



A Tourism Life Cycle Model: Polish Female Entrepreneurial Firms

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Abstract:

The paper presents a case study of Polish female entrepreneurs who have successfully established and operated their businesses in the tourism industry. Innovative Polish female entrepreneurship success represents a strategy for utilizing entrepreneurial resources in a manner that contributes to the social and economic development of the community. The Tourism Area Life Cycle model is used to analyze the problem areas at various stages of business operations and provide a list of strategies that make businesses successful. Conclusions are drawn concerning the sustainability of the industry's entrepreneurial activities that have been critical for the business' success.

Keywords: *Polish female entrepreneurs, tourism industry, problems and obstacles to economic growth and development, sustainable development, tourism life cycle model.*

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurs are recognized as an important factor in the development of employment and enhancement of the level of economic activity (Yago et al., 2007). The record of women entering entrepreneurial ownership has increased significantly across the world, and those women have been recognized for making vital contributions to the economic growth and development of local, national, and global economies (Bliss and Garrat, 2001). In the transitional economies of the Central and Eastern Europe, Polish female entrepreneurs have assisted communities in solving their economic and developmental challenges (Fogel, 2001). This paper focuses on female entrepreneurship by providing an examination of the business cycle within the Polish tourism industry and evaluating how the strategies adopted by those female entrepreneurs contributed to their business success and the development of their local economies.

After financial crisis of 2008, Poland has been recognized as the emerging economy achieving the most successful development and

growth of entrepreneurship. Polish female entrepreneurs have provided economic development and job formation, and it is essential to provide a synopsis of women's characteristics, identify their contributions to entrepreneurial growth into local economies, and highlight key trends and successes. The Tourism Area Life Cycle model is used to identify the problem areas at various stages of business operations and provide a list of strategies that make businesses successful at various.

Ten case studies demonstrate that a country's natural resource base and economic, political, cultural, and legislative context have had a positive impact on female involvement in business development and ownership in the Polish tourism industry. An examination of the role of entrepreneurship strategies in sustainability-oriented tourism development highlights the strategies that have been successful. These businesses have been characterized by strategy of moving away from a conventional tourism into exploration for sustainable tourism with a

culturally oriented and ecologically oriented approach to tourism.

These findings provide insights for policy making regarding business strategies for entrepreneurial development and growth in the sector of tourism industry that has an environmental focus. The most important factor for the long-term potential of entrepreneurship with the tourism industry is that the management and policies supporting entrepreneurial development should be based on sustainability, allowing enterprises to generate employment, wealth, and a healthy environment. Innovative female entrepreneurship in the tourism industry represents an approach for preservation and utilization of resources in a manner that contributes to the development of the local communities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurship has been generally acknowledged to play a leading role in economic growth and development. Early research in the field of entrepreneurship sought to determine those personality characteristics that make entrepreneurs successful (Sexton, et al. 1982). Over the years, the study of entrepreneurship has become multi-dimensional (Bliss and Garrat, 2001). An approach that gained support explains entrepreneurial success by combining personal characteristics and ideas with the business environment to promote or impede the development of entrepreneurship (Baron, 2000; Corman et al. 1996). As a result, there are many studies that suggest combining personal characteristics, the business environment, and business ideas to identify the factors that promoted or hampered the creation and operation of successful entrepreneurship (Baron, 2000; Morrison et al., 2003; Zapalska, 1997). Bliss and Garratt (2001) analyzed a variety of historical and cultural factors to stress that certain factors hinder the entrepreneurs' efforts to participate in the transition process. Several authors studied government regulations, policies, and procedures and political and legal forces, favorable attitudes and public support toward entrepreneurship, the availability of loans, technical assistance, physical

facilities, and information on the success of new ventures (Getz and Carlsen, 2000).

Existing theories demonstrate the inseparability of the external environment and the entrepreneurial process (Kuratko and Hodgetts, 1989; Fogel, 2001). The concept of the external environment includes those forces and elements that are beyond the business' boundaries that affect and are affected by business actions. This includes more general economic, socio-cultural, political-legal, and technological influences that provide the broader context for entrepreneurial growth and development (Zapalska and Fogel, 1998). These external forces may affect entrepreneurship through the availability of loans, technical assistance, physical facilities, and information on the success of new ventures (Gnyawali and Fogel, 1994). Several studies on entrepreneurial environments in former Soviet-bloc economies demonstrate that nations can increase the likelihood of new venture start-ups, business development, and business growth by keeping rules and regulations to a minimum, offering tax breaks and other incentives, and making financial resources, training, and counseling services available to start-up entrepreneurial ventures (Gartner 1990, Gnyawali and Fogel, 1994; Zapalska, 1997).

Several studies indicate that entrepreneurs face numerous obstacles such as the lack of information on various aspects of business, excessive taxation, high rates of inflation, and a lack of financial assistance (Zapalska and Fogel, 1998; Zapalska 1997). These findings suggest several policy options that include providing venture capital funds and tax-based incentives, government procurement programs, defending proprietary ideas and innovations, fostering entrepreneurship by educational institutions, and minimizing entry barriers. Fogel (1994) argues that differences in social and political structures across transitional economies suggest a variation in individual factors affecting the performance of female businesses. Zapalska and Fogel (1998) found that negative public attitudes in Poland discouraged entrepreneurs and small business operators.

Bliss and Garratt (2001) analyzed a variety of historical and cultural factors hindering

Polish entrepreneurs' efforts to participate successfully in the economic transition and take advantage of the associated benefits. There have also been studies examining family entrepreneurial firms, particularly those operating in the tourism and hospitality industry of a reforming economy (Getz and Petersen, 2004). These studies argue that there is a need for a comprehensive analysis of entrepreneurship among family businesses in the tourism and hospitality business that operate in post communist economies.

Several models have been used to explain the various stages of development of entrepreneurial firms (Kazanjian, 1988). Models of organizational lifecycle and stages of development provide information on the types of problems encountered by firms over time and suggest that each stage of development (start-up, growth, maturity) is associated with a unique set of problems (Kazanjian 1988, Johnson and Storey 1993, Zapalska 1997). For example, Morrison's life-cycle model of entrepreneurial growth and development (Morrison and Williams 1999) examines elements of success and problems encountered by entrepreneurial firms at different levels of growth and development. The Tourist Cycle of Evolution Model rigorously evaluated by Agarwal (1994) and extended by Xie and Lane (2006) is another research tool for analyzing problems and difficulties at various stages of business development and growth.

The Tourist Cycle Evolution Model facilitates the analysis of Polish entrepreneurial firms that operate within tourism industry and specifically focuses on problems, competencies, and environmental characteristics that must be present for the firm to grow and sustain successful development and remain competitive. This study analyzes entrepreneurship by examining respondents' unique personality characteristics, the process of innovation, organizational creation, value and profit creation, growth, and the relationship between an owner and a cultural and heritage based environment. This study presents the current situation for the tourism industry by analyzing a variety of factors that might have a negative influence the results of the performance

of these businesses in question in perspective of sustainability characteristics.

METHODOLOGY

The classical approach to analyzing the tourism industry relies on a Butler's (1980) Tourism Life Cycle (TLC) model which provides a framework for predicting and managing tourism's economic development and impact over its life cycle stages. As a standard demonstration of the business cycle within tourist industry, this model has been used to identify the dynamic characteristic of the industry and to propose a general process of development and possible decline which could be avoided by appropriate planning and management strategies. As illustrated in Figure 1, the TLC model describes six stages in the development of a tourist industry: *exploration*, *involvement*, *development*, *consolidation*, *stagnation* and *decline* or *rejuvenation*. The model has been used to understand the starting phase of operation of the tourism entrepreneurial ventures, their progress, how they influence management and marketing methods throughout the life cycle, and to identify the challenges that they face during the various stages of operation.

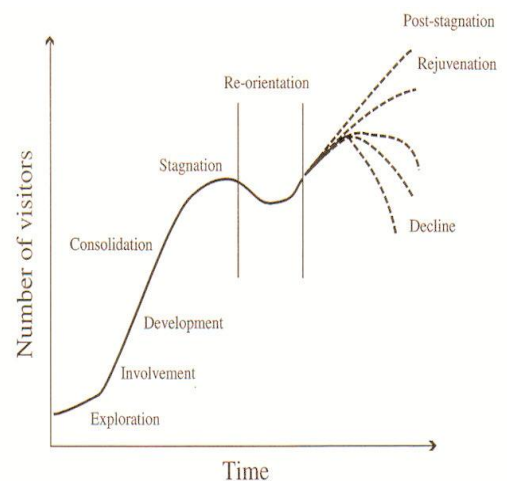


Figure 1: Modification of the Butler Tourist Cycle of Evolution Model (Agarwal, 1994).

A tourism venture begins with the *Exploration* stage where the destination is

relatively unknown with a small numbers of visitor due to lack of access, facilities, and market information. During the *Involvement* stage local residents offer facilities for tourists, and as more people discover the tourist destination and its attractions, the facilities and services may increase and improve due to an increase in demand for the tourist attractions that are being offered. The tourism venture then enters the *Development* stage where its growth and level of growth increases and is affected by various factors. During the *Consolidation* the area or business continues to attract tourists, but some tension develops between the hosts and the tourists before the industry enters the *Stagnation* stage, where maximum capacity is achieved due to social and environmental limits. The rapid ascent from the *Exploration* stage to the *Stagnation* stage is illustrated by the exponential contour of the growth curve in Figure 1.

The TLC model does not provide information about what happens beyond the *Stagnation* stage, and some authors (Berry, 2006; Agarwa, 1994) have explored additional stages beyond the *Stagnation* stage. Xie and Lane (2006) proposed a variation of the original TLC model by introducing additional stages beyond the *Stagnation* stage leading to the Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) model. According to TALC model, after *Stagnation* the facilities for the tourists may decline as they become old and overused. As the numbers of tourists decreases, the tourist businesses find it difficult to sustain their operation leading to *Decline* stage. However, in the long run the tourism industry trend may change its direction and orientation leading to *Rejuvenation* stage or *Post-stagnation* stage. During those two stages both investment level and modernisation can take place leading to improvements and an increase in tourist attractions and visitors. Some of the factors causing tourist destinations to follow such trajectories include technological development and investment in areas that increase the competitive advantage of the tourist products and services. The unmarked trajectory in Figure 1 between the *Rejuvenation* and *Decline* stages represents examples of tourism ventures that are

vulnerable to disasters and political, economic, or financial crises.

SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

The data presented in this paper represents responses of ten female entrepreneurs and were collected to examine characteristics and to study and assess small entrepreneurial firms that operate within the tourism industry in Poland. The variables analyzed include:

1. Perceived stage of operation and factors positively affecting the level of production and services within the tourism industry in the community. An open-ended response was included for additional information.
2. Perceived impact and changes in the community resulting from tourism. Respondents were asked to describe the changes, if any, their tourism service had brought to their communities. An open-ended response was included for additional information.
3. Perceived problems and challenges within various stages of operations. An open-ended response was included for additional information.

The questions were organized around the TALC model to emphasize the importance of control and responsibility in managing the tourist areas and to offer a list of problems that need to be addressed. The model is used to explain the development of tourist businesses, to emphasize the need for proactive and strategic planning, and to provide guidance for strategic decision making. The life cycle model has been adopted to analyze factors that contribute to success and failure at various stages of growth and operation and explain the role of various strategies across various stages and particularly in overcoming the stagnation period.

Tourism sustainability traditionally has been defined as a set of principles, political prescriptions, and management methods that establish a path to develop tourism in combination with the protection of environmental, cultural, and infrastructure resources of tourist destinations (Hunter and Green, 1989). Some of the questions

included in a survey inquired whether the businesses used the environmental resources available, maintained ecological processes, helped conserve and educate about natural resources, protected functional integrity of natural ecosystem, preserved the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserved established and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contributed to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.

The data were gathered through emails as well as a telephone survey of ten women who own and manage entrepreneurial businesses that operate in the tourism industry located across various regions of Poland. The survey instruments were emailed to the owner-managers prior to the telephone survey and provided them with information on the reasons and the goal of the research project and assured the confidentiality of the results. The telephone surveys resulted in a high response rate (100 percent). Respondents answered various questions and provided additional needed information electronically. The responses were grouped into categories to identify common types of businesses and characteristics contributing to or inhibiting ventures into entrepreneurship and

identifying the factors that helped or created barriers for the businesses' growth throughout the all stages of the TALC model.

RESULTS

Poland has been considered as one of the most diverse European countries with respect to the development and growth of small entrepreneurial businesses in the tourism industry. The increasing interest in exploration of Polish heritage and natural beauty created an increased demand for various small business family services that support the global tourism industry in Poland. Since the 1990s, entrepreneurial female firms within the tourism and hospitality industry have developed in all parts of Poland. Those businesses developed quickly and remain relatively small but are extremely successful within their scales of operation. The ten entrepreneurial firms that are included in this study are a good representation of businesses that have been developed, owned, and operated by female entrepreneurs across various locations of Poland since the collapse of the Soviet bloc.

Table 1. Basic Characteristics of Ten Female Businesses in the Tourism Industry in Poland

Type of Business	Number of Workers	Geographic Location	Types of Clients
Art Gallery and Studio	10	City	Domestic and International
Beauty Salon and Wellness Spa	5	Suburb	Domestic and International
Agro-tourism Bed and Breakfast	9	Country	Domestic and International
The Farm and Guesthouse	11	Country	Domestic
The Health and Spa Guesthouse	12	Suburb	Domestic and International
Horseback Riding Farm	5	Country	Domestic
The Café Shop	6	Small town	Domestic and International
Cosmetic, Dental, and Plastic Surgery	15	Small town	Domestic and International
Horseback Riding in the Wilderness	4	Country	Domestic and International
The Pottery House	8	Suburb	Domestic and International

Table 1 indicates that the size of the businesses is relatively small, but over the years most of entrepreneurs increased their services to international clientele which increased the size of employment and level of services. The number of full-time workers ranged from four to fifteen, but

all businesses increased their operations significantly since the beginning of their operations. Most of employment and business opportunities have been offered on the basis of traditional, cultural and environment orientation, and family ties. The female entrepreneurs

expressed that they were able to increase competitiveness of their businesses and contribute to local economic growth and job creation. The average length of activity has been about twenty five years. Most of the respondents had already set up their ventures before the 1990s at the time when the restrictions on private activity were lifted. The skills acquired before 1990 were not always useful in the new economic and political environment.

This sample indicates that tourism activities cover a wide spectrum of services. The most common tourist activities have been provided to support activities related to visiting pilgrimage places, nature. And culture. Visitors can rent rooms in the family house, in a separate house on the farm or a camping space and enjoy a real break from the 21st century hectic and stressful life-style. The eco-farms also provide wholesome home cooking prepared with healthy, organic, and farm-fresh vegetable, fruits, herbs and other ingredients.

The Agro-tourism Bed and Breakfast offers services such as bed and breakfasts where their tourists can also appreciate learning how to make pottery while enjoying peaceful surroundings and close contact with nature. The Farm and Guesthouse offers guesthouses where their clients can actively participate in fruit, wild berry, and mushroom picking adventures. The Café Shop offers service of restaurant and cafés; Beauty Salon and Wellness Spa provides wellness and health services, and the Health and Spa Guesthouse serves sport and entertainment training, and rental services. The Pottery House allows domestic and international tourists to stay on a small organic eco-farm. Holidays and vacations spent at a Horseback Riding Farm allow guests to take part in farm chores, ride horses, catch fish in the farm pond or nearby lake or river,

and enjoy a cycling tour or hike in the countryside.

According to an owner of Cosmetic, Dental, and Plastic Surgery business, foreign tourists are being attracted by his dental, cosmetic, medical, and corrective surgery as the service is of high quality and at a much lower price that is being charged in other countries in EU or in the US. Services provided by Beauty Salon and Wellness Spa are attractive to the foreign tourists as they are being packaged with other products such as recreational activities provided in varying environmental climatic conditions, usually bordering national parks and reserves. They offer the possibility of spending time outdoors and taking advantage of the qualities of eco-tourism by the sea, in the mountains or lakes. Their tourists can choose between salt water pools, thermal baths, the natural mineral water springs as well as enjoy the eco-system provided throughout the entire country.

The successful entrepreneurs are typically those who developed a strong comparative and competitive advantage by focusing on a particular product, service, or niche market. Offering higher quality and better services and products have been the keys to survival and rapid growth. These products and services are offered to tourists who are more educated, sophisticated, and oriented towards healthy and active lifestyles. Tourism in a post-communist Poland is perceived to be oriented not only towards tourists who are better educated but also to those who are more culturally aware and attuned to the natural environment. These changes in social trends were prompted by political and economic changes that led to an increased standard of living and have generated new demand patterns for travel and tourism and changing product needs.

Table 2. Major Factors Influencing Women to Become Entrepreneurs

Business	Major Factors Influencing Women to Become Entrepreneurs
Art Gallery and Studio	achiever, income-driven entrepreneur, personal fulfillment, unique service, protect socio-cultural authenticity
Beauty Salon and Wellness Spa	achiever, income-driven entrepreneur, personal fulfillment, unique service
Agro-tourism Bed and	achiever, income-driven entrepreneur, personal fulfillment,

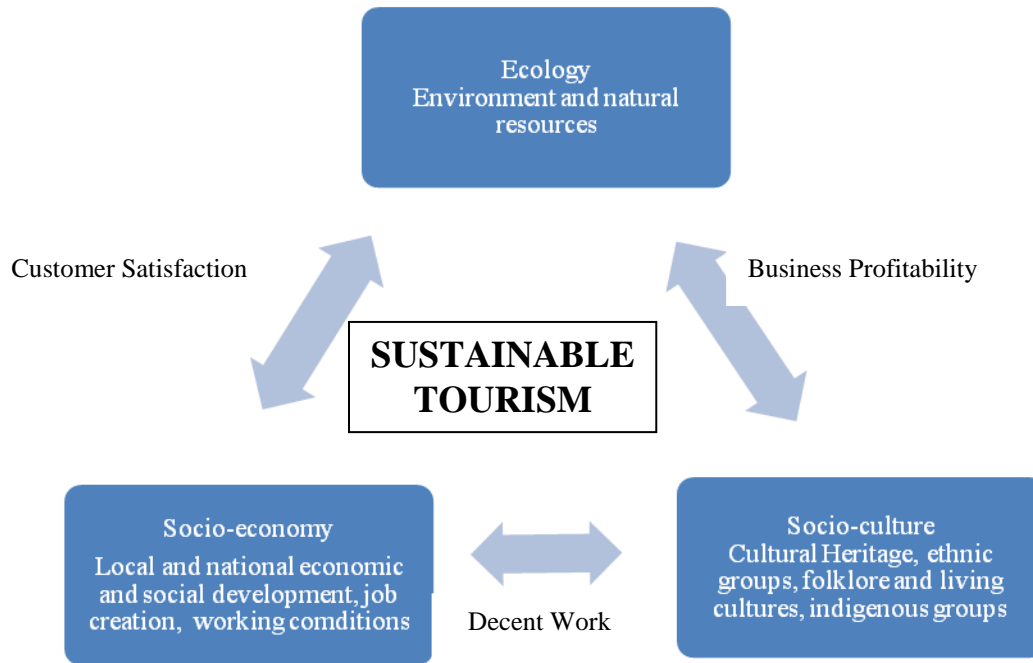
Breakfast	unique service, protect socio-cultural authenticity
The Farm and Guesthouse	achiever, income-driven entrepreneur, personal fulfillment, unique service, protect socio-cultural authenticity
The Health and Spa Guesthouse	achiever, income-driven entrepreneur, unique service protect socio-cultural authenticity
Horseback Riding Farm	Achiever, family-driven, income-driven entrepreneur, unique service, protect socio-cultural authenticity
The Café Shop	achiever, income-driven entrepreneur, sustainable enterprise unique service
Cosmetic, Dental, Plastic Surgery	achiever, block-factor, income-driven entrepreneur
Horseback Riding in the Wilderness	family-driven, income-driven entrepreneur, personal fulfillment, unique service, protect socio-cultural authenticity
The Pottery House	achiever, family-driven, income-driven entrepreneur, personal fulfillment, unique service

The female entrepreneurs' focus and strategies have made their tourism and hospitality businesses competitively successful in a challenging business environment driven by various factors that are presented in Table 2. The respondents stated that their businesses created a strong positive impact on a local environment, community, society, and economy. According to their experience, their businesses have been a source of growth, wealth creation, and employment and respectable work for their local economy. They consider cooperation among governments, businesses, labor, and society to be important to promote sustainable enterprises and assure the quality of employment.

The rewards of business ownership include the satisfaction of building a business as well as

employing people and helping them achieve their full potential. The female entrepreneurs started their businesses because of a social or spiritual need and the need for personal fulfillment. Some have a vision of supporting the growth of the business to build a healthy work environment or create a service that will support wellness and the healthy life-style of their clients. For these female entrepreneurs, owning and operating a business is an important part of their careers and their personal goals. They all expressed that hard work, the vision of how the business could grow, and personal sacrifices were the key to their success. Respondents said that finding a unique product or service was a driving force for a business success.

Figure 2. Components of Sustainable Tourism



Source: Tourism and Sustainable Development. GTZ, Sector Project. ITB Convention, Berlin 2009.

These interviews indicated that entrepreneurial businesses can form a sustainable tourism industry. Substantial changes have been made to the range of products and services they have been offered over the past decade. The businesses have become more dynamic and subject to constant change and evolution towards sustainability, health, and wellness. Those characteristics are supported by a model of sustainable tourism proposed and developed by Tourism and Sustainable Development (GTZ, Sector Project. ITB Convention, Berlin 2009). The model is composed of three fundamentals: social justice, economic development, and environmental integrity, as illustrated in Figure 2. Sustainable tourism’s orientation is directed towards the enhancement of local prosperity, generation of economic prosperity, and income and employment for workers without affecting the

environment, heritage, or culture of the tourist destinations.

Respondents stated that the primary sources of sustainability within their businesses came from socio-economic, socio-culture elements, ecology, and natural and environmental resources (Table 3). The success of and sustainability of these ventures came from optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes, and helping to conserve culture, heritage, natural resources, and biodiversity. Concern has been expressed as regarding the possible pollution and destruction of folklore and the cultural heritage of the local communities and regions, but local communities focus on maintaining culture, tradition, and folklore as well as protecting the environment. Local government and European Union legislation has contributed to protective environmental steps, and management of tourism sector focuses on adopting uniform standards of environmental friendliness and support.

Table 3. Sources of Sustainable Tourism and Current Stage of Operation

Name of the Business	Sources of Sustainable Tourism	Operation Stage
Art Gallery and Studio	Socio-economy, socio-culture elements	Stagnation
Beauty Salon and Wellness Spa	Socio-economy, socio-culture elements	Stagnation

Agro-tourism Bed and Breakfast	Socio-economy, socio-culture elements, ecology, natural and environmental resources	Post-stagnation
The Farm and Guesthouse	Socio-economy, socio-culture elements, ecology, natural and environmental resources	Post-stagnation
The Health and Spa Guesthouse	Socio-economy, socio-culture elements	Consolidation
Horseback Riding Farm	Socio-economy, socio-culture elements, ecology, natural and environmental resources	Post-Stagnation
The Café Shop	Socio-economy, socio-culture elements	Rejuvenation
Cosmetic, Dental, Plastic Surgery	Socio-economy, socio-culture elements	Development
Horseback Riding in the Wilderness	Socio-economy, socio-culture elements, ecology, natural and environmental resources	Stagnation
The Pottery House	Socio-economy, socio-culture elements, ecology, natural and environmental resources	Stagnation

Table 3 also represents a stage of the businesses operations based on the TALC model. The businesses included in this study operate in various stages of the TLAC model. Those respondents who operate beyond the reorientation stage expressed that their businesses have never been directed towards a Decline stage but were able to achieve the Post-stagnation or Rejuvenation stage. There were several strategies for business growth and success that led to achieving the operation stage beyond the Development or Consolidation stage. Most respondents stated that their growth and development came from optimal use of environmental resources. Respondents stated that their businesses developed a climate of respect for the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserved the cultural heritage and traditional values, and contributed to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.

Table 4. The Stage of Operation Based on the TALC Model and Problems Encountered

Operation Stage	Primary Problems Encountered
Exploration	Management, marketing, advertising, market knowledge, experience, financing, planning, development of an innovative product or service
Involvement	Management, marketing, advertising, market knowledge, experience, financing, planning, development of an innovative product or service
Development	Management, marketing, advertising, market knowledge, experience, financing, planning, development of an innovative product or service
Consolidation	Marketing, market knowledge, financing, planning, development of an innovative product or service
Stagnation	Management, financing, planning
Reorientation	Financing, planning
Post-stagnation	Management, financing
Rejuvenation	Financing, market knowledge, planning

The problems encountered across various stages of operation occurred a number of times (Table 4). Marketing and people management issues featured strongly in the responses. The

problems of finance and marketing were quoted as being major impediments, and lack of experience and development of innovative product were the factors that created a primary need for financing

their businesses. It was not clear from the responses whether the financial and marketing impediments were a symptom of other problems, like bad management leading to a cash-flow crisis, or the actual cause, as if they could not raise enough start-up capital for the business at the beginning of their operations. The most common problems reported were market knowledge and planning, but a lack of financial capital was more important during earlier stages of operations. All those problems were present in first four stages of the business operations. During last four stages, Stagnation, Reorientation, Post-stagnation, and Rejuvenation, the list of problems encountered was short and included management, planning, and financing.

Most of the respondents started their businesses from scratch with an original and innovative niche in a product, service, or market. All respondents stated that they were confident about their business direction and their success was achieved after they developed the product or service that was innovative and very new to the local economy. They communicated their goals and business ideas to potential investors, family members, and friends. They had innovative ideas for the product or market and effective strategies and marketing practices. They were able to grow their businesses to the level of Stagnation or beyond.

The conceptual product, service, and business ideas for most entrepreneurs demonstrate a high degree of innovative and original thinking. According to respondents, their success came from their abilities to recognize and utilize the best market conditions and cultural elements to

start and develop their businesses. The entrepreneurs were able to multitask and efficiently allocate limited financial resources throughout the early stages of development and launch of their business ventures. There was a high level of determination and tolerance for ambiguity. For most respondents prior experience was not necessary for success, but all respondents were well educated with at least three years of college education. The most important strategies for success included: focusing on the customer, having a plan, being flexible and passionate, keeping track of business direction and the impact on the local economy, not giving up, cherishing one's own family, and focusing on staying healthy. The lists of successful strategies based on a stage of business operation are provided in Table 5.

The female entrepreneurs expressed that they never gave up. Failure was a reason to be persistent, learning market opportunities that were very dynamic during first stages of their operation. Cherishing a family was also a strong characteristic of a successful business owner. Spending plenty quality time with a family was as important as working hard on developing the business. Focusing on a customer was critical. They all believed that the success of business depended on the quality of the experience provided to the customers. Respondents also stated that business must be conducted at a personal level; bringing a unique personality into a business attracts customers and brought those customers back. Both short-term and long-term plans should include all goals and the steps the entrepreneur plans to take to meet those goals.

Table 5. The Stage of Operation Based on the TALC Model and the Most Successful Strategies

Operation Stage	The Most Successful Strategies
Exploration	Focus on the Customer, Have a Plan, Be Flexible, Be Passionate, Keep Track of Business Direction and Impact on Local Economy, Don't Give Up, Cherish Own Family
Involvement	Focus on the Customer, Have a Plan, Be Flexible, Be Passionate, Keep Track of Business Direction and Impact on Local Economy, Don't Give Up, Cherish Own Family, Stay Healthy
Development	Focus on the Customer, Have a Plan, Be Flexible, Be Passionate, Keep Track of Business Direction and Impact on Local Economy, Don't

	Give Up, Cherish Own Family, Stay Healthy
Consolidation	Focus on the Customer, Have a Plan, Be Flexible, Be Passionate, Keep Track of Business Direction and Impact on Local Economy, Don't Give Up, Stay Healthy
Stagnation	Focus on the Customer, Have a Plan, Be Flexible, Be Passionate Keep, Track of Business Direction and Impact on Local Economy, Don't Give Up, Cherish Own Family, Stay Healthy
Reorientation	Focus on the Customer, Have a Plan, Be Flexible, Be Passionate Keep, Track of Business Direction and Impact on Local Economy
Post-stagnation	Track of Business Direction and Impact on Local Economy, Don't Give Up, Cherish Own Family, Stay Healthy
Rejuvenation	Track of Business Direction and Impact on Local Economy, Don't Give Up, Cherish Own Family, Stay Healthy

Respondents stated that it was critical to be flexible. While it was essential to have a business plan, their business become successful and survived difficult operation times as the changes were made it if it becomes necessary to do so. These female entrepreneurs were passionate and determined to provide employment and a healthy work environment for their employees. They were not interested in their business to operate solely in order to make money, and financial goals were not allowed to overshadow their passion. Keeping written records on every aspect of the business and proper accounting were not easy at first, but attention to such details improved business profits and reorientation of the business into areas that provided greatest return on their investments. Staying healthy was critical because illness would cause the business to suffer.

CONCLUSIONS

For more than two decades Polish economy has been adjusting its laws and economic institutions to the EU regulations. It has moved more to establish basic market policies and trade, and these reforms were successful in generating economic growth. The transition from state-planned to market-oriented economies in Poland has provided valuable lessons for developing countries and international assistance organizations seeking to accelerate private enterprise expansion.

The demand for wellness, agro, and sustainable tourism products will continue to grow. A higher demand for wellness and medical

tourism and the widespread use of technology and advanced services has created a need for education, training, and skills. There have been increasing expectations across all areas in the industry for employees to become multi-skilled and trained.

Medical and wellness tourism requires specific skills from employees within the industry. Hotels and accommodation services linked to hospitals, wellness centers, homes, or spas require workers with knowledge in these services. To encourage potential clients, clinics, spas, and entrepreneurial travel agencies have started offering foreign patients entire wellness and medical packages that include medical treatments, spa stays, and trips to cultural and historical sites. Many small-scale family entrepreneurial projects have been developed to combine tourism with unemployment reduction. On a larger scale this would require the implementation of effective national strategies.

This study highlights the entrepreneurial characteristics that affect the success of the female entrepreneurs. The analysis reveals that education, training in the specific sector, and prior experience help in operating the enterprise successfully. The entrepreneurs' dreams motivated them to start the enterprise and it was a crucial factor in starting and operating the business.

The Polish female entrepreneurs were motivated for economic development, job creation, and delivery of health-oriented services and products. Their business success was tied to their commitment to enhance local prosperity.

They also expressed that their commitment to generate income and decent employment for workers without affecting the environment and culture of the tourist destinations ensured the long-term viability and competitiveness of their enterprises. The development and growth of the businesses provided a positive experience for local populations, other tourism industry sectors, workers, and the tourists themselves.

The following recommendations can be made to ensure the best practices for female entrepreneurs in other countries. There needs to be a supportive cultural environment. Polish female entrepreneurs looked beyond wealth creation to provide opportunities and protection in the workplace. The success of their businesses came from an optimal use of environmental resources that constituted a key element in tourism development. Respondents stated that an orientation towards ecotourism and sustainable tourism services created a climate of respect for the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities. By providing positive experiences for both visitors and hosts they also provided direct financial benefits for conservation and financial benefits and empowerment for local people.

These results indicate that Polish female entrepreneurs prefer low-risk and return businesses. Most of the innovations within their business operations were simple but ingenious and had their origins in individual's ability to observe what was available and what was required by the market and then changing the direction of products or services to suit market needs. Most of these female entrepreneurs combined a commitment to the care of their clients with a dedication to finding the most appropriate services and products for the market.

This study reflects insights from diverse intellectual perspectives. Similar studies need to be conducted in the other areas of the Eastern and Central Europe. Such focused efforts can help develop a more complete understanding of the causes, correlations, and consequences of successful, sustainable entrepreneurship. The Polish government and the European Union tourism authorities recognize that Poland is rich in environmental and cultural assets and provided

support and infrastructure to facilitate the development of sustainable tourism. The transformation of the Polish economy into a tourism oriented economy is an illustration of innovation and enterprise creation that has already proven to add value to the local community and economy. Small enterprise development needs to be guided and managed strategically, and appropriate models of development that are sensitive to the cultures and entrepreneurial motivations of the local population would provide a continuous growth in a sustainability-oriented tourism development.

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