

GUIDELINES FOR IMPROVEMENT OF CULTURAL TOURISM PRODUCT MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING COMPETENCIES (LITHUANIA'S CASE)

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Abstract

Tourism development is guaranteed, if employees are well-trained and have appropriate competencies. Sale and popularisation of cultural tourism products requires even more competencies. The aim of this article is to analyse the selected cultural tourism products and reveal problematic areas of management and marketing competencies which occur during the provision of these products to customers. The article also aims at setting out the guidelines for the development of human resources. To this end, the triangulation of research methods was chosen. A survey was carried out which combined meta-analyses of several cultural tourism products (encompassing document analysis, website analysis and observation). The conducted research highlighted the problematic areas and the direction in which improvement could be achieved. It should be emphasised that Lithuania has a big potential of cultural tourism (heritage) products, however, the opportunities are poorly availed of and this area is not competitive enough. For this reason, it is important to note that to place an attractive cultural tourism product on the market of tourism or to offer attractive services more attention should be focused on clients and the improvement of competencies related to market knowledge and customer-oriented learning.

Key words: cultural tourism, tourism products, competencies, improvement.

Classification JEL: M12 – Personnel Management.

1. Introduction

The European Union documents stress the need for competent specialists in the sector of tourism. Communication from the Commission on “Europe, the world’s No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe” (2010) emphasises that with the increase in the challenges of competitiveness in the European tourism sector and with new opportunities opening, the problem of improvement of human resources (namely, their professional skills) in the tourism sector should be also emphasised so that employees could adapt to new technologies and expectations in the market. Tourism development is related to the environmental, transport, agricultural, integration to the EU, regional, small and middle-sized business development. Part of the functions of the tourism development directly or indirectly falls within the field of competence of many ministries and other institutions (*On Long-Term Development Strategy, 2002*). Innovation, fast process modernisation and continuously emerging new opportunities for tourism development demonstrate that specialists who work in the tourism field need complex and inter-disciplinary knowledge to retain their competitiveness in the market. However, the analysis of scientific sources shows lack of research on human resources in the sector of tourism.

MacCannell (2005), Holloway and Taylor (2006) state that as early as in the late 20th century the number of organised trips declined and an increasing number of tourists preferred individual travelling. Lickorish and Jenkins (2007) notice that mass tourism failed to satisfy all travelling needs and motives. These trends pose new challenges to those who work in the tourism sector. The need to seek for and work with not only organised tourist groups but with single travellers arose.

Notably, the motive of many trips is to visit natural and cultural heritage and to know it better. These changes contribute to a faster development of cultural and natural tourism. Specific tourist preferences and interests affect the occurrence of extraordinary cultural tourism

products. Newly-occurred tourism products in the market and their popularity prompt the development of new types of cultural tourism (e.g., historical tourism, culinary (or gastronomic) tourism, ethnographic tourism, etc.). This article focuses on cultural tourism and its products.

Researchers have noticed that tourists choose not only new ways of travelling but also untraditional and undiscovered trip destinations. This is a perfect opportunity for Lithuania to introduce and popularise its cultural heritage and tourism products developed on the basis of cultural heritage for the reason that some extraordinary tangible and intangible heritage which reflects Lithuania's historical uniqueness has been preserved.

Purpose of the research: Having carried out the analysis of cases of cultural tourism product, to reveal the problematic areas of product management and marketing competencies as well as to draw up preliminary guidelines for the development of professional skills.

2. Scope of the cultural tourism product

In terms of developmental dynamics and the number of staff, tourism is one of the leading economic sectors in the world. The dynamic development of the sector poses new challenges and requirements for those who work in this area (new competencies and skills are required).

The number of tourists is annually growing and, as forecast say, these trends will continue. It should be emphasised that the Continental Europe receives more than a half of all world's tourists. France still remains the leader of tourism in Europe. However, the popularity of other tourism regions is also growing. The World Tourism Organisation forecasts that interest in the Central and Easter European tourism region (to which Lithuania belongs as well) will also grow (*UNWTO, Tourism Highlights, Edition 2015*).

Growing numbers of tourists positively affect the expansion of certain types of tourism. One of such types of tourism which is becoming increasingly popular is cultural tourism. The importance of development of cultural tourism to a country is more and more often emphasised in national (*The National Tourism Development Programme 2007–2013*) and international documents (*Europa 2020*). Cultural tourism could be considered the type of tourism which is typical for the European Union and encompasses architectural, ethnographic and industrial heritage thus constituting the economic structure of the region.

Scientific sources emphasise the significance of a stronger relation between tourism and culture and cultural industry in seeking to develop attractive tourism products.

Cultural tourism products which are developed on the basis of heritage play an important role in the range of experiences of those who use tourism products. This range of experiences involves recreational, cultural and educational as well as social aspects. Tourists tend to positively assess heritage tourism products for the gained experience, emotions, impressions, and knowledge on the location. They find these products attractive because they are authentic, original and real (*Io, 2013: 902–903*).

The authenticity of tourism product is a concept which has considerably evolved since its initial meaning which was related to the existence of external criteria, the understanding of the location and culture. The modern understanding of authenticity is often linked to the ways in which specific values are 'performed', to feedback (response) which is generated in tourists by respective experience, and to the extent they experience authentic self-perception (*Sims, 2009:321–326*). According to Sims (2009: 326), it is likely that the product and the occasion will be associated with authenticity, if it (1) fits in with tourists' preconception of what is typical for the experience in that location; (2) it is enhanced by a corresponding environment; and (3) is linked to certain traditions or the element of naturalness. Thus the concept of heritage can be examined through different aspects and this gives the opportunity to discuss correlation between the past and the present, historical aspects and modern challenges. It is important to analyse heritage in the context of modern tourism as a social construct which is continuously developed

and ever changing, involves the concept of preservation of 'tradition and innovation', and adaptation in new situation (*Bessièrè, 1998: 27*).

In Lithuania, cultural tourism is seen as having a huge potential, however, it is also admitted that this sector of tourism poses a number of problems, including the shortage of information, and the qualification of specialists working in the tourism sector (*Barkauskienė & Barkauskas, 2012: 936*). People working in the objects of heritage rarely have sufficient knowledge and skills to present the available potential in an attractive and innovative manner. And this, in turn, often determines the tourist's choice of trip direction: tourists do not visit objects which do not contribute to their personality's improvement and do not give any additional knowledge (learning while travelling).

In recent decades, a peculiar and clearly identifiable segment of the tourism market has emerged which is directly linked to education (*Ritchie, Carr & Cooper, 2003:10*), where learning is seen as a general interest of a trip and many new things are learned during the trip (tourism first), or learning can be a specific purpose of a trip, for instance, in the case where a person travels to another country to study (education first). This type (education first) of travels include school tours, language schools, experience of university and college students. Educational tourism is linked to lifelong learning, i.e. type of activity which is engaged in by people of any age at any stage of their life and during which the aim is to improve knowledge, skills and competencies in personal, civil, social and/or occupational fields. For this reason, this type of tourism is perceived as adult or even senior tourism. Although there is no sufficient research on education tourism or any related literature on this subject, some research on schoolchildren tourism (*Dale, Ritchie & Keating, 2012: 805; Dale, 2013: 23*) and student tourism as one of the target groups of educational tourism, can be found (*Tashlai & Ivanov, 2014*).

The changing motives for travelling and the goals of travelling contribute to the occurrence of sub-types of cultural tourism. An increasingly higher number of tourists are interested in ethnographic and architectural tourism products. Tourists often 'deviate' from popular tourist routes and travel to less visited places for their unique heritage and location. For example, water and wind mills which receive more attention of tourists. Folklore tourism is also becoming popular for the possibility to experience live cognition, for the reason that it is involving and giving the opportunity to participate, though it is a relatively new type of tourism product. In discussing the combination of folklore and tourism, a phenomenon of festival tourism has been developing (*Jordan, 2015:1-5*).

The products of gastronomic tourism are no less important. They often enable tourists to combine different types of heritage and to present them to tourists in a complex and 'packaged' manner.

However, to become interesting and popular not only to local tourists but also to foreign ones, a lot of effort and time has to be put into these cultural tourism products so as to replenish one's knowledge and skills.

3. Specificity of competencies of human resources in tourism sector

The concept of competence is analysed in a quite broad and comprehensive manner in the modern research literature (*Le Deist & Winterton, 2005: 27-46*). Personal competencies are perhaps most often analysed as the object of educational system where this term closely interacts with the concept of qualification. When discussing employees' competencies in the context of organisation, Boyatzis (*1982: 21*) was one of the first to define the concept of competence saying that it is the essential characteristic of an employee related to the best or most effective performance of work. The correlation between performance efficiency and competence has been highlighted by a number of researchers (*Spencer & Spencer, 1993; Le Deist & Winterton, 2005: 27-46*). The focus of this concept is the best result. However, the

scope of the modern concept of competence also includes the description of competence from the viewpoint of an individual where competence is defined as the “totality of personal peculiarities, encompassing knowledge, skills, motives, attitudes, personal characteristics which can be used by an individual to help him/her achieve professional (organisation’s) goals” (*Gražulis & Makuckienė, 2013*) and as the key personal characteristic related to effective higher-level performance of work. Competencies are analysed from different approaches and comprised of values, attitudes, motives and self-esteem. (*Le Deist & Winterton, 2005: 27–46*). A person and his/her traits related to the occupational context are in the heart of this conception.

Just like in any other field, specialists related to the tourism sector require both deep personal competencies and specific skills and knowledge. Another important factor is that the competencies of human resources in the tourism sector depend on the scale (certain location-focused, national, international) as well. The characteristic feature of this sector is continuous innovations and fast process modernisation, and new tourism development opportunities. They all demonstrate that working specialists need complex and inter-disciplinary knowledge so that they can remain competitive in the market and that the available competences have to be continuously developed. For example, with the popularity of the idea of sustainable tourism, the need of new competencies and skills to implement this idea in practice occurs (by applying tourism resources for the process of learning and education), particularly, by adapting cultural and natural resources for the needs of tourism.

Competencies of human resources of the tourism sector depend on the social, economic, political and technological context in which organisations operate. Surveys show that in less developed countries the tourism sector is often defined as a low-skills sector; meanwhile, developed countries do not show this trend. “In most developing countries<...> the skills base that exists in the economy may not be tuned to effective tourism work. In developed countries, skills shortages exist as a result of the image problems that the sector has, demand factors such as seasonality and changes in the technical focus of education and training programmes within the college system” (*Pender & Sharpley, 2004: 90*).

It should be noted that the challenge of managing human resources in tourism sector lies in that a typical tourism sector organisation is difficult to define (*Pender & Sharpley: 87*) because there are many organisations operating in the market of this sector and offering a wide range of tourism products both directly related to tourism and supplying specific products/providing specific services which can be also used for the needs of tourism. Tourism services are rendered by many organisations. They are of different type (public sector and business entities, non-governmental organisations), independent or engaged in different activities (assets operators, tourism agencies, restaurants, hotels, tourism information centres, museums, etc.) and pursue their specific goals. Subject to the type of organisation, its activities and offered services, the coverage of employees’ competencies is different.

An important area of activities of tourism companies is the development of tourism products/ services and sales organisations. This activity includes solutions and actions providing conditions for the tourism product to occur and move from product/service developer to the customer. The nature of tourism products/services is specific. These services often have an intangible component (the customer gain subjective experience), they are not accumulated, they are time and place dependent and are developed in an immediate interaction with the customer (*Pender & Sharpley: 89*). The specificity of the tourism product/services determines the type of competences of human resources in the tourism sector. Seeking to ensure the quality of services, the participants of the tourism market must focus on the users of tourism services and on their needs (*Navickiene & Danileviciene, 2011: 104*). One more important component in the tourism product/services development is customer-oriented learning. It is a significant area of market knowledge competence (*Li & Calantone, 1998: 14*). Eventually, proper

presentation of information on tourism products at the product/service realisation stage gains special meaning and importance and requires additional competences of specialists to present this information to potential tourism markets.

In this context, the importance of the communicative competence (*Izdonaite-Medziuniene, Žalys & Žalienė, 2008: 56–58*) and cooperative social competence should be stressed. In the broadest sense, the latter is understood as communication through working and learning environments (*Izdonaite-Medziuniene & Medziunas, 2008: 29*). Researchers who scrutinise the content of this competence discuss a wide range of abilities and skills required for its development, namely, the ability to negotiate, effective conflict management, cooperation and collaboration, communication skills, team work skills, self-control, self-efficacy, etc. (*Izdonaite-Medziuniene & Medziunas, 2008: 29–31*). All aforementioned abilities and skills are significant to managers not only on a personal and inter-personal level but also for the cooperation among different organisations and for the creation of conditions favourable for the integration of products into the tourism market.

It should be noted that the tourism sector uses a lot of consumer commodities which are not specifically developed for tourists. The developers of such products/services may lack specific competences of product management and marketing required specifically for the tourism market.

4. Methodology

The research was carried out in the period from 2013 to 2015. To achieve the goal, the triangulation of research methods was used (*Wilson, 2014*). Combination of several methods was chosen so as to collect detailed and comprehensive information. The conducted research combines meta-analyses of several cultural tourism products which include document analysis, websites analysis (publicly accessible descriptions of tourism products) and observation. This blend of methods enabled the authors of the article to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the chosen cases and highlight the problems of product management and marketing competences. The cases of cultural (historical, ethnographic and national heritage) tourism products were chosen so as to reflect the most important areas of Lithuanian national heritage (culinary heritage, folklore, architecture). Reconstruction of Medieval history and related performances were chosen as an innovative field which is increasingly gaining attractiveness (Table 1).

The cases of culinary tourism were chosen from the point of view of two aspects: the type of product and regionality. The cases of two ethnic Lithuanian culinary products (beer and bread) were analysed according to the type of product. The aspect of regional culinary tourism was applied in the analysis of one of the most peculiar regions (Samogitia or Žemaitija) as well as the case of the culinary heritage of Karaites (who are the national minority in Lithuania) which tourists find highly attractive was analysed. To demonstrate the application of ethnographic (folklore) heritage in tourism products festivals as tourism products were chosen for the analysis. To illustrate the use of products of architectural heritage in tourism products the cases with wind and water mills were chosen. These objects were chosen for their architectural particularity and applicability for the needs of tourism. As many as 55 mills (water mills are mostly found in Highlands or Aukštaitija, meanwhile, the number of wind mills is higher in Žemaitija) have survived up to nowadays, however, only part of them are used for tourism. The following criteria were used in the analysis: supply of products, authenticity, educational elements, related events and programmes, attractiveness of information, innovation, accessibility to Lithuanian and foreign tourists (Figure 1). The analysis of these aspects enabled the identification of problematic areas of management and marketing competences typical to product developers.

Table 1. Research methods and sources (own study)

Type of cultural tourism product	Methods	Research basis (sources)
Products of culinary heritage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Based on the recommended product (bread, beer); ○ Based on region (culinary heritage of Karaites, products of Samogitia (Žemaitija)) 	Analysis of internet sources (websites); observation	Websites of organisations which offer tourism services and provide information on the offered products. During the non-structural observation individual cases of product presentation were analysed. As many as 58 internet sources were analysed, and xx cases of observation were recorded
Products of ethnographic tourism (festivals).	Analysis of internet sources (websites); document analysis	Websites of events organised by ethno-cultural centres (Vilnius Ethnical Culture Centre, Klaipėda Ethnical Culture Centre, Kaunas National Culture Centre) in Lithuania and folklore groups were analysed. The analysis focused on the artistic event plans of amateurs who foster the traditions of ethnographic regions, regional culture, non-material cultural heritage and song festivals as well as events which took place in the period from 2011 to 2013 and in 2015.
Products of architectural heritage (mills)	Analysis of internet sources (websites); observation	First, information on the available water and wind mills in Lithuania was collected from internet sources. Subject to their condition and usability and use for the needs of tourism, 18 objects were selected. The criteria of the selection: accessibility, tourism infrastructure in mills, the range of offered services, organisation of educational programmes, and advertising for the mill.
Reconstruction of Medieval history and artistic performance	Document analysis; Analysis of internet sources (websites); observation	Document analysis included the analysis of programmes of Medieval feast in the Trakai Peninsula Castle (programmes of 2006-2014 were available); Observation was conducted during the two wide-scale events in the Trakai Castle Museum and Kernavė.

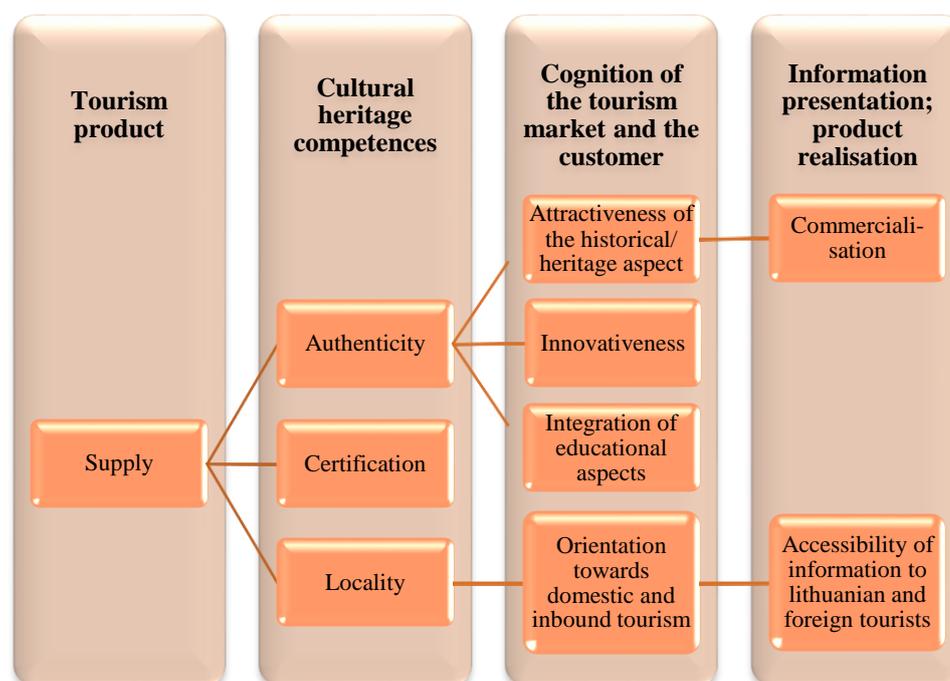


Figure 1. Aspects of the Analysis of the Survey Data (own study)

Web sites analysis is quite widely used method in tourism discourse studies (*Hallett & Kaplan-Weinger, 2010: 2*). The information reflected in web sites not only provides a certain knowledge on tourism products and shows the main product attractiveness guidelines, but also can be a motivating/demotivating factor to use one or the other product. The presentation of information is directly linked to the product management and marketing competence.

5. Analysis of the results

It has been determined that there is a wide range of authentic, almost un-commercialised cultural tourism products on offer (Figure 2). Developers of the analysed products are professionals who are experts in a corresponding area of culture or heritage and are capable of creating authentic products which might be attractive to potential tourism markets. However, referring to the conducted analysis, an assumption can be made that product developers lack specific tourism product management and marketing competencies, they fail to adequately assess the potentials of the tourism market, thus majority of the offered products are characteristic of locality and are poorly adjusted for the attraction of foreign tourists.

When analysing the aspects of attraction of local and foreign tourists, the problem of assessing some products in an unambiguous manner is encountered. For instance, the Reconstruction of Medieval History and Artistic Performance. The analysis of visitors has shown that such events are mostly visited by local residents and guests from neighbouring localities and by only a very small number of tourists. Meanwhile, the list of participants of the events includes the participants not only from Lithuania and the countries in its vicinity but also Western Europe (*Žuromskaitė & Dačiulytė, 2014: 236–241*). The examination of the architectural heritage (mills) case has also revealed an unambiguous situation. Some owners establish hotels and mass caterers in their mills (water mills, in particular, for attractiveness of their localisation), whose services are becoming increasingly popular among domestic as well as foreign tourists. Meanwhile, there is also a group of owners which adjusts mills (wind mills, especially) for the needs of cultural and educational tourism. As educational programmes are provided in Lithuanian only, these objects are not in demand by foreign tourists and are more visited by local tourists (*Stankevičiūtė & Žuromskaitė, 2012: 50*).

The conducted analysis leads to the statement that the potentials of cultural tourism (heritage) products in Lithuania is high, however, it is not sufficiently used (Table 2). Organisations which are directly related to tourism (tourism information centres, municipal offices, travel organisers, etc.) where professional tourism specialists work, most often provide summary information on cultural tourism products (events, festivals, programmes, etc.) on their websites and give links to the original websites of the product developers/producers. Meanwhile, the websites of product suppliers lack attractive presentation of information, there is almost no information in English, which shows that the product is intended for local use only, or in the most optimistic case – that it is intended for the promotion of the development of local tourism. Evidently, entrepreneurship, public organisations and local communities which develop products demonstrate lack of special competencies directed towards tourist flows. An assumption could be made that there is also the lack of competencies in terms of foreign language knowledge.

Moreover, there appears to be insufficient fulfilment of functions by employees of local government institutions, and by tourism information centres which are operated by municipalities. This drawback may also be determined by the lack of corresponding competencies. Pursuant to the *Law on Tourism of the Republic of Lithuania (1998)*, institutions of local governments and tourism information centres established by them must ensure the management function of the tourism information.

While analysing the cultural heritage products, it turned out that though there are many authentic culinary heritage products preserved in Lithuania and the supply of such products is

also considerable, in often cases there is lack of competencies in relation to the presentation of information. There is also shortage of specialised corresponding tourist flow-targeted information. It must be admitted that potential developers of culinary tourism products have better competencies of product presentation where the flows of tourists are higher. An assumption could be made that such competencies are gained through experience. For instance, the analysis of the culinary heritage products of Karaites showed better results than were the results of the survey on culinary heritage of Samogitia (Žemaitija) region. This could be linked to the geographical place of residents of Karaites, namely, Trakai, the so-called old capital of Lithuania which is included in the national tourism itineraries.

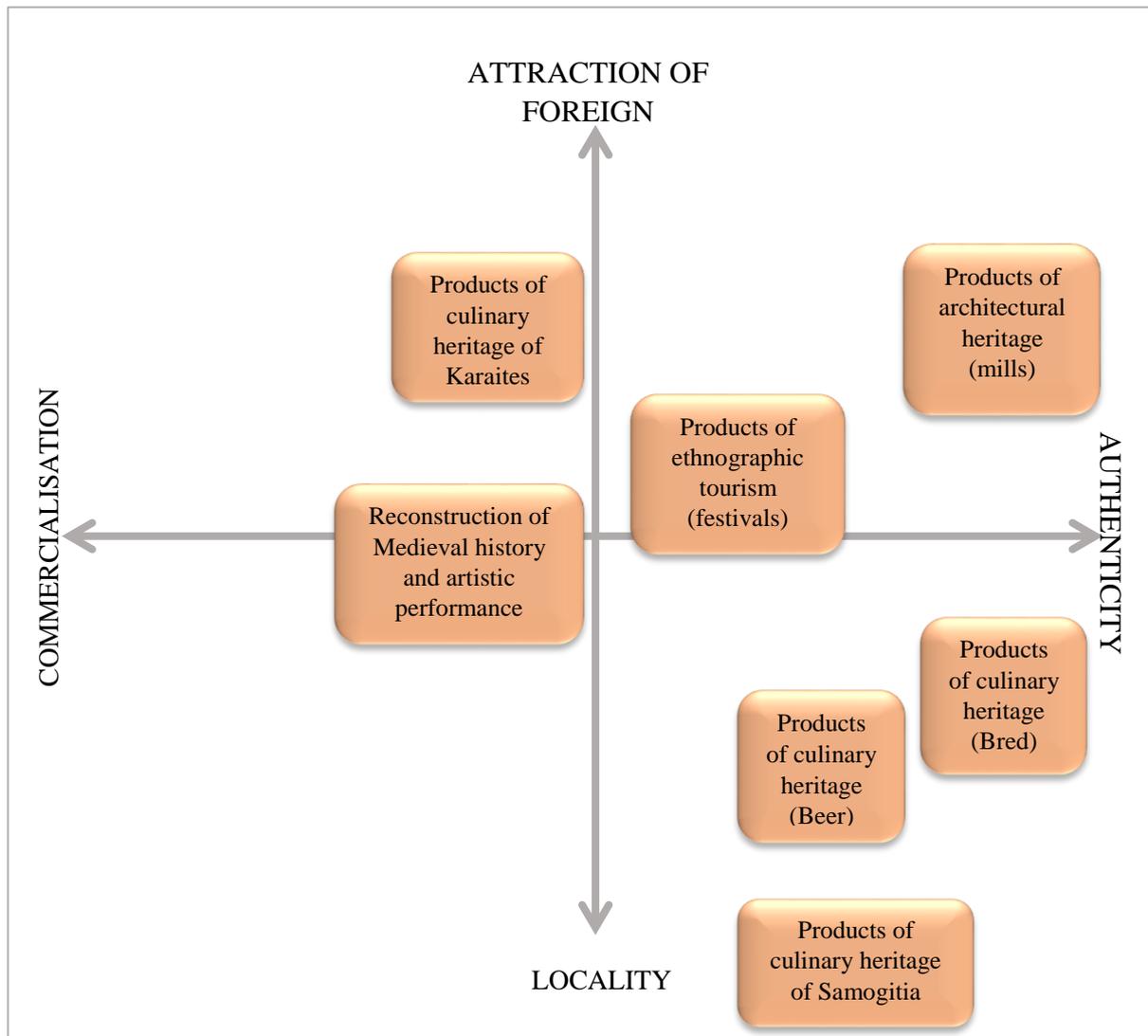


Figure 2. Characteristics of Cultural Tourism (Heritage) Products (own study)

The analysis of supply of beer as a culinary tourism product determined that part of the products are integrated in sightseeing tours, however, this product is designated for tourist groups only and is practically unavailable for individual tourists. Meanwhile, individual tourism has become an increasingly developing part of the tourism market.

Mills are one more important item of Lithuania's heritage which is used for the development of cultural tourism. Nevertheless, the applicability of these objects for the needs of tourism poses many new challenges for responsible persons as heritage needs not only to be

preserved but also presented to the consumers in an innovative manner by satisfying their educational needs.

Table 2. Problems of Cultural tourism product management (own study)

Problem identification + defined problematic aspects were identified +/- there are some problematic aspects - there are no problematic aspects	Cultural tourism products		
	Historical tourism products	Culinary tourism products	Ethnographic tourism products
Competencies of the cultural heritage area			
Authenticity of heritage	-	-	-
<i>Product commercialisation–orientation towards a mass customer and shortening of the duration of product presentation/delivery (e.g., to prepare culinary products frozen products are used)</i>	-	+/-	-
Understanding tourism market and customer			
Insufficient focus on foreign tourists (lack of information in foreign language, shortage of guides speaking foreign languages, the objects themselves provide information in Lithuanian only, programmes and events are held in Lithuanian)	+	+	+
Product locality–orientation towards the local market, little consideration of the population of other regions	+/-	+/-	+
Orientation towards narrow target groups only	-	+	+/-
<i>Lack of educational elements</i>	+/-	-	+/-
Sale/accessibility time (hardly accessible during the off-season)	+ seasonal product	-	+ seasonal product
Dissemination of information on product			
Insufficient consideration of the target market when developing product websites			
Lack of innovative tourism product publicity channels (traditional marketing means are used, information on local press, posters, brochures)	+	+	+
Majority of information is provided solely in Lithuanian	+	+	+
Product realisation			
Quality of tourism product realisation (specialists providing services lack knowledge on products; shortage of qualified guides; persons responsible for the product also lack knowledge).	+	+	+

While analysing the supply of one more culinary heritage product, bread, its characteristic of innovativeness was discovered. The main tourist product is educational programmes implemented by organisations which are directly related to tourism. These are Lithuanian museums (*Zuromskaite & Daciulyte, 2015: 273–290*). However, even in the case of this product the lack of understanding the consumer/user of the tourism product has been observed. Scientific literature analysing educational tourism has distinguished between several main target groups (*Ritchie, Carr & Cooper, 2003*): adult and seniors' educational tourism, students of schools, universities and higher education institutions. Educational tourism programmes in Lithuania are, in principle, focused on the schoolchildren's target group, thus the potentials of

the adult and older people as well as the student educational tourism market remain unused. There is only one programme integrated in the tours offered by tourism agencies.

Perhaps the closest links with tourism are seen in the area of ethnographic heritage, namely, folklore events – festivals. Following document analysis and sticking to the classification offered by O'Sullivan (2002: 331), it has been identified that small-scale home-grown festivals constitute a considerable number of ethnographic tourism products which, though being the advocates of authentic culture, have little connection with tourism because they are mostly intended for local communities. Nevertheless, there is also a considerable share of regional-level festivals. Regional-scale folklore festivals are associated with the promotion of internal/local (of domestic) tourism as their target group is participants and guests from different regions as well as from abroad. Still, some festival organisers focus on a very narrow target group, namely, groups arriving to festivals and their participants. Meanwhile, the understanding of specific tourism market customers and how to reach them is given little attention. Ethnographic (folklore) tourism products also lack advertising and innovative publicity. Domestic and inbound tourism is mostly related to the national and international-scale events which might be attributed to the group of festivals attractive to [foreign] tourists. It should be admitted that compared to other analysed products, a relatively bigger part of ethnographic heritage (festivals) tourism products are accessible in foreign language, some festivals are included in the programmes offered by tourism agencies. Nonetheless, the fact that information is presented in an insufficiently attractive manner leads to the conclusion that these products lack consideration of foreign tourists and their attraction.

6. Conclusion

To place an attractive cultural tourism product/service on the market, attention should be focused on the improvement of competencies related to market knowledge and customer-oriented learning.

Most suppliers of cultural tourism (heritage) products are organisations which are not directly related to tourism activities (business organisations, individual entrepreneurships, farmers, communities of rural areas, public institutions), and their employees lack special competencies required for the tourism activities. To avail of the potentials of cultural tourism products in a more efficient manner, it would be advisable to provide appropriate conditions for the developers of such products to improve the competencies in need in the context of life-long learning or professional improvement programmes.

The analysis of the supply of cultural tourism products has revealed the problems related to the competencies of information management both in the specialised state-established information centres and from the viewpoint of corresponding product suppliers. Besides, there is lack of cooperation among tourism sector entities. Only individual analysed cultural tourism products are incorporated in the programmes offered by specialised tourism organisations. This highlights the problems of cooperation and the competence in network development.

For this reason, to become competitive and attract more local and foreign tourists, more focus must be put on the development of human resources (namely, professional skills) and on the improvement of their competencies.

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