%). The decision to visit specific historic urban centres was primarily influenced by proximity to accommodation (72%), interest in the city's history (59%), topographical features (56%), and the opportunity to explore numerous historical landmarks within one location (49%).

In terms of overall satisfaction, Dubrovnik, Zadar, and Trogir received the highest evaluations. Respondents assessed indicators such as the diversity of historical monuments, the availability of complementary cultural services (e.g., exhibitions and concerts), tourist amenities (public toilets, facilities for people with disabilities, baby-changing stations), urban signage, and access to digital information tools such as online guides, maps, and QR codes at tourist sites.

The results highlight the importance of understanding the socio-economic profile and behavioural patterns of Polish tourists for shaping sustainable tourism strategies in Dalmatian historic cities. Insight into visitor motivations and expectations may support local authorities and destination managers in balancing tourism development with the preservation of cultural heritage, improvement of service quality, and enhancement of long-term destination sustainability.