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Innovativeness in tourist companies: Assessment attempt

K e y w o r d s: innovations, innovative potential, tourist company, research results

S u m m a r y: The research described in the paper is aimed at presentation of the concept of the innovation process and formulation of a model of innovative potential in tourist companies, along with defining determinants of this potential. With this concept, innovativeness was assessed in the examined tourist companies from the SMB sector. The content included in the introduction allowed preliminary identification of the issues of how competitiveness and globalization stimulate innovativeness in tourism, what are the basic sources of innovativeness in tourist companies, how significant is the human factor, entrepreneurship and knowledge in the innovation process. The following part of the paper presents the discussion on the basic terms related to the innovation process and the innovative capacity of an organization, along with classifications of innovation used in tourism. The determinants of innovative potential are described, such as employee competencies, modernity of infrastructure, the level of cooperation in managing knowledge, method of work organization and protection of knowledge (innovation) originated inside the organization. The empirical part of the paper includes the results of the research on assessment of degree of innovativeness in tourist industry companies in the Małopolska region. It has been found out that it is mostly knowledge and skills of employees of tourist companies as well as cooperation between the entities in the given industry that determine the degrees of company innovativeness. The basic source of innovations in tourist companies thus comes from knowledge of employees and knowledge acquired from the outside, from other organizations.

1. Introduction

The numerous and extensive literature in the area of tourism quite often provides at the beginning the documents definitions, classifications of different types of tour-

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ism, determinants of its development, and systematization of travelling motifs. Presenting the share of tourism in generation of world GDP or emphasizing its importance in development of national economies is also discussed extensively, along with quoting various statistical data which characterize tourism in the past and, at the same time, forecasts are made as to the number of millions of persons who will leave for national or international journeys in the future.[1] Less care is taken about innovative processes or fast changes in tourism and its surroundings. Tourism has recently been revolutionized by new technologies, markets and destinations, newly established organizations and their organizational forms, changing consumer preferences, economic and political conditions, new forms of investing and acquiring capital, modern methods of learning in employees and development of organization. These processes, due to their variety and speed, as well as uncertainty and unpredictability, tend to be regarded by some researchers as the cause of crisis phenomena coming and developing in tourism. They believe that turbulence of the surroundings may soon push the industry into the stage of crisis (2, 3). These changes are thus worth attention, because they are related to and determine innovativeness of tourist companies, and they strongly affect their functioning and sometimes decide about their survival.

The process of innovation is the centre of research described in this paper. The following are some selected results of earlier research which allowed preliminary identification of the issues:

1. How competitiveness and globalization stimulate innovativeness in tourism?
2. What are the basic sources of innovativeness in tourist companies?
3. How significant is the human factor, entrepreneurship and knowledge in the innovation process?
4. Can IT technology and organizational factors be decisive for creation of innovations?

The content provided in the introduction constitutes the basis for further analyses, in particular the description of the concept of innovation process, identification and characteristics of the determinants of innovative potential in companies and formulation of the model of innovative capacity (innovativeness) in tourist companies.

Recognizing the determinants of innovative potential and assessment of their effectiveness as premises for construction of innovative potential and supporting company innovativeness have been assumed as the main objective of the research described in the paper. The presented objective of the research thus required a concept to be developed for the analysis addressing evaluation of innovative capacity of a company.

[1] Tourism as the strongest branch of the global economy generated USD 6.6 billion in 2012, or 9.3% of the world GDP. Despite worldwide economic slowdown, USD 760 milliard was invested in this sector in 2012. According to forecasts, tourism will develop by 2022 at the average annual rate of 4.4%, that is faster than the rest of economy. At present, about a milliard people travel every year, but this number will increase to 1.6 milliard in 2020 (1).

A wide approach has been adopted as regards the methods of research included in the paper, based on three main concepts:

- first, references were made to the rich and still growing literature in the field of tourism and innovations, in which the results of the analysis of theoretical research are presented;
- secondly, the results of the earlier empirical studies were also used;
- thirdly, own empirical studies were also an important element of the adopted approach, conducted in the selected tourist companies of the Małopolska region.

The issues of development of company innovativeness are perceived in four characteristic dimensions: innovative potential (innovative capacity), innovation invention, diffusion of innovation and taking value from innovation. The realms of changes and development are the correlates of individual dimensions, i.e. the areas which include specific references to the form of innovative capacity. The following are determinants of the realm of changes and development of innovative potential of companies.

This potential is in particular affected by:[2]

- managerial and employee competencies, especially experiential knowledge;
- modernity of the employed infrastructure, especially IT technology;
- the level of cooperation in managing knowledge, especially the level of relational activities with clients (customers, suppliers, etc.);
- the method of work organization and management;
- ensuring protection of knowledge originated inside a company.

The adopted methodology distinguishes innovative potential from innovative capacity. Innovative potential of a company defines a set of social and economic features shaped within the development of a given company and constituting the base for its innovative activities. In other words, these are resources, processes, structures, and factors integral to the company. These of them which are on the ongoing basis effectively used for creating innovations of commercial significance constitute innovations capacity (innovativeness) of the company. Ultimately, effectiveness of a company in the scope of developing innovations is determined by the said resources developed in the past (innovative potential) as well as by appropriate methods, skills and capacities of their current application.

[2] The given set of determinants of innovative potential was defined from among many variables of the surroundings and resources of the organization with the analyses of factors of effect. Those of them were taken into account whose significant cause and effect relations with innovativeness appeared in the past and will be apparent in the future. In the process of their identification, various sources of information were consulted. Those which referred to the surroundings included statistical data, special reports, research results from others and expert opinions. As regards the resources of the organization, opinions of the managerial staff and of specialists in the researched companies were used. The collected comments and statements constituted the basis for selection of determinants of innovative potential of the company.

The scope of the research was limited to microeconomical and microsocial scales with special attention paid to problems of company innovativeness, including their closer surroundings. Less space has been given to the issues of development of innovativeness on the regional, national or international (global) levels.

Innovations constitute a process as old as economic activity of man. However, only recently (at the beginning of the 20th century), it was found that the basic determinant of innovativeness is competitiveness of business entities. Acceleration of the process of globalization of economy enhances this competitiveness, shortens product life cycle, thus intensifying innovation processes. Competition of tourist companies is effected mostly in the realms of costs and prices, as well as quality of the provided services, which is why innovations in this area are specifically valuable for entities in the tourist market. Although every single innovation is related to costs and carries high risk, majority of companies accept the thesis that creating a new value by implementation of innovations is considerably less risky than its lack.

According to the authors who are involved in this issue, the sector of services, and the tourist industry in particular, is not capable of creating innovations without participation of external entities. Most often, companies and institutions from outside of the tourism sector are the source of innovations, with own research playing a secondary role, e.g. R&D (4). It is for this reason that external activities are definitely more important for development of innovations in tourism than internal research similar to that conducted in the industry (5, p. 24; 6, p. 21). Examples of this come in the form of application of new inventions in tourism: washing machines, fridges, nutrition technology, new IT technologies (e.g. applications enhancing booking services), establishing new organizations (e.g. low-cost airlines), development of new markets, especially in Asia, which has contributed to development of innovations in tourism and tourism itself.

The process of globalization of economy and the related phenomena of migration of people and ideas result in transmission and conversion as well as multiplication of novelties, e.g. in the scope of forms of rest and methods of spending free time, introduction of new culinary products or exotic cooking. This acceptance and implementation of new ideas, or more precisely concepts, ideas, processes, products or services, constitutes a significant determinant of innovativeness in tourism organizations (6, p. 5). One has to emphasize that even if product components do not meet the criterion of novelty, their new composition constitutes a novelty, especially when it creates a new value for the client. Moreover, a client in tourism may also be the creator, or even the co-producer of a tourist product, thus he/ she should take active part in the process of innovation invention. The skill of composing product components and combinations of products according to expectations of clients (*boundling*) and in cooperation with clients constitutes a major premise of innovativeness potential of a tourist company.

Human capital or, more precisely, labour potential of employees is the main generating factor in tourism, with majority of the provided services being strongly ‘satu-

rated with work' whose productivity is low in many subsectors. Innovations in the scope of employment rationalization or work organization improvement are thus highly important from the point of view of reduction of unit costs of the product and competitiveness of tourist companies. This is why management over labour costs and quality of work in tourism is absolutely necessary, and organizational innovations in the area of HRM or work organization are of special importance.

Assessment of quality of human capital is quite a different issue, especially in reference to experiential knowledge of employees in the aspect of development of innovation in tourism. Authors who deal with this issue believe that the level of human capital in tourism is low, and creating and transferring knowledge within a company is slow and difficult (7, p. 25; 6, p. 25). The main problem of tourism organizations is to capture and systematize hidden knowledge and transfer of knowledge within the organization. This results in the necessity of enhancing skills and training employees, increasing rights (*empowerment*) of individuals and groups of employees or creating the so called knowledge communities. However, companies and employees readily participate in various organizational forms of alliances only when they achieve benefits, and when exchange of knowledge and information does not bring about advantages, they quickly give it up.

Companies which create innovations do their best to protect them against competitors. Protective activities in the tourist companies sector face, however, numerous difficulties. First, innovations are common work of clients, the result of learning from others, e.g. benchmarking, thus they intrinsically are commonly available and used. Secondly, they usually are not eligible for patent protection, and in case of product innovations they are easily imitated, or standardized. Certain, quite small, possibilities of protection for innovations are in legal instruments, such as copyright and similar solutions, trademarks, geographical markings, company secrets, introduction of information security policy in the company, and concluding long-term contracts with employees, which may also limit spreading of knowledge and information outside of the company. However, innovations in tourism (especially in products and marketing) may be easily noticed by competitors and copied or replaced with their equivalents produced with tools like reverse engineering (8, pp. 12–14; 9, pp. 28–30; 10, pp. 96–98).

The specific nature of the tourist industry makes the decisive majority of innovations highly susceptible to imitation or diffusion within the industry. Few of them are covered by patent protection, they are also difficult to protect with other legal instruments. The tourist companies sector has the prevailing approach to the innovation process which is called the 'free-rider effect' when they use innovations created by others both within the industry and outside of it without any expenditures being spent on their generation (11, p. 31). Thus, companies and organizations imitating and adapting new values from innovations are predominant in the tourist industry, and not the original innovators (12, pp. 782–783). This seems to feature the advantage of contributing to the development of the industry.

2. Essence and types of innovations

Innovativeness is differently understood and defined in its complexity. Innovation means any (by definition beneficial) change in different areas of activities of any organization, which brings about progress against the existing situation. Its nature is often that of evolutionary improving of the existing phenomena, positively assessed in the light of the criteria of a given organization.[3] In reference to the thesis of Schumpeter, C. M. Hall and A. M. Williams presented an interesting concept of innovation, understanding it as relational activity within the innovativeness system[4] if these relations occur between individuals, individuals and technology, companies and individuals, companies and other companies, research institutions or state institutions (6, p. 24).

Many titles in the literature give different classification types for innovations. Due to the limited frame of the paper, only two of them are presented, namely the general typology given in the Oslo Manual and the classification of innovation types in tourism by A. M. Hjalager. The Oslo Manual names and characterizes product, process, marketing and organizational innovations (see Table 1).

Table 1

Types of innovations

Type of innovation	Definition
Product innovation	Introduction of goods or services which are new or significantly improved in the scope of their features or applications. This includes major improvements in terms of technical specifications, components and materials, integrated software, easy operation or other functional features. The term 'product' is used for both products and services.
Process innovation	Implementation of a new or significantly improved methods of production or delivery. This category includes significant changes in the scope of technology, equipment and/ or software. This is innovativeness within the process.
Marketing innovation	Implementation of a new marketing method related to significant changes in the project/ design of the product or in the package, distribution, promotion or price strategy. The objective of marketing innovations is to better satisfy the needs of clients, opening new markets or new positioning of a product of the company in the market to increase sales.

[3] According to the Oslo Manual, innovativeness is defined as 'the entirety of scientific, technical, organizational, financial and commercial activities which indeed lead to or are intended to lead to implementation of innovations. Some of these activities are innovative in themselves, whereas other are novelties, but are necessary to implemented innovations' (13, p. 49).

[4] The system of innovativeness means systematization and placing of actors, i.e. companies and other organizations which participate in generation, diffusion and application of novelties (new knowledge), useful and bringing about economic benefits in the production process (6, p. 24).

Organizational innovation	Implementation of a new organizational method in the principles of operation adopted by the company, in the organization of a workplace or in relations with the surroundings. The objective of organizational innovations may be to achieve better results by way of reduction of administrative or transaction costs, increasing the level of satisfaction with work (thus: effectiveness in work), obtaining access to assets which are not the subject matter of trade exchange (like non-codified external knowledge) or reduction of delivery cost.

S o u r c e: Authors' own research on the basis of 13, pp. 50–54.

Taking into account the specific nature of tourist companies, A. M. Hjalager defines five types of innovation: product (services), process, management, marketing and institutional innovations (Figure 1).

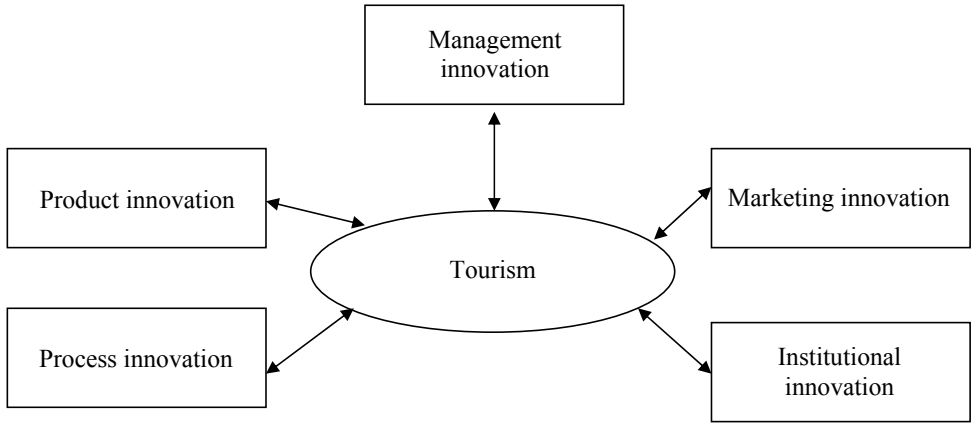

Figure 1. Types of innovations in tourism

S o u r c e: (14, p. 5).

According to this author, product (services) innovations include changes perceived by consumers as new, both in the meaning of unparallelled so far and innovative for individual companies, which may significantly affect the decision of purchasing a new product. Process innovations in case of tourist companies usually refer to functioning of backup facilities, whose main objective is increase in efficiency, effectiveness and capacity of individual operations.

Innovations in the realm of management refer to new forms of organizing internal cooperation, team management and delegation of tasks, development of career and developing an appropriate system of salaries. Development of methods of limitation of employee rotation, maintenance of flexibility and costs control are a major challenge for many tourist companies. Another type of innovations are marketing innovations. Examples of such innovations in tourism are, most of all, introduction and development of loyalty programmes. Institutional innovations refer to creating new

organizational structures or legal forms which effectively change or improve company activities in individual areas of tourism. Specific networks of companies play a significant role in development of innovations, including those among small and medium-size companies. New institutions may, however, cause more changes and thus affect a wider circle of companies and consumers (e.g. banks and credit cards, electronic systems of ticket booking) (14, pp. 5–7).

The quoted definitions of innovations and classifications of types of innovations have allowed better understanding of this phenomenon and, to some extent, have contributed to constructing concepts of the innovation process and analyses of elements of this system.

3. Determinants of innovative capacity of a company

Research in the innovation process, especially in innovativeness of organization, requires an interdisciplinary and multidimensional approach to include cause and effect relations of various phenomena and processes affecting development of innovations. However, this requires a new look at these issues, expansion of the field of analysis with the issues of innovativeness understood as innovations capacity (innovative potential) as well as innovative activities, i.e. invention and diffusion of innovations. This attitude to innovations is more difficult in understanding this phenomenon, but allows better presentation and explanation of its essence. One should be aware that no company can create and implement innovations without appropriate knowledge resources in the form of inventions, designs, licenses, author's property rights, classified knowledge (know-how), recipes, etc. A thesis may be even proposed that the 'heart' of innovations is knowledge and learning of the organization and its employees or members.

In the adopted concept of the innovative process, innovative capacity (innovative potential) constitutes the first and basic element of the system which also includes innovation invention, diffusion of innovation and taking value from innovation (see Figure 2).

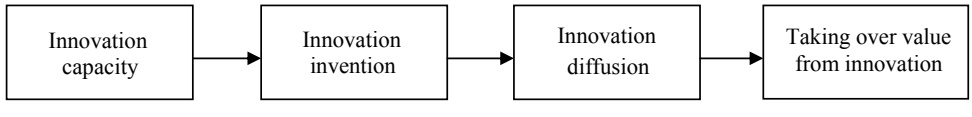

Figure 2. The concept of the innovation process model

S o u r c e: Authors' own research.

The presented model belongs to the class of supply models of the innovation process, although in this case, just like with the demand model, it is the market which is the factor of verification of suitability and value of innovations.

Innovative capacity of companies refers to possibilities of making by them significant modifications and improvements in the existing technologies and creating new ones. At present, it is perceived as the ground for creating value from innovations (15, pp. 278–289), or even as the driving force of economic growth (16). Innovativeness 'is thus the capacity of application of the act of creativity of new ideas, inventions, resulting in innovation' (17, p. 17). It essentially integrates determinants of innovativeness such as managerial and employee competencies (which are the basis for creation of knowledge in the organization), the infrastructure employed (e.g. technology used, IT resources, databases, software), organization of work (e.g. flexible forms of work, creating task teams, the organizational structure), the level of cooperation in managing knowledge (e.g. cooperation with clients or suppliers in the given industry) and a significant determinant of performance of the innovation process, that is ensuring protection of knowledge generated within the company (e.g. patent protection, licences). It manifests in four perspectives: the capacity for product innovations, the capacity for process innovations, the capacity for organizational and marketing innovations.

4. Results of empirical research[5]

The study covered 316 entities, including 12 tourist companies from the Małopolska region whose establishment and activities are related to travel tourism. The study was conducted with the survey method with a questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first included questions related to the characteristics of the conducted activities, the second was related to assessment of potential of the organization and assessment of its surroundings. The research shows that the analyzed companies were in the SMB sector. Employment in these companies did not exceed 250 employees (Figure 3). Four of them employed from 11 to 50 employees, the same number of companies declared employment in the range of 101–250 employees, whereas 3 companies had 50 to 100 employees. Half of the studied companies (6) operate in the range of hotel services, 3 companies are involved in gastronomy, 2 in recreation, and only 1 company is focused on transport services (Figure 4).

[5] Research project: 'Innovative activities of companies in the Tarnów and Małopolska regions' executed by the team of researchers of the Department of Management, MSE in Tarnów.

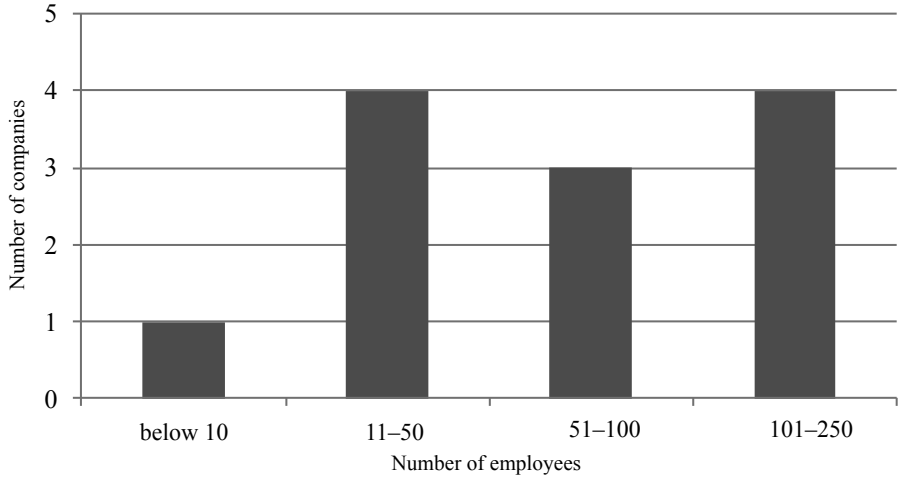

Figure 3. Employees in the years 2008–2010

S o u r c e: Authors' own research on the basis of the studies.

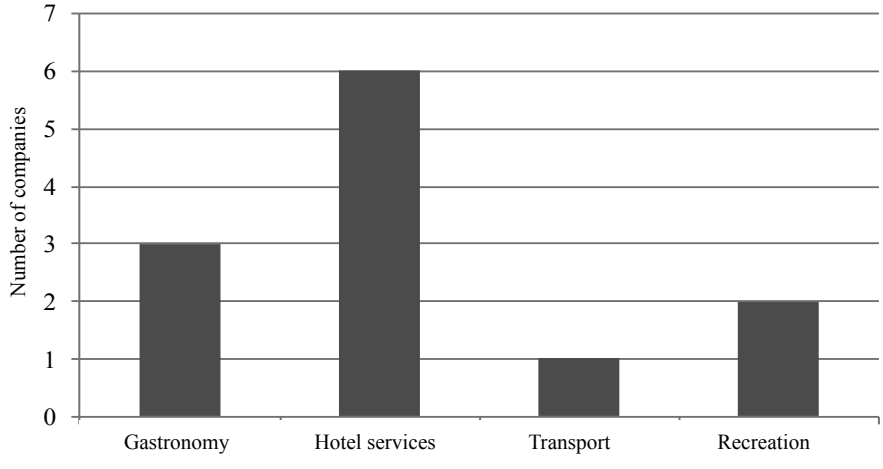

Figure 4. Activities conducted

S o u r c e: Authors' own research on the basis of the studies.

In the analysis of the reach of the conducted activities, the examined companies indicated international market, with 5 companies active. The same number was stated in regional market. Only 2 companies conduct their tourist activities throughout the country (Figure 5).

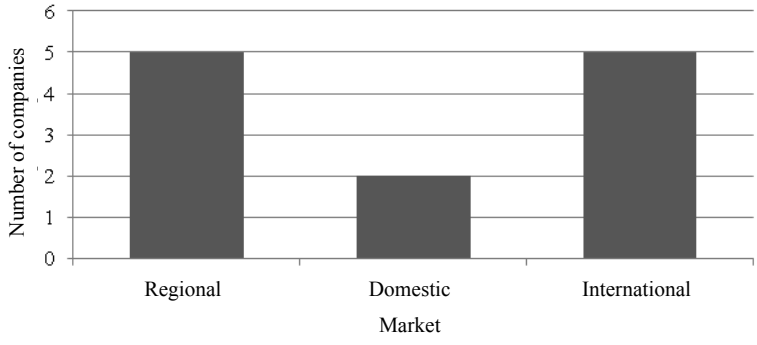

Figure 5. The reach of the conducted activities

S o u r c e: Authors' own research on the basis of the studies.

In line with the thesis of the paper stating that invention and diffusion of innovation depend on the innovative potential of the company, the following Figure presents the determinants of this potential adopted by the research team (the replies allowed determination of individual determinants of innovative potential in the companies). It has been assumed that the following should be selected from among the determinants of innovative potential: managerial and employee competencies for innovation (creation of knowledge in the organization), infrastructure used, organization of work, the level of cooperation in managing knowledge and protection of knowledge generated within the company.

In the category of competencies for innovation, special attention was paid to expenditures borne by the companies for training events, duration of training events and their types, the level of education of employees and competencies in foreign languages. The skill of using modern technologies is also an important factor from the point of view of creating innovations. In case of infrastructure of the given company, which constitutes an item of innovative potential, the research took into consideration the degree of its use, databases, the type and layout of the IT system, as well as methods of communication in the company. Another criterion adopted by the research team for assessment of work organization as determinants of innovative potential were contracts of employment used by the companies, awarding boni for innovativeness, existence of the R&D department, as well as internal relations between the posts in the organization, team solving of problems, the infrastructure in support of the decision-making process or the presence of innovativeness culture in the organization. The level of external cooperation in regard to innovations is related to cooperation of a given company with other entities (e.g. business partners, research and development units). The scope of cooperation, sources of knowledge and the number of business partners are important in this category. The last factor is protection of knowledge employed by the given company, which consists of legal form of the used protection

measures, access to information, and types of databases. The stated detailed forms of the realm of changes and development of innovative capacity of a company constitute also assessment criteria for the stated areas.

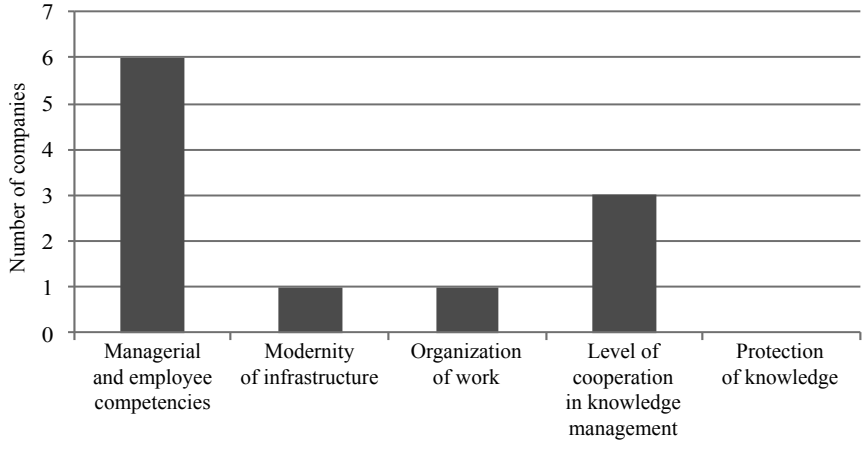

Figure 6. Criteria of company innovativeness

S o u r c e: Authors' own research on the basis of the studies.

The analysis of the collected data showed that all the examined companies declared having qualified employees. Half of them emphasized that this personnel also had innovative capacity (Figure 6). The second determinant affecting innovativeness is cooperation between the entities in the market. 3 companies declared this base for creating innovations by way of exchange of knowledge with cooperating parties. Having the appropriate modern infrastructure and organization of work (which also affects development of innovative potential) was declared by 2 tourist companies. None of them mentioned any activities aimed at protection of knowledge generated within the organization (innovative solutions), e.g. with patent protection or licences.

The analysis of the above data shows that it is mostly knowledge and skills of employees of tourist company as well as cooperation between the entities in the given industry which determines the degree of innovative potential of the given company. The question is thus whether the examined companies use their innovativeness and convert it into innovations? In an attempt to answer this question, companies were categorized in terms of their level of innovative potential, comparing it with the conducted innovative activities. The companies were respectively classified into those of low, average and high level of innovative capacity. If the company believes to meet the appropriate criteria in the scope of any one innovativeness determinant, its innovative capacity is low. If the given company uses 2 factors which affect its capacity to create innovations, the conclusion may be drawn that innovativeness of such a company is at the average level. If the companies indicated use of three or more factors

from among those listed, they were classified as belonging to the third category, of high degree of innovative potential.

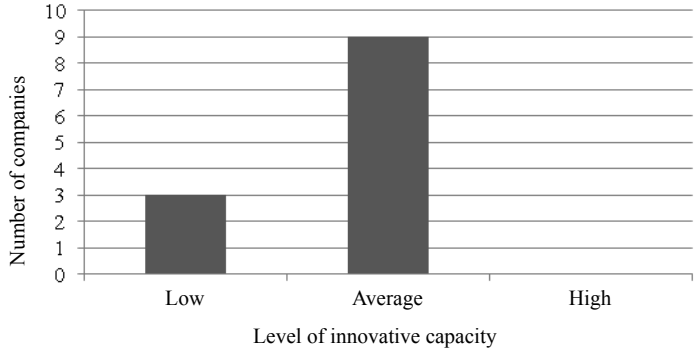

Figure 7. Level of innovative capacity in the years 2008–2010

S o u r c e: Authors' own research on the basis of the studies.

In case of the analyzed tourist companies, their innovative capacity is at the low (3 examined companies) and average (9 companies) level. Not a single of the analyzed companies was included in the third category. Despite this, these business introduced the total of 28 innovations during the period of 5 years (Figure 8). Of these, the companies with low level of innovative capacity implemented 5 innovative solutions, which were process, organizational and marketing innovations. The companies with the average level of innovative potential implemented 23 innovations: 2 product innovations, 7 process innovations, 8 organizational and 6 marketing innovations.

Tourist companies with the average level of innovative capacity implemented relatively a higher number of innovations than those of low innovation capacity. Moreover, they created product innovations valued most, while low innovative capacity companies did not provide innovations in this class.

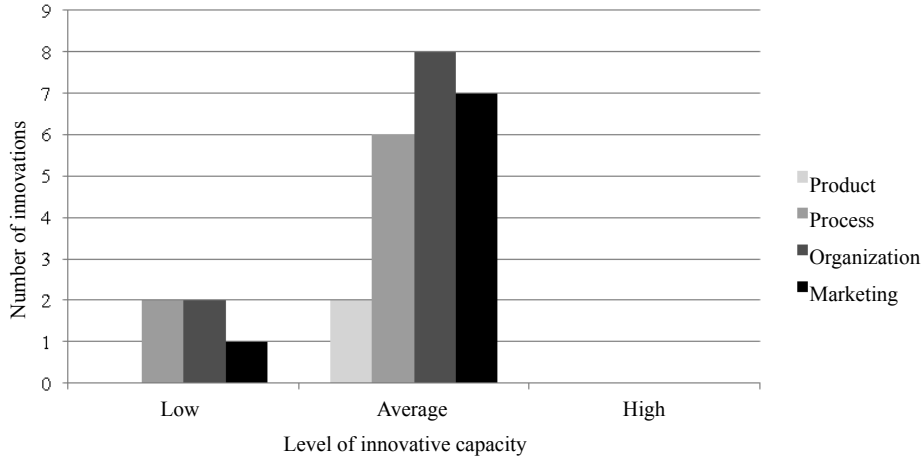

Figure 8. Number of innovations implemented according to the level of innovative capacity in companies in the years 2008–2010

S o u r c e: Authors' own research on the basis of the studies.

The presented data thus allow the statement that appropriate use of knowledge of employees, creating modern infrastructure and building relations and cooperation between market entities all constitute a significant factor necessary to create and implement innovations in tourist companies. Having and using at least one of the listed factors contributes to creating innovations in a company. Moreover, the research showed that companies of relatively low level of innovative capacity can create innovations.

5. Conclusions

Innovative activities of organizations is in essence a social phenomenon and not only (as it may seem) a technical process or an economic mechanism. Research on the innovation process thus requires interdisciplinary and multidimensional approach, to include cause and effect relations of various phenomena and processes affecting development of innovations. However, this requires expansion of the field of analysis with the issues of innovative potential and innovation capacity which form a premise for innovative activities, i.e. invention and diffusion of innovations.

The paper presents (in view of the said methodical and practical issues) a new concept of the innovation process. Isolation and definition of organizational capacity of an organization as a determinant of invention and diffusion of innovations is an important element of this model. This approach to innovativeness allows assessment of progress in all or selected areas of company innovativeness on the one hand, and

also allows programming and planning of its dynamics and shape in accordance with the strategy of the organization.

The results of the analysis of theoretical and empirical research presented in the paper showed that survival and development of tourist companies depend largely on their innovativeness. The basic determinants for building or developing this innovativeness are:

- managerial and employee competencies, especially experiential knowledge and knowledge acquired from the outside;
- the level of cooperation in the scope of knowledge, i.e. building alliances of knowledge with clients and other interested;
- innovativeness of the IT infrastructure, that is development of IT and communication systems;
- organization of work and pro-innovative organizational culture.

While emphasizing immense significance of knowledge in the innovation process, it has been assumed that the stated determinants of innovativeness constitute crucial elements of the system of knowledge and knowledge management in a tourist company, a system which is mostly understood in the subjective, structural and instrumental aspects.

In reference to the ground of the Małopolska tourist companies in the research, one has to emphasize that they are not capable, and have no economic nor technical capacity to manage research and development activities. Under these circumstances, the basic source of innovations in these companies is knowledge acquired from the outside, from other companies or institutions (learning from others). This acceptance and implementation of new concepts, ideas, processes, and products constitutes a significant determinant of innovativeness in tourism organizations. Clients (tourists) form another source of knowledge and innovativeness, of no less significance. The point is thus not only in marketing research, i.e. identification of changing preferences and likes of clients, but including it, with the properly structured loyalty programme and system of motivation in active participation in the process of increasing innovative capacity, or even innovation invention.

The objective of any tourist company is to increase performance, which is regarded the most important expression of rational management. It is currently inseparably related to acceptance and implementation of innovations, whose basic premise is development of innovative capacity of the company with the said directions and methods of development of innovativeness.

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Innowacyjność przedsiębiorstw turystycznych – próba oceny

Streszczenie: Celem badań opisanych w artykule jest przedstawienie koncepcji procesu innowacji oraz sformułowanie modelu potencjału innowacyjnego przedsiębiorstw turystycznych wraz z podaniem determinant tego potencjału. Wykorzystując tę koncepcję, dokonano oceny innowacyjności badanych przedsiębiorstw turystycznych przynależących do sektora MŚP. Treści zawarte we wprowadzeniu pozwoliły na wstępną identyfikację kwestii: Jak konkurencyjność i globalizacja stymulują innowacyjność turystyki? Jakie są zasadnicze źródła innowacyjności przedsiębiorstw turystycznych? Jak znaczącą rolę odgrywają czynnik ludzki, przedsiębiorczość i wiedza w procesie innowacji? W dalszej części artykułu przedstawiono dyskusję wokół podstawowych pojęć związanych z procesem innowacji i zdolnością innowacyjną organizacji, po-

dano klasyfikacje innowacji w turystyce. Scharakteryzowano determinanty potencjału innowacyjnego takie jak: kompetencje pracownicze, nowoczesność infrastruktury, poziom kooperacji w zarządzaniu wiedzą, sposób organizacji pracy i zabezpieczenie wiedzy (innowacji) powstałej wewnątrz organizacji. Empiryczny fragment pracy zawiera wyniki badań nad oceną stopnia innowacyjności przedsiębiorstw branży turystycznej regionu małopolskiego. Stwierdzono, że to przede wszystkim wiedza i umiejętności pracowników firm turystycznych oraz współpraca między podmiotami danej branży stanowią o stopniu innowacyjności przedsiębiorstwa. Zasadniczym źródłem innowacji przedsiębiorstw turystycznych jest więc wiedza pracowników oraz wiedza pozyskiwana z zewnątrz, od innych organizacji.

S ł o w a k l u c z o w e: innowacje, potencjał innowacyjny, przedsiębiorstwo turystyczne, wyniki badań