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Evaluation of the Tourist Potential of
Olsztyn Sub-Region in
Wamińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship**

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**USE OF THE SWOT ANALYSIS FOR EVALUATION
OF THE TOURIST POTENTIAL OF OLSZTYN
SUB-REGION IN WARMIŃSKO-MAZURSKIE
VOIVODSHIP**

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Key words: tourist potential, evaluation, SWOT analysis, sub-regions.

A b s t r a c t

Evaluation of the tourist potential of Olsztyn sub-region in Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship using the SWOT analysis was the aim of the work. The tourist potential was evaluated based on two groups of variables concerning the structural and functional resources conditioning tourist development. The studies showed that the woodiness was the major strength of the Olsztyn sub-region tourist potential. It was followed by investments in environment protection and municipal infrastructure. The major threats to tourist development in Olsztyn sub-region were the decrease in volumes of the German sentimental tourism and increasing demands of tourists concerning quality coupled with insufficient status of tourist facilities.

**WYKORZYSTANIE ANALIZY SWOT DO OCENY POTENCJAŁU TURYSTYCZNEGO
PODREGIONU OLSZTYŃSKIEGO WOJEWÓDZTWA WARMIŃSKO-MAZURSKIEGO**

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Słowa kluczowe: potencjał turystyczny, ocena, analiza SWOT, podregiony.

A b s t r a k t

Celem pracy była ocena potencjału turystycznego w podregionie olsztyńskim województwa warmińsko-mazurskiego, z wykorzystaniem analizy SWOT. Potencjał turystyczny oceniano na podstawie dwóch grup zmiennych dotyczących czynników strukturalnych i funkcjonalnych. Badania wykazały, że najważniejszym atutem potencjału turystycznego podregionu olsztyńskiego była największa w województwie warmińsko-mazurskim lesistość. Duże znaczenie dla rozwoju turystyki na tym terenie miały także inwestycje na rzecz ochrony środowiska oraz rozwój infrastruktury komunalnej. Głównymi zagrożeniami dla rozwoju turystyki w podregionie olsztyńskim były spadek wielkości niemieckiej turystyki sentymentalnej, zapotrzebowanie turystów na jakość w połączeniu z niewystarczającym stanem obiektów turystycznych.

Introduction

Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship is the area with exceptional natural and landscape values with numerous areas that are subject to legal protection representing over 46% of the total area of that voivodship. Areas of protected landscape represent over 39 percent points out of that, landscape parks almost 6 percent points and natural-landscape complexes over 0.5 percent point. The fact that during the recent years the area under eco-use, from 3.050 ha in 2004 to 20,780 ha now, that is over ten-fold, also deserves attention. More than 18% of the total area of Polish natural sanctuaries is situated in Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship. That rich natural values, also in the European scale, caused that following the accession to the European Union structures a relatively large part of the voivodship was covered by Natura 2000 representing 666,751.9 ha that is over 27% of the voivodship area. Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship, however, is diversified as concerns the share of the individual nature protection forms, share of different land use types, population density and other demographic indicators. The differences also concern the tourist and recreation facilities as well as accommodation facilities for the potential tourists. According to the Central Statistical Office data, the voivodships and sub-regions of Poland with the highest natural values are often characterised by lower development of tourism while some aspects important for the economy and organisation are related to tourism (NOWAKOWSKA 2004, pp. 11–18). The increasing importance of tourism in some regions causes that conducting appropriate policy becomes necessary for active support to development of tourism where the appropriate potential for its development exists. The development concept at the regional and local level should be based on the results of conducted analyses and evaluations considering the diversity of conditions within the area of the voivodship. Conducting the analyses is possible using the generally available Central Statistical Office data as in addition to the division into the territorial units the Office gathers some data taking into account the division of voivodships into sub-regions. This is of particular importance in case of the voivodships with high values of the natural and cultural environment (e.g. Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship) and in which industrial development is not (SZCZEPANOWSKI 2010, pp. 543–553). The SWOT analysis can be used for studies on the tourist potential of the regions. Complemented with systems of points and weights, it can serve not only evaluation of the current status but also defining the strategies of actions to be taken. The SWOT method is classified among comprehensive strategic management methods. It serves identification, evaluation of influence and investigating the strength of correlations of factors in the environment of the investigated unit and the internal factors. It is important that investigation of weaknesses and strengths as well as opportunities and threats resulting from

the environment is done in the combined way allowing investigation of the strength of correlation between the environment factors and the internal factors. Used most frequently for evaluation of the enterprise situation, the method may also be applicable to evaluation of the potential of areas that serves strategic planning, choice of the activities and development. The term potential comes from the Latin word “potential” meaning the ability, might (ZAJADACZ, ŚNIADEK 2009, pp. 35–60).

Methodology of studies

Evaluation of tourist potential of Olsztyn sub-region of Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship conducted using the SWOT analysis was the main goal of the studies.

Implementation of the main goal involved the following detailed objectives:

- Identification of elements of the tourist potential occurring in Olsztyn sub-region of Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship and evaluation of them from the perspective of positive or negative influence on development of tourism in the given area.
- Determination of factors influencing the tourist potential situated outside the Olsztyn sub-region of Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship and establishing, which of them represent opportunities and which the threats to development of tourism in the given area.

The tourist potential evaluation was conducted based on two groups of variables representing structural and functional resources conditioning development of tourism¹. The structural conditions encompassed four basic elements: tourist values, tourist development, transport access and other elements belonging to none of the earlier indicated groups. The functional conditions included the economic, political, cultural, socioeconomic, psychological and environmental conditions. The study covered the years 2010–2011.

The secondary data originated mainly from the documents generated by the Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Sports and Tourism, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Statistical Office in Olsztyn, Marshal's Office of Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship, Warmia and Mazury Spatial Planning Bureau and Warmia and Mazury Regional Tourist Organisation. The primary data was obtained through search at the institutions involved indirectly and directly in tourism in Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship.

¹ Elaborated based on: *Uwarunkowania i plany rozwoju turystyki*. 2009. Ed. Z. Młynarczyk, A. Zjadacz. Scientific Publishing House of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, after E.P. LEARNED, C.R. CHRISTENSEN K.R., ANDREWS W.D. GUTH, 1965. *Business Policy*, Texas and Cares, McGraw-Hill, London.

The SWOT analysis method was applied for processing the source data. It was divided into four stages. During stage one, 41 factors of tourist potential influencing the current and future tourist development in Olsztyn sub-region were chosen and divided according to the source of origin (internal and external factors) and the influence (positive and negative factors).

Next, the factors were described using indicators (tab. 1 and tab. 2).

Table 1
Factors of strengths and weaknesses of the tourist potential and indicators describing them

Strengths	
Item	Indicators
1	2
Woodiness	$\text{area of forests (km}^2\text{) / total area (km}^2\text{) } \times 100\%$
Share of waters	$\text{area under waters (km}^2\text{) / total area (km}^2\text{) } \times 100\%$
Share of legally protected areas	$\text{area of legally protected areas (km}^2\text{) / total area (km}^2\text{) } \times 100\%$
Industrialisation level	$\text{number of industrial enterprises / total area (100 km}^2\text{)}$
Cleanliness of the environment	wastewaters treated biologically, chemically and with increased removal of biogens in relation to the total wastewaters requiring treatment
Municipal infrastructure	$\text{population using water supply and sewer systems / total population } \times 100\%$
Population density	$\text{total population / total area (km}^2\text{)}$
Activity of territorial government units in development of strategic documents	$\text{number of strategic documents / number of counties } \times 100\%$
Investments for environment protection	$\text{outlays on fixed assets serving environment protection and water management (PLN) / total population}$
Development of overnight accommodation facilities	$\text{number of collective accommodation facilities in 2010 - number of collective accommodation facilities in 2005 / number of collective accommodation facilities in 2005}$
Road infrastructure	$\text{length of roads (km) / total area (km}^2\text{)}$
Weaknesses	
Support of tourism development from budgets of territorial government units	$\text{expenditures on tourism (PLN) / total expenditures (PLN) } \times 100\%$
Size of accompanying facilities	$\text{number of sport facilities / total area (100 km}^2\text{)}$
System of cycling paths	$\text{length of cycling paths (km) / total area (100 km}^2\text{)}$
Land development	$\text{area covered by the effective and currently prepared local physical development plans (km}^2\text{) / total area (km}^2\text{) } \times 100\%$
Status of roads	$\text{length of improved surface roads (km) / total length of roads (km) } \times 100\%$
Conditions for out of season tourism development	$\text{number of whole year collective accommodation facilities / total number of collective accommodation facilities } \times 100\%$

cont. table 1

1	2
Status of overnight accommodation facilities	number of 1, 2 and 3 star hotels / total number of hotels \times 100%
Tourist season length	number tourists staying overnight during the months from June until September / number of tourists staying overnight during the whole year \times 100%
Internal demand caused by low incomes of the population	average gross month wage as compared to the national average (%)
Status of gastronomy facilities	number of business entities registered with the REGON register operating restaurants and other gastronomy facilities / total area (100 km ²)
Concentration of population in three main urban centres	population in one of the three main urban centres / total urban population \times 100%
Status of the tourism organisation sector	number of business entities registered with the REGON register operating as organisers of tourism as well as tourist intermediaries and agents / total area (100 km ²)
Activity in organisation of tourist and sports-recreation events	number of tourist and sports-recreation events / 365 days

Source: own work based on the subject literature and territorial government units' documentation.

Table 2
Factors of opportunities and threats to the tourist potential and indicators describing them

Strengths	
Item	Indicators
1	2
Funds transferred by the European Union	European Union funds for financing EU programmes and projects (PLN) / total population
Entrepreneurship of residents	number of businesses newly registered with the REGON register / total population (10,000 persons)
Demand for domestic tourist services	number of tourists staying overnight per 1,000 residents in 2010 – number of tourists staying overnight per 1,000 residents in 2005
Access to the Baltic Sea	distance from the Baltic Sea (km)
Interest of tourists in new forms of recreation (agro-tourism)	number of agro-tourism farms / total area (100 km ²)
Border location	number of foreigners entering Poland / 365 days
Level of safety and public order	offenders detection index (%)
Level of education of the population	number of graduates from tertiary schools in 2010 – number of graduates from tertiary schools in 2005 / number of graduates from tertiary schools in 2005 \times 100%
Demand for eco-tourism	number of eco-farms in 2010 – number of eco-farms in 2005 / number of eco-farms in 2005 \times 100%

cont. table 2

Threats	
Share of population in post-productive age group	population in post-productive age group / population in the productive age group (100 people)
Unemployment level	registered unemployment rate (%)
Volume of German sentimental tourism	number of German tourists staying overnight in 2010 – number of German tourists staying overnight in 2005 / number of German tourists staying overnight in 2005 × 100%
Quality requirements of tourists concerning accommodation facilities	number of 5 star hotels / total number of hotels × 100%
External migrations of population to other voivodships and abroad	external migrations balance per 1,000 residents
Peripheral location in relation to the national centres of activity	distance of the main centre to Warsaw (km)
Air transport	passenger traffic in airports (number of persons departing) / 365 days
Transport access	number of express and national roads assuring links with the other voivodships and Europe

Source: own work based on the subject literature and territorial government units' documentation.

Next, the valuation of individual factors within each of the four categories was conducted. Each factor was allocated the point weight within the 1–3 points scale. Allocation of different weights allowed increasing the probability of correctness of the assumptions made and bringing the results closer to the actual conditions.

The weights were determined based on the subject literature concerning development of tourism in Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship as well as the analysis of documents developed by units of territorial government such as the regional strategies, local development plan, reports, studies as well as strategic and programme documents.

During stage three, each factor was evaluated by attributing to it the point score according to the 1–3 scale. Factors with positive influence, i.e. strengths and opportunities were allocated positive scores. Factors with negative influence, i.e. weaknesses and threats were allocated negative scores.

For factors belonging to strengths and weaknesses, the score was determined based on the comparison of the indicator for a given factor determined for the sub-region with the value of that indicator for the voivodship. The factor with the indicator value higher than the indicator value for the voivodship scored 3 points; when it was equal to that value – 2 points and when it was lower – 1 point.

A similar procedure was applied in case of factors belonging to opportunities and threats. The score was determined by comparing the value of the

indicator for a given factor determined for the sub-region studied with the value of that indicator for Poland. The factor with the indicator value higher than the value determined for Poland was allocated 3 points; when the value was equal to that for Poland – 2 points, and in case of a lower value – 1 point.

A different method for scoring was applied in case of three factors belonging to the categories of opportunities and threats. For the factors of access to the Baltic Sea and transport access, the highest value of the indicator scored 3 points, the intermediate – 2 points and the lowest – 1 point. The situation was the opposite in case of the peripheral location in relation to the national centres of activity. In this case the factor with the lowest indicator value scored 3 points, the intermediate value scored 2 points and the lowest – 1 point.

During the last stage the aggregated score for each of the four categories of factors was generated using the formula (ZAJADACZ, ŚNIADEK 2009):

$$O_j = \frac{\sum (R_{ij} \cdot P_{ij})}{\sum R_{ij}}$$

where:

O_j – is the aggregated score of category j ,

R_{ij} – is the rank (weight) allocated to component i of category j ,

P_{ij} – is the point score of component i of category j .

Evaluation results were presented in the descriptive format. Thanks to evaluation of point S positioning development strategy determination was possible. The point S coordinates were determined by balancing the sums of scores for weaknesses and strengths as well as opportunities and threats (*Analiza...* 1997, ZAJADACZ, ŚNIADEK 2009).

SWOT analysis of Olsztyn sub-region of Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship

Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship was divided into three sub-regions: Elbląg, Olsztyn and Elk. Olsztyn sub-region is the largest as concerns both the area and the population. It is characterised by the largest area of forests and protected landscape areas among the sub-regions of the voivodship but the smallest area of waters, landscape parks and natural reserves. Olsztyn sub-region possesses the best-developed road and tourist infrastructure, which is probably related to the presence of the largest town, the capital of the voivodship – Olsztyn in it. The largest number of tourists, including also tourists from Germany, visits that sub-region. Using the SWOT analysis with

allocation of scores and weights the weighted scores were computed for individual factors. This allowed evaluation of the tourist potential status in the studied sub-region. It also offered the possibility of comparing it with the other sub-regions and proposing the development concept in the future.

While evaluating the tourist potential of Olsztyn sub-region, its strengths were defined first (tab. 3). The weighted score of the strengths was 1.76. Among all the factors, woodiness of the sub-region scored the highest at 0.36. Also, investments for environment protection and municipal infrastructure scored high at 0.24. The level of industrialisation scored 0.16. The further five factors i.e. share of waters, share of legally protected areas, activity of territorial government units in development of strategic documents, development of overnight accommodation facilities as well as road infrastructure scored 0.12 each. Cleanliness of the environment and population density scored the lowest at 0.08.

Table 3
Strengths of Olsztyn sub-region

Item	Points scored (P_{ij})	Factor weight (R_{ij})	Weighted score $R_{ij} \cdot P_{ij} / \Sigma R_{ij}$
Woodiness	3	3	0.36
Share of waters	1	3	0.12
Share of legally protected areas	1	3	0.12
Industrialisation level	2	2	0.16
Cleanliness of the environment	1	2	0.08
Municipal infrastructure	3	2	0.24
Population density	2	1	0.08
Activity of territorial government units in development of strategic documents	3	1	0.12
Investments for environment protection	3	2	0.24
Development of overnight accommodation facilities	1	3	0.12
Road infrastructure	1	3	0.12
Result		$\Sigma 25$	1.76

Source: own work based on the studies.

Evaluation of the weaknesses in Olsztyn sub-region tourist potential was another issue investigated (tab. 4). The weaknesses obtained the weighted score of -1.80 . The factors concerning the support of tourism development from budgets of territorial government units and the status of roads scored the lowest (-0.30). Low scores of -0.20 were attributed to tourist development and

the number of tourist and sports-recreational events. The largest number of factors, i.e. the system of accompanying facilities, system of cycling paths, conditions for out of season tourism development, status of overnight accommodation facilities, tourist season length, status of gastronomy facilities and concentration of population in three main urban centres scored -0.10 each. The status of the tourism organisation sector (-0.07) and internal demand caused by low incomes of the population (-0.03) scored the lowest meaning that they had the smallest negative influence on tourist development of Olsztyn sub-region.

Table 4
Weaknesses of Olsztyn sub-region

Item	Points scored (P_{ij})	Factor weight (R_{ij})	Weighted score $R_{ij} \cdot P_{ij} / \Sigma R_{ij}$
Support of tourism development from budgets of territorial government units	-3	3	-0.30
Size of accompanying facilities	-1	3	-0.10
System of cycling paths	-3	1	-0.10
Land development	-3	2	-0.20
Status of roads	-3	3	-0.30
Conditions for out of season tourism development	-1	3	-0.10
Status of overnight accommodation facilities	-1	3	-0.10
Tourist season length	-1	3	-0.10
Internal demand caused by low incomes of the population	-1	1	-0.03
Status of gastronomy facilities	-1	3	-0.10
Concentration of population in three main urban centres	-3	1	-0.10
Status of the tourism organisation sector	-1	2	-0.07
Activity in organisation of tourist and sports-recreation events	-3	2	-0.20
Result		$\Sigma 30$	-1.80

Source: own work based on the studies.

Next, evaluation of the tourist potential opportunities was conducted (tab. 5). The weighted score of the factors was 1.75. Interest of tourists in new forms of recreation and demand for eco-tourism with the score of 0.45 each were considered the major opportunities for tourist development on Olsztyn sub-region. Access to the Baltic Sea (0.20) as well as demand for domestic tourist services and border location (0.15) scored significantly lower. Factors such as the funds transferred by the European Union, entrepreneurship

of residents, and level of education of the population scored 0.10 each. The level of safety and public order scored the lowest at 0.05.

Table 5

Opportunities of Olsztyn sub-region

Item	Points scored (P_{ij})	Factor weight (R_{ij})	Weighted score $R_{ij} \cdot P_{ij} / \sum R_{ij}$
Funds transferred by the European Union	1	2	0.10
Entrepreneurship of residents	1	2	0.10
Demand for domestic tourist services	1	3	0.15
Access to the Baltic Sea	2	2	0.20
Interest of tourists in new forms of recreation (agro-tourism)	3	3	0.45
Border location	1	3	0.15
Level of safety and public order	1	1	0.05
Level of education of the population	2	1	0.10
Demand for eco-tourism	3	3	0.45
Result		Σ 20	1.75

Source: own work based on the studies.

Evaluation of threats to the tourist potential of Olsztyn sub-region was conducted next (tab. 6). The weighted score was -2.34 . The lowest scores (-0.50 each) were attributed to the volume of German sentimental tourism, quality requirements of tourists concerning accommodation facilities and air transport. The factor of external migrations of population to other voivodships and abroad scored -0.33 . The other factors generated higher scores. The unemployment level and transport access scored -0.17 each while peripheral location in relation to the national centres of activity scored just -0.11 . The share of population in post-productive age group with the score of -0.06 was considered the smallest threat to the tourist potential of Olsztyn sub-region.

The SWOT analysis performed for Olsztyn sub-region allowed concluding that the weaknesses of tourist potential that obtained the weighted score of -1.80 exceeded slightly the strengths that scored 1.76 . The opportunities in the environment of the studied sub-region scored similar to the strengths of the tourist potential, i.e. 1.75 . The highest weighted score, -2.34 was generated by the threats. The set of the external factors indicated clearly the significant domination of threats to the tourist potential that could have negative influence on development of tourism in Olsztyn sub-region.

Based on the results of the aggregated evaluation (fig. 1.) it should be highlighted that although to a minimum extent but still weaknesses dominate over the strengths (-0.04), and threats over opportunities (-0.59).

Table 6

Threats for Olsztyn sub-region

Item	Points scored (P_{ij})	Factor weight (R_{ij})	Weighted score $R_{ij} \cdot P_{ij} / \Sigma R_{ij}$
Share of population in post-productive age group	-1	1	-0.06
Unemployment level	-3	1	-0.17
Volume of German sentimental tourism	-3	3	-0.50
Quality requirements of tourists concerning accommodation facilities	-3	3	-0.50
External migrations of population to other voivodships and abroad	-3	2	-0.33
Peripheral location in relation to the national centres of activity	-1	2	-0.11
Air transport	-3	3	-0.50
Transport access	-1	3	-0.17
Result		$\Sigma 18$	-2.34

Source: own work based on the studies.

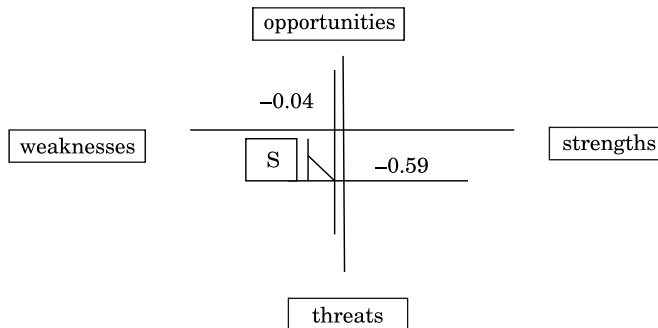


Fig. 1 Aggregated evaluation

Source: own work based on studies.

Positioning of point *S* in the MINI-MINI position causes that in practice that area could develop more intensively towards tourist use only in case of implementing urgent activities aiming at liquidation of weaknesses. The domination of weaknesses over strengths is small so it offers chances for sub-region development in that direction. Support of tourism development from budgets of territorial government units and the status of roads are the major weaknesses. The more difficult and larger differences exist between opportunities and threats. The decreasing volume of German sentimental tourism and quality requirements of tourists concerning tourist infrastructure are the major problems.

Conclusion

Analysis of the presented studies allows concluding that the highest woodiness in the entire Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship at almost 34% represents the major strength of the tourist potential in Olsztyn sub-region. Investments for environment protection and municipal infrastructure development were also highly important for development of tourism in that area. Investment outlays in fixed assets serving environment protection and water management amounted to PLN 266,380,300 a year. In the sub-region studied, over 78% of the residents had access to water supply installations and sewers. Environment cleanliness improvement and strengthening the image of Olsztyn sub-region as environmentally valuable among the potential tourists was the intended outcome of those activities.

The largest number of weaknesses in Olsztyn sub-region resulted from bad tourist development. Poor status of the roads was the major problem. Within the area covered by the studies, roads with improved surface represented only 30% of the total length of roads. Poor development of the sub-region area had negative influence on tourism-related investments. Only 11% of the studied area was covered by effective or currently drafted local physical development plans. In many cases, that situation contributed to resignation by the investors from the planned undertakings in the field of tourist development. That situation was also amplified by insufficient support to tourism from budgets of the territorial government units. The expenditures on tourism in Olsztyn sub-region represented only 0.2% of the total expenditures of territorial governments.

It should be noticed that increased interest of tourists in new forms of recreation that include agro-tourism and eco-tourism represented the major opportunity for development of tourism in Olsztyn sub-region. The sub-region studied had 409 agro-tourism farms and 1,212 eco-farms. That number increased year by year. During the years 2005 to 2010, the number of eco-farms increased from 203 to 1,212, i.e. by 497%. The authorities could also use the opportunities for tourist development resulting from the border location of Olsztyn sub-region and small distance of some counties to the Vistula River Lagoon.

Analysis of the presented data allows noticing that the decrease in the volume of German sentimental tourism represented a large threat for tourist development of Olsztyn sub-region. Visitors from Germany had a large share among the foreign visitors in the sub-region where it was almost 57%. During the years 2005–2010, the number of German tourists staying overnight decreased from 116,485 to 53,012, i.e. by over 54%. The increased quality demands of tourists as concerns the overnight accommodation facilities repre-

sent a factor that is also classified a significant threat to tourist development of Olsztyn sub-region. The sub-region had only three five-star hotels. Unavailability of air transport represents a significant threat not only for the studied sub-region but also for the entire Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship. In Olsztyn sub-region, three airfields are located: in Olsztyn, Szymany and Kętrzyn. Those airfields do not have appropriate surfacing and equipment allowing landing of aircrafts under difficult weather conditions. This caused their unavailability for servicing domestic and international air traffic. Also migrations of population to other voivodships and abroad represented a threat to tourist development of Olsztyn sub-region.

The aggregated evaluation indicates the *S* point positioning in the MINI-MINI position meaning that care should be taken to improve on the weaknesses of the sub-region, which can be influenced. The domination of weaknesses over strengths is small, just -0.04 . This may indicate that chances for improvement of the internal conditions exist. The domination of threats over opportunities is much larger at -0.59 and influencing the external environment is not always possible.

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