

Popular science abstract

The major aim of the project is to provide a detailed picture on the usefulness of knowledge management (KM) processes in a crisis situation in tourism organizations in Poland. Poland has been selected as a specific example of a country affected during the last three years by two large crises: COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine (a neighbouring country) and its consequent anxiety to come to Poland manifested by foreign tourists.

Due to the novelty of the phenomenon, the study will adopt a mixed-method approach which combines the quantitative and qualitative approaches and takes advantage of the strengths of both. The scope of the research are the tourism organizations located in Poland (123 local tourism organizations and 16 regional tourism organizations) – these organizations were chosen due to the broad scope and versatile nature of their activities within tourism industry.

The rationale for undertaking this research is based on several grounds:

- We live in the VUCA world, characterized with volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity and it should be expected that new crises will appear, i.e.: natural disasters (e.g. including climate changes and sudden phenomena, pandemic resulting from the overuse of wild habitat or the growing risk of the monkey pox spread, as well as economic, military, or technological crises.
- Tourism is one of the most vulnerable sectors to crisis impacts. It is necessary to develop tools and practices that will provide tourism organizations with support and allow them to better deal with such critical conditions.
- Empirical research in this area will enrich both the world of science and practitioners working in the field of tourism on a daily basis.

The project is of pioneering character due to several reasons. Most of all, it will integrate two important research fields: knowledge management and crisis management, which underlines its novelty and pioneering character. The study will be conducted shortly after a major COVID-19 crisis and during (or shortly after, depending on the development of the situation) the crisis resulting from the war in Ukraine. The pioneering character also results from the potential impact on the functioning of organizations – by showing how knowledge management may help tourism organizations in handling crisis, it will be possible for organizations to make improvements and be more resistant to external changes in the VUCA world.

Due to the above reasons, project results will constitute an important contribution to the development of the entire management field and discipline. The project will also have an impact on other sectors, as it is possible that some of its outcomes will be applicable also in other organizations from the whole tourism sector, as well as from other sectors.