

PROMOTION MANAGEMENT OF THE REGION ON THE EXAMPLE OF SELECTED LOCAL INITIATIVES

Agnieszka PREDYGIER

Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce; agnieszka.predygier@ujk.edu.pl, ORCID: 0000-0003-3283-2592

Purpose: The aim of the article was to answer the following questions: Does the promotion of local initiatives influence the popularization of the region? How does the cooperation of inter-organizational stakeholders affect the development of the region? How do local initiatives promote the Świętokrzyskie region? What is the role and importance of stakeholders in creating local initiatives? What are the effects of inter-organizational relations in the described examples of local initiatives?

Design/methodology/approach: The article uses the case study research method, which seems to be interesting and little known local initiatives to promote the Świętokrzyskie region, and refers to the concept of regional management in terms of the "blue ocean strategy" (e.g. building relationships and inter-organizational cooperation).

Findings: The article presents examples of good practice used by municipal managers in the Świętokrzyskie region. These examples best reflect the competitive success of the implemented "blue ocean" strategies based on cooperation between stakeholders, searching for common values and building inter-organizational relationship networks as a key element of competitive advantage.

Practical implications: Managers of the region can apply a blue ocean strategy based on regional partnership, building inter-organizational relationship networks and inter-organizational collaboration. When creating a new strategy, mayors, starosts and marshals should apply actions to increase competitive advantage.

Social implications: A strategy based on the values of partnership and cooperation consists in: observing alternative strategic solutions of other regions, educating them, applying various strategies, reprogramming the thinking of the local society (e.g. not only communication routes are important, but also ecological behaviours), creating solutions favourable for the development of the municipality (e.g. a common sewage treatment plant, health resort), each of which will have the benefit of creating new solutions, accepting innovations, distinctive features, shaping external trends (e.g. the Park of Miniature World Buildings in Krajno).

Originality/value: The article is recommended to region managers (mayors, starosts, marshals) who are looking for a strategy to increase the region's competitiveness. The article constitutes an innovative solution for the application of the "blue ocean strategy", which so far has been described only in the case of enterprises. The article is a guide for "region managers" who build a strategy of competitiveness based on inter-organizational cooperation and activate stakeholders to create local initiatives. The competitive success of two local initiatives in the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship is for them a source of research, analyses as well as a guide to good practice. The article presents the implementation of the "blue ocean strategy" in an original way, by promoting the role of the region's stakeholders.

Keywords: promotion management of the region, stakeholders as change leaders, local initiatives, inter-organizational relations.

Category of the paper: Studies, point of view.

1. Introduction

The impact of modern technology, know-how, which force the adaptation of competitive strategies or the development of new ways, methods, techniques to win an increasingly demanding customer. Nowadays, the marketing strategy is not just about finding ways to satisfy the customer's needs, it is also about beating competitors, gaining favourable relationships, establishing new rules of the market game (Doyle, 2003; Kaplan, Norton, 2010).

New competitive strategies of enterprises, in which managers propose to abandon products in favour of modern solutions, seem to be gaining more and more fans (Google, Apple, General Electric, Boeing, ABB). Managers and analysts of modern brands (Coca-Cola) emphasize the contribution of marketing to creating value for shareholders. "Marketing is a management process focused on maximizing returns for shareholders by creating relationships with valued customers and creating a competitive advantage" (Doyle, 2003, p. 35).

Marketing has always been a social process, a philosophy of modern man, because its influence includes: managers, customers, partners, communities, competitors, employees, relations between them, building a network of international relations, that is, it includes the so-called transnationalism of international corporations, as described by Ph. Kotler (Kotler, Jatusripitak, Maesincee, 1997).

Today, the approach to region management is also changing, hence the article describes the process of attractive changes in terms of local initiatives (Klamut, 2014; Kożuch et al., 2018). Global requirements, opportunities and threats force a change in the approach to municipal, district and voivodeship management. The management of the region cannot be based only on administering the area and fulfilling legal norms. The key element is the diversification of the competitive development of the areas, management of their development, disproportions in their development demonstrate the need for managerial skills. Nowadays, a mayor, staroste or marshal is not only a representative of the local self-government in the area. The region's managers are knowledgeable, educated people who solve regional problems related to the specificity of managing a given local society on a daily basis. "Regional managers", as they should be called, not only manage budgetary funds, but are responsible for acquiring new external funds (e.g. European funds), undertaking investments with a view to the future of the municipality, powiat or voivodship. The area managers implement the strategy of the region's competitiveness by fulfilling the needs of the local community, acquiring funds for them, as well as being responsible for the implementation of the strategy to the society, which can

evaluate their work and recall them by expressing dissatisfaction during elections (Pakulska, 2012; Romanowski, 2008). The region's managers carry out their task, not as officials, but behaving like managers who can be dismissed for managerial inefficiency in an enterprise (dismissed after elections). Therefore, it is appropriate to call mayors, starosts, voivodship marshals "managers of the region", because they are responsible for generating profits in the form of meeting social needs, they also bear the risk of being dismissed if their competences are deemed insufficient by the local society to achieve the effects of local task implementation. Thus, a theory of governance today best fulfils the task of managing the competitiveness of the region (Klamut, 2014).

The theory of governance (Pawłowska, 2016) has created the concept of the "manager of the region" ("new public management") who seeks the most effective methods of promoting his/her region, products, in order to meet local needs by implementing the most effective strategies of competitiveness. The global world has rediscovered the old truth that "in unity is strength", "two heads are better than one". All these slogans implement the idea of cooperation, which can be a key competitive advantage of the region. Today, the old competitive advantages (cheap raw material, cheap labour, destructive competition) are ruining the world. The answer to the needs of the modern world is a strategy of inter-organizational cooperation, which eliminates the strategy of destructive competition and introduces partnership and value innovation. "Value innovation is created in an area where the company's activities positively affect both the cost structure and the value offered to buyers. Cost savings are made by eliminating and reducing these factors, which cause the intensification of competition in the industry. Buyer value is increased by bringing in and creating items that the industry has not previously offered. Over time, there is a further reduction in costs due to economies of scale achieved as the scale of the sales volume of what generates the highest value increases" (Chan Kim, Mauborgne, 2005, p. 36).

Building a modern competitive advantage strategy by managers of the region should involve a shift from a destructive competitive strategy to a cooperation strategy known as the "blue ocean strategy". Traditional forms of competition required: focusing on building a competitive position within a strategic group, better service to petitioners, maximizing the offer of values distinguishing the region, offering low-cost products and services, deepening functional and emotional orientation in the local society (practicality, relations with culture, history), spatial adaptation to a changing and uncertain environment, observing trends and immediate reactions. These were tiring and ineffective activities for local authorities. Competing in a modern region involves the following key elements: becoming aware of the distinctive features of the region, identifying the most advantageous forms of promotion and advertising, building a marketing strategy, creating communication and relations with participants of the market game in the region. The success of formulating a competitive strategy process depends on the skills of regional managers, such as:

- the ability to build the involvement of the local society (activation, formulation of clear expectations, education, awareness-raising),
- the ability to build appropriate attitude, trust and loyalty towards strategic goals presented by local managers,
- the ability to create expected behaviours, e.g. activity, voluntary cooperation, acceptance for goals, understanding the common good, commitment to the social good, emotional acceptance of good practice,
- the ability to implement the strategy, i.e. moving from "thoughts to actions", that is, implementing the established strategic goals in line with the expectations of the local society.

Therefore, the development of the region depends on the skills of the manager dealing with abilities, attracting investors for cooperation, the ability to create beneficial partnerships and cooperation of local change leaders (Bojar, Olesiński, 2007). Involving investors from various organizations in inter-organizational cooperation supports the local system of changes, builds a new quality of inter-organizational relations (Olesiński, 2010), which translates into the effects achieved for the region and its society. Some of the benefits that occur in the cooperation of science organization, business support organisation, local government and local entrepreneurs are presented below, i.e. creating local innovation systems.

The article presents synergistic effects resulting from inter-organizational cooperation in the region between various stakeholders. Support for the region's competitiveness can be achieved through the implementation of specific innovative projects that are the result of cooperation between many local organizations. These initiatives are key elements that distinguish the region from others and reflect the identification and attractiveness of local communities. The grassroots origin of these initiatives and the identification of the local society with these undertakings constitute the strength of the region's competitive advantage. The use of such initiatives by local managers represents their key management competences. Individual case studies from the Świętokrzyskie region of initiatives that constitute a structure for promoting and supporting the region's development are proposed below.

2. The case study of the Bałtów Tourist Complex

The founder of the first Jurassic dinosaur park in Poland was the Delta Association. The Bałtów Tourist Complex was created by including other tourist attractions over the years: Bałtów Zoo, Amusement Park, 5D Cinema of Emotions, Rollercoaster, Prehistoric Oceanarium, Horse Riding Centre "Kraina Koni", Witches Village "Sabatówka" or Poland in Miniature. Thanks to efficient and effective management methods and the ability to build inter-organizational relations in the marketing strategy, the venture operates all year round. In winter,

tourists can use the "Szwajcaria Bałtowska" Ski Station, and the youngest visitors can visit the Santa Claus Village. The organizers provided a full complex of guest services by providing accommodation for over 100 people in a nearby agritourism farm, 5 guest houses and numerous catering points, mini restaurants. JuraPark is an undertaking to promote the Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski region in the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship through the strategic use of historical and palaeological assets, as well as the image of the Świętokrzyskie Mountains as the oldest in Europe. The inter-organizational cooperation of the Bałtów Commune Office, the Delta Association, the Association for the Development of the Bałtów Commune "Bałt", Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce with the discovery of dinosaur traces in 2001 by Gerard Gierliński, PhD and professor Zbigniew Kotański contributed to the emergence of this initiative. Thanks to the help of the organizational strategy, Bałtów Jurassic Park has been operating since August 7, 2004 on an area of 100 ha and its promotional strategy based on the cooperation of many entities provides the most diverse entertainment area in Poland in terms of attractions. DLF Invest Sp. z o.o. has been the co-founder of the Bałtów Tourist Complex since December 2017. Managing the promotion strategy of the organization, taking into account inter-organizational relations, ensures the development of the organization and "clustering" (Predygier, 2020), i.e. the natural expansion of activities in the manner of clustered organizational forms. The success of one venture creates a synergistic effect of creating other activities that use the common promotional success strategy. The Delta Association, having successfully established the JuraPark, created a similar project in the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship (JuraPark in Solec Kujawski), JuraPark Krasiejów (near Opole), PaleoSafari Moab Giant in the USA in the state of Utah.

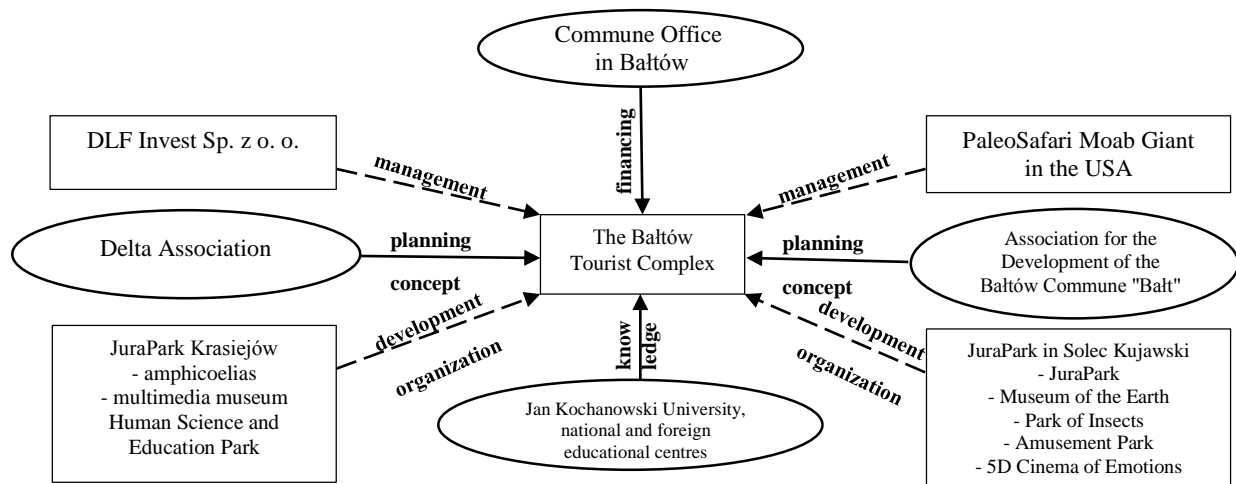


Figure 1. Managing the promotion of the Bałtów Tourist Complex in terms of inter-organizational cooperation of stakeholders.

Source: Own study.

The diagram presents the process of creating a successful strategy for the creation and promotion of the Bałtów Tourist Complex with multiple tourist attractions. The success of managing the promotion of a venture depends on the managerial skills of building inter-

organizational cooperation and the involvement of local authorities with a governance perspective (Pawłowska, 2016) based on promoting the area through the participation of stakeholders, interest in the world of science, domestic and foreign business, and involving in the initiative the inhabitants who can become local leaders of change through their actions in the association and simple sympathy for the local venture carried out in the municipality.

3. A case study of the promotion strategy of Sandomierz through a film

Managing the promotion of the region through modern forms of public communication (film) was applied in the case of the city of Sandomierz. According to estimates, about 80,000 tourists visited Sandomierz in 2008 (Diagnosis of the state of tourism in ..., 2020). Compared to 2020, taking into account the use of accommodation and ticket sales, Sandomierz was visited by approximately 300,000 people per year. The research also shows that 64% of respondents indicate television as the most common source of information and encouragement to visit Sandomierz (Szpara, Musz, 2016). In 2015, comparisons were made between the effectiveness of the promotion of Sandomierz and the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship in relation to the film "Father Matthew" versus other forms of paper and online advertising in financial terms. The research shows that if the city wanted to buy such an advertisement, it would have to spend about PLN 7 million on it only in one half of the year, and even so, the effect of this ad would be poor compared to the success of the film (Szpara, Musz, 2016). Currently, Sandomierz spends tens of thousands of zlotys a year for this, but taking into account the costs of advertising this returns the city about 14 million a year. In 2009, the rules on product placement in films were not in force and it could not be done directly, the television made a condition to find money to continue film production. At the time, the Regional Tourist Organization and the Marshal's Office of the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship co-financed the third and fourth part of "Father Matthew". The value of the share of the Sandomierz City Hall was PLN 1.5 million, which was enough for 20 episodes (Szpara, Musz, 2016). The management of the promotion of the city through the film has expanded its activity to the entire Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship, as well as to towns such as: Kielce, Bałtów, Opatów, Krzyżtopór Castle, Busko Zdrój, Kurozwęki, where the film takes place. The integral part of the series features the name "Sandomierz" and the inscription "Świętokrzyskie" below it. The success of the competitive strategy of promoting the city through the film therefore includes the synergistic effect of involving other organizations in this success. Eight years of cooperation has influenced the development of tourism, an increase in the development of a small business base, an increase in the number of hotel and agritourism facilities, an increase in the number of private accommodation (their number increased to about 1000 accommodation places in Sandomierz alone), which brought the promotional success of Kazimierz on the Vistula (Diagnosis of the state..., 2020; Faracik 2017; Szpara, Musz, 2016). Promotion management has involved other

macroregions, e.g. Subcarpathian Voivodeship with Tarnobrzeg, Baranów Sandomierski, Stalowa Wola, with which joint initiatives are implemented. The promotion strategy of the city of Sandomierz includes continuous development. The Sandomierz Wine Trail may be a tourist attraction. Sandomierz has extremely good conditions for vineyards. White wines are rated by connoisseurs as better than Spanish wines. You can stay overnight in the vineyard, educate yourself about wine production and taste wine, which is conducive to the promotional activities of the city. Orchards, used for tourist activities, are another attraction of Sandomierz resulting from the promotion of traditional activities in the area. The Sandomierz Apple Trail allows to advertise the potential of fruit farms, which provides customers for the agricultural sector and the development of tourism industry. The wine and orchard trails have been provided with agritourism activity, which may provide accommodation and food facilities for tourists, as well as become an idea for starting a business. Managing the competitiveness of the development of the city of Sandomierz through an effective marketing strategy provides benefits to other tourist attractions around Sandomierz, e.g. promotion of the Krzyżtopór castle in Ujazd, which attracts nearly 160,000 visitors annually (Faracik, 2017). The analysis of the case study of the promotion of the city of Sandomierz shows that the beneficial phenomenon of "clustering" takes place here (Predygier, 2020), i.e. the effect of synergistic benefits transferred between organizations joining the common promotion strategy. Another attraction of Sandomierz is a bicycle route connecting five voivodeships of Eastern Poland. The increase in bicycle traffic is connected with new ecological trends, promotion of a healthy lifestyle and reduction of smog. The project is carried out with the participation of 5 other voivodeships that share the same problems (unemployment, low living standard of the inhabitants), which they have been trying to solve by implementing a strategy of inter-organizational cooperation in the promotion of the region.

The originators of the strategy to promote the city of Sandomierz through a TV series were: Marshal's Office of the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship, Sandomierz City Hall, Telewizja Polska S.A. These institutions have become leaders and stakeholders in managing the promotion of the city of Sandomierz through the film. The Regional Tourism Organization used the idea of the series for promotional activities, along with the development and competitive strategies of the project being joined by other organizations from the Świętokrzyskie and Podkarpackie voivodeships. Residents of the communes of the Świętokrzyskie and Podkarpackie voivodeships, who, thanks to tourist attractions, could develop gastronomic and hotel activities for the benefit of the city and the voivodeship, became the stakeholders. The success of the promotion strategy of the city of Sandomierz is based on the involvement of residents in the implementation of the idea and their activation, thanks to which the initiative developed by implementing other projects such as: the Sandomierz Wine Trail, the Sandomierz Orchard Trail, and the Sandomierz Bicycle Trail (Faracik, 2017; Szpara, Musz, 2016). Managing the promotion of the city of Sandomierz through the promotion strategy has been successful thanks to the cooperation of many stakeholders from the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship as well as other voivodships.

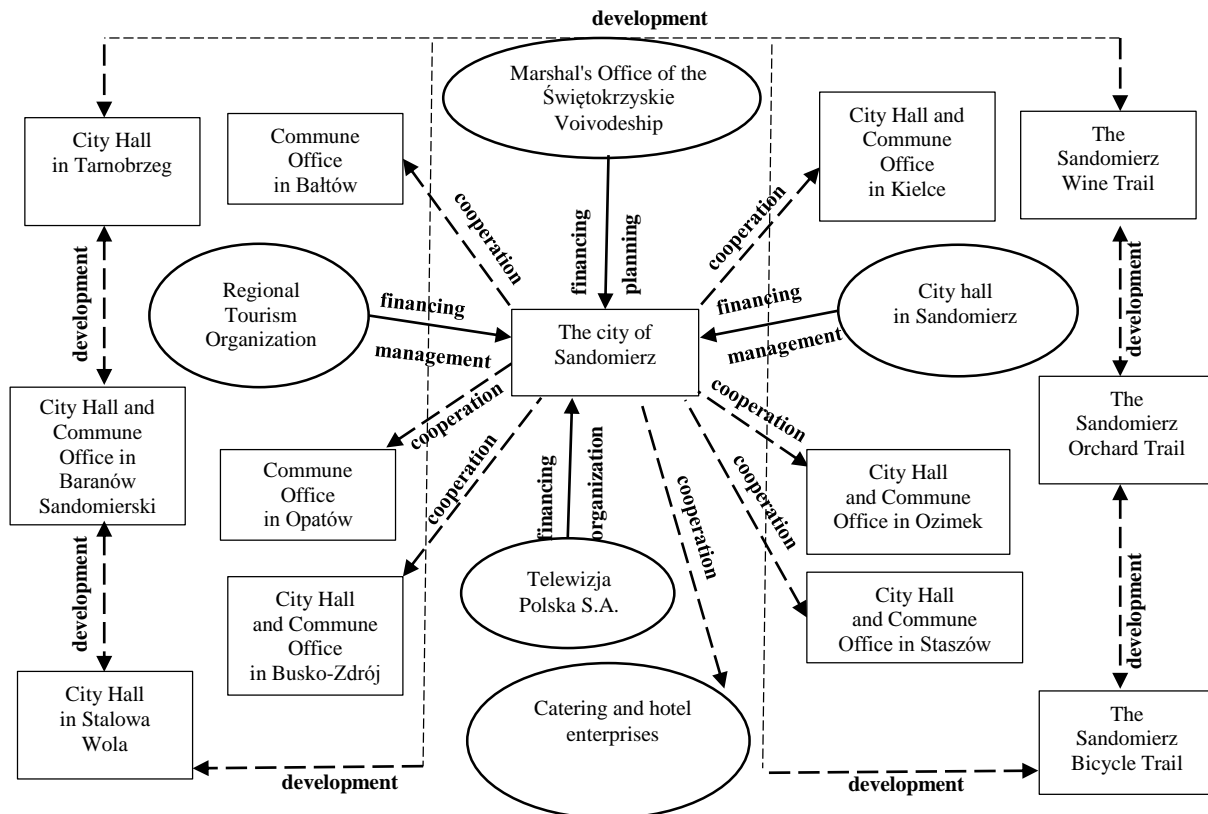


Figure 2. Managing the promotion of the City of Sandomierz in terms of inter-organizational cooperation of stakeholders.

Source: Own study.

4. Summary

Increasingly, the winners in global markets are not those who offer low prices or incur increasing capital expenditure, but those who offer new values, solutions to old products or well-known brands. Proposing new applications for old products (Vinted app), activities favouring the protection of the natural environment (Alior Bank's biodegradable Visa card), or educating the society (e.g. learning to segregate waste) seems to be the right concept, widely accepted by the society, hence the popularity of such commercials and activities of the organizations implementing them.

The case study analyses and evaluates two selected local initiatives of the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship.

Nowadays, regions build their image and plan their development by using the promotion of local initiatives created in inter-organizational cooperation. The article describes two examples of selected local initiatives that have an impact on image building and the development of inter-organizational relations in the Świętokrzyskie region. The analysis and evaluation of the promotion management of the region in the case study described in the article show that the

promotion of local initiatives increases the popularity of the region by increasing its tourist value and is a valuable tool for enriching local societies through the development of enterprises (gastronomy, hotel industry) in practice. By implementing the concept of governance, local authorities should foster the image of a region open to innovation, promotion and development of local initiatives. The promotion of local initiatives is the basis for involving local society, building knowledge about the region and creating bonds, inter-organizational relations, which in turn is conducive to the development of the region and the implementation of strategic goals.

References

1. Bojar, E., Olesiński, Z. (2007) *The emergence and development of clusters in Poland*. Warsaw: Difin.
2. Chan Kim, W., Mauborgne, R. (2005). *Blue ocean strategy*. Warsaw: MIBiznes.
3. *Diagnosis of the state of tourism in the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship* (2020). ARC Kielce: Marshal's Office of the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship, p. 25.
4. Doyle, P. (2003). *Value Marketing*. Warsaw: FELBERG S.A.
5. Kaplan, R., Norton, D.P. (2010). *Implementation of strategies to achieve competitive advantage*. Warsaw: PWN.
6. Klamut, E. (2014). Environmental protection costs versus farms. In: D. Dziawgo, G. Borys (eds.), *Accounting for sustainable development. Economy - ethics – environment. Research Work of the University of Economics in Wrocław, No. 329* (pp. 152-160). Wrocław: Publishing house of the University of Economics.
7. Kotler, Ph., Jatusripitak, S., Maesincee, S. (1997). *The Marketing of Nations*. Krakow: Publishing house of the Professional Business School.
8. Kozuch, B., Magala, S., Paliszkievicz, J. (eds.) (2018). *Managing public trust*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
9. Olesiński, Z. (2010). *Managing inter-organizational relations*. Warsaw: Economy Management Series, H.Beck Sp. z o.o.
10. Pakulska, T. (2012). Direct competitiveness of the region and the development of entrepreneurship. In: H. Godlewska-Majkowska (ed.), *Investment attractiveness as a source of entrepreneurial competitive advantages*. Warsaw: SGH.
11. Pawłowska, A. (2016). Governance as a theoretical approach - a few contentious issues. *Politics and Society*, 3(14). Rzeszów: Publishing house of the University of Rzeszów, pp. 5-17.

12. Predygier, A. (2020). Analysis and evaluation of the development potential of entities in selected Świętokrzyskie clusters. In: E. Sobczak (ed.), *Regional and local conditions for the development of the Polish economy* (pp. 89-100). Wrocław: Publishing house of the University of Economics in Wrocław.
13. Romanowski, R. (2008). Preferences of internal recipients of the territorial offer as a premise for differentiating marketing activities of local government authorities. *Scientific Notebooks of the Poznań University of Economics*, 108. Poznań: Publishing house of the University of Economics, pp. 73-90.