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**Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism** is an interdisciplinary research journal, aimed to publish articles and original research papers that should contribute to the development of both experimental and theoretical nature in the field of Environmental Management and Tourism Sciences.

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## Sociological Analysis of Domestic Tourism in the Chuvash Republic

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### Abstract:

The tourism industry acquires special significance in the modern world economy. A growing number of countries become "active participants" in the development of world tourism; in many countries, the share of the tourism industry in the country's economy has increased significantly, which in turn increases the share of the tourism economy in the modern world economy. In this connection, the interest to the tourism development is obvious. It seems to be of high relevance to study, in particular, the domestic tourism, from the perspective of maintaining and developing the regional economies. The relevant problems of domestic tourism in the Chuvash Republic are reflected herein based on the scientific study. The necessity of manifestation in modern conditions of an active regional policy in the tourist industry by the state and municipal authorities of Chuvashia is substantiated. The recommendations for enhancement of the efficiency of actions in the field of tourism taken by the regional authorities, aimed at improving the level of competitiveness of the republican tourist product in the domestic and international tourist markets, are proposed.

**Keywords:** domestic tourism; the Chuvash Republic; tourist product of Chuvashia; state regulation of tourism.

**JEL Classification:** L80; L83; Z32.

### Introduction

Tourism today is a powerful global industry accounting for up to 10% of the world's gross product, a sphere of large investments attracting millions of employees of a wide range of professions and qualifications (Pisarevskii 2014). According to scientists, currently the tourism sector includes 53 branches of the national economy; one workplace in the tourism industry creates up to five new jobs in related industries (Barchukov 2008).

According to the international practice, any investment in tourism development is positively reflected through the strengthening of the national economy of the state (Babkin 2008). For example, due to the developed

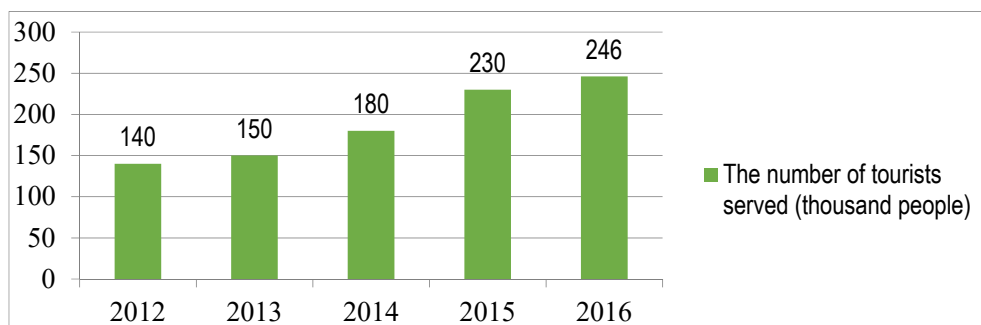
tourism, most residents of the European Union, the United States of America and the People's Republic of China mostly travel around their own countries. In the United States and the EU, the number of domestic tourists is about 80% of the total number of tourists, and in China this indicator is more than 1 billion people annually (Akopyan *et al.* 2016). Hence, rationally organized domestic tourism may well become an additional source of replenishment of the state budget.

Currently, the Russian Federation surpasses the foreign countries that are popular with prospective tourists (Chudnovskii *et al.* 2014) in many ways in the international tourism market in terms of the availability of tourist resources. Over the recent years, the positive dynamics has been observed in the development of the domestic market of domestic and incoming tourism. According to the official data provided by the Federal Agency for Tourism, the number of tourists traveling around Russia in 2015 amounted to 49.2 million people, which was 18.5% more than in 2014 (41.5 million people), of which 5.6 million were the inbound tourists (Federal Agency for Tourism 2015). The observed positive trend causes quite naturally a justified need for the improvement of the level of competitiveness and quality of the domestic tourism product, based on the available capabilities of the country's tourist resources. A large flow of tourists as it is cannot guarantee the receipt of tangible revenue by the state treasury if the country lacks a comprehensive tourist offer and a developed tourist infrastructure.

It should be noted that the above-mentioned problem is also relevant due to the current unstable situation in the social and economic sphere of the Russian Federation. The fact is that the Russian ruble depreciation caused a rise in the price of vacation abroad for ordinary Russians, which in turn created the need for import substitution of the foreign tourist product for the domestic one in the tourist market (Goncharova *et al.* 2014). In this regard, currently the problem of the domestic tourism development in Russia should be seriously considered in parallel with the federal government at the level of regional governments. For example, at present the problem of the regional tourist industry development is of high relevance in the Chuvash Republic.

According to the official data for recent years, the domestic tourism in Chuvashia shows the positive dynamics. Thus, in 2016, over 246 thousand people were served by the touristic companies of the republic, which was 7% more than in 2015 (230 thousand people were served in 2015, 180 thousand people were served in 2014, 150 thousand people – in 2013, 140 thousand people – in 2012) (Figure 1). Of the total number of the residents served, the number of foreign tourists was about 3 thousand people (Ministry of Culture, National Affairs and Archive Affairs of the Chuvash Republic 2017).

Figure 1. The number of tourists served in the Chuvash Republic as of 2012-2016.



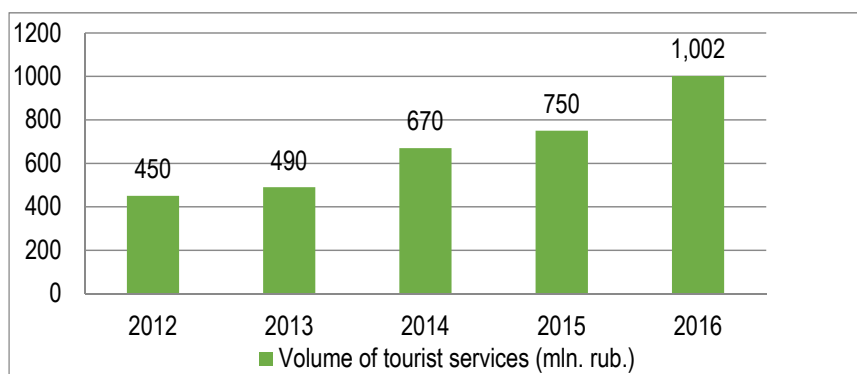
As of January 1, 2017, 96 touristic companies and agencies were engaged in the sphere of tourism in Chuvashia, including 5 tour operators, 68 accommodation facilities (Materials to the Message of the Head of the Chuvash Republic M.V. Ignatiev to the State Council of the Chuvash Republic 2017). In 2016, the volume of services provided by the tourist organizations of the republic amounted to more than 1 billion rubles, which was 250 million rubles more than in 2015 and twice as high as in 2013 (Figure 2) (750 million rubles in 2015, 670 million rubles in 2014, 490 million rubles in 2013, 450 million rubles in 2012) (Message of the Head of the Chuvash Republic M.V. Ignatiev to the State Council of the Chuvash Republic 2017).

According to the rating published by the TurStat agency, following the results of 2016, the Chuvash Republic entered the top 30 most popular regions of Russia for domestic tourism, taking the 27th place (Analytical Agency TurStat 2017).

Also, according to the new data of the "Environmental Rating of the Subjects of the Russian Federation" of the All-Russian Public Organization "Green Patrol" for the settlement period "Spring 2017" Chuvashia entered the top 5 ecological regions of the country once again, firmly taking the 4th place (All-Russian Public Organization "Green Patrol" 2017).

Moreover, the Chuvash Republic was included in the top-10 ranking of the regions leading in the rural tourism development, compiled by the Federal Agency for Tourism in 2016 (Official Portal of the Authorities of the Chuvash Republic 2017).

Figure 2. The volume of tourist services rendered to the population in the Chuvash Republic in 2012-2016.



Despite the fact that the republic has a huge tourist resource potential, currently the Chuvash tourism product competes poorly in the domestic and international tourist markets. It should be emphasized that domestic tourism is one of the segments of the region's economic development, given the favorable conditions and the implementation of the effective state policy in this area, the tourism industry is fully capable of becoming a profitable revenue part in the regional economy (Kosolapov 2009).

## 1. Methods.

The object of the study is the tourism industry of the Chuvash Republic. The subject of the study is the attitude of the residents of Chuvashia to the regional tourism product, as well as the level of efficiency of the state and municipal authorities of the Chuvash Republic in tourism development regulation in the region.

The theoretical and methodological basis of the research is the fundamental works of the scientists in the field of state, municipal management and tourism; official statistics; the results of the sociological studies. The following scientific methods are used herein: the study of primary documentation, the questionnaire survey method, the statistical data analysis method, the expert evaluation method, the comparison method, and the social engineering method (Urzha 2017).

In order to research the current state of domestic tourism in the Chuvash Republic and to determine the opinion of Chuvashia residents about the tourist industry of the region, a questionnaire survey was performed in 20 municipalities of the republic in May 2017, including in 4 city districts. During the survey, 225 respondents were interviewed: 81 residents of the region; 144 experts in tourism. The experts were the employees of the Ministry of Culture of the Chuvash Republic; the staff of the Tourist and Cultural Center of Chuvashia; the employees of the administrations of municipal regions, city districts and rural settlements of the Chuvash Republic.

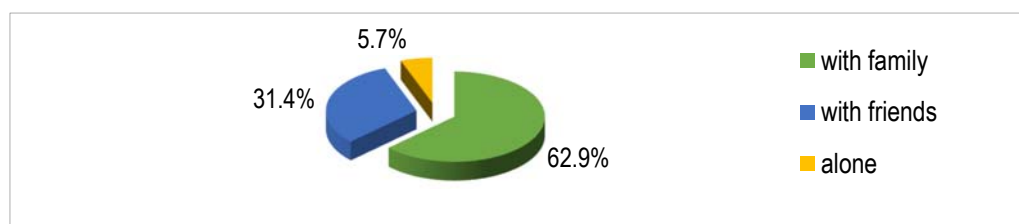
## 2. Results.

The questionnaire survey was anonymous in order to obtain the most objective answers from the respondents. Moreover, the residents of the region and the experts in tourism were interviewed with various questionnaires, which allowed for a sociological survey to increase the number of question types asked and to receive the responses both of general and private nature from the respondents.

### 2.1. Responses of the residents of the region

First, let us consider the percentage of answers received to the questionnaire from the residents of the republic. The respondents answered the question "*Whom do you prefer to recreate with?*" as follows: 62.9% – with the family; 31.4% – with friends; 5.7% – alone (Figure 3).

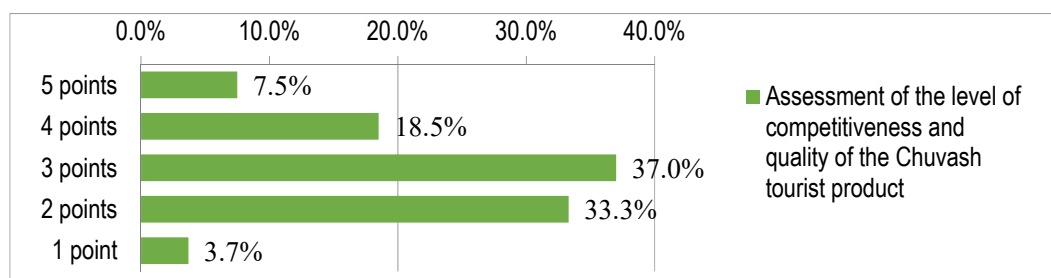
Figure 3. Distribution of the respondents' answers to the question "Whom do you prefer to recreate with?" (in % of the number of respondents).



It turned out that 66.7% of the respondents in the region *had already travelled around the Chuvash Republic*; 76% *knew* at least one and more *tourist companies* in Chuvashia and 52% *knew* at least one and more *tourist routes* in the region.

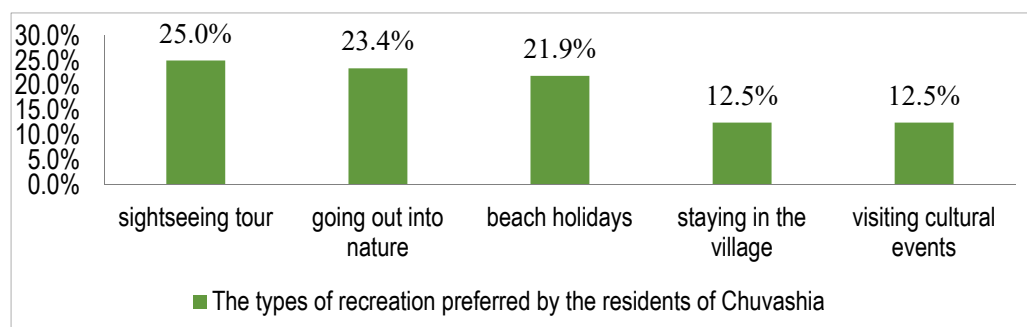
In the next question, the respondents were to *determine the level of competitiveness and quality of the existing tourist product of Chuvashia in the tourist market according to a five-point scale*. The respondents answered this question as follows: 1 point – 3.7%; 2 points – 33.3%; 3 points – 37%; 4 points – 18.5%; 5 points – 7.5% (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Distribution of the respondents' answers to the question "Determine the level of competitiveness and quality of the existing tourist product of Chuvashia in the tourist market according to a five-point scale" (in % of the number of respondents).



The surveyed residents of the republic prefer the following types of recreation: 25% – sightseeing tour; 23.4% – going out into nature; 21.9% – beach holidays; 12.5% staying in the village; 12.5% – visiting cultural events, etc. (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Distribution of the respondents' answers to the question "What type of recreation do you prefer?" (in % of the number of respondents).



Also, the residents were to *list the sights of the republic, which, in their opinion, were the most attractive for a potential external tourist*. The answers were divided into thematic blocks: 37.6% – the monuments and cultural institutions (the Memorial complex of the USSR pilot-cosmonaut A.G. Nikolaev, V.I. Chapaev Museum, theaters, etc.); 16.5% – the center of Cheboksary (the bay, the boulevard of merchant Efremov (Arbat), the monument to the Most Holy Mother of God, etc.); 14.7% – the provincial cities of Chuvashia (Mariinsky Posad, Tsivilsk, Alaty and Kozlovka); 12% – the events of the region (Republic Day, All-Russia Festival of Folk Art "The Springs of Russia", Chuvash (Suvar) national holiday of the land and the plow "Akutui", etc.); 6.4% – the nature monuments (the national park "Chavash varmane", the state nature reserve "Prisurskiy", the parks of Cheboksary, etc.); 6.4% – Chuvash national ethnic settlements (the ethnoecological complex "Yasna", ethnic fortress "Chemen Kardi") and other sights.

The respondents answered the question "Do you notice the state support for the development of domestic tourism in the republic?" as follows: 37% – rather no; 37% – rather yes; 3.7% – yes; 0% – no and 22.3% – found it difficult to answer (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Distribution of the respondents' answers to the question "Do you notice the state support for the development of domestic tourism in the republic?" (in % of the number of respondents).

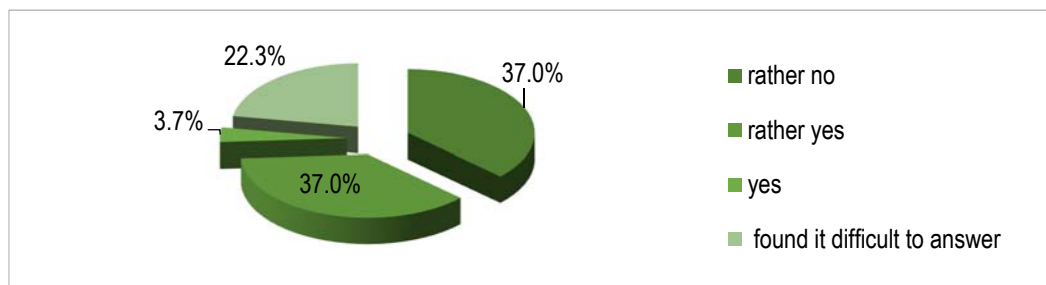
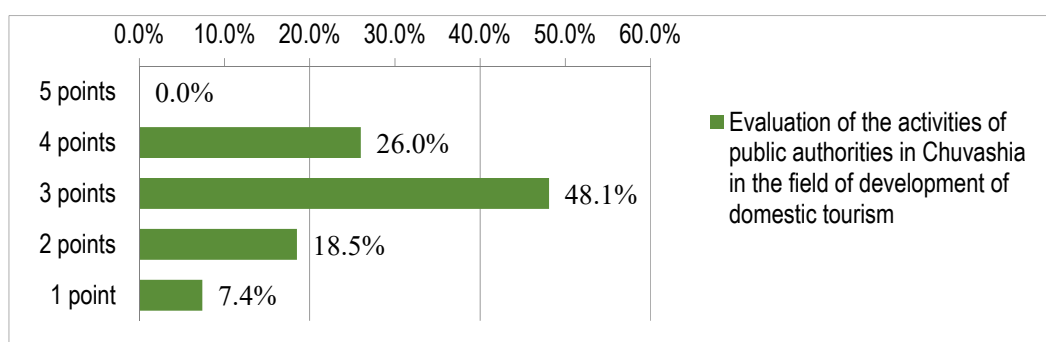


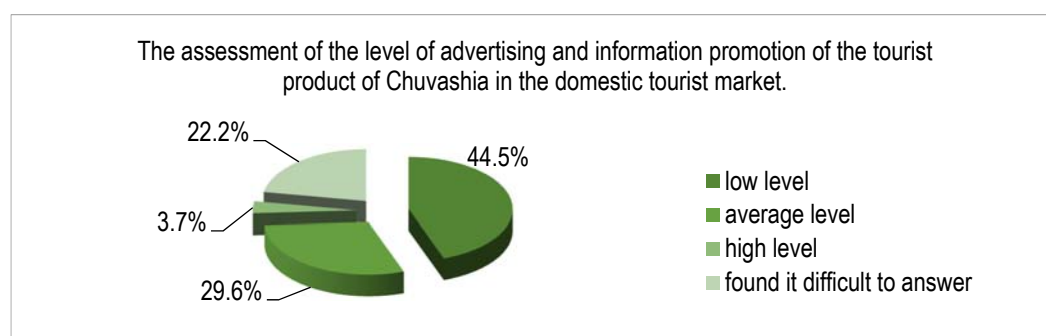
Figure 7. Distribution of the respondents' answers to the question "Evaluate the activities of public authorities in Chuvashia in the field of development of domestic tourism" (in % of the number of respondents).



The residents of the region answered the question "Do you think that the interest of the regional authorities in the development of public-private partnership in the field of tourism is currently manifested in the republic?" as follows: 48.2% – yes, but insufficiently; 18.5% – yes; 0% – no; 33.3% – found it difficult to answer.

It was also necessary to assess the level of advertising and information promotion of the tourist product of Chuvashia in the domestic tourist market. The answers received were as follows: 44.5% – low level; 29.6% – average level; 3.7% – high level; 22.2% found it difficult to answer (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Distribution of the Chuvashia residents' answers to the question "Assess the level of advertising and information promotion of the tourist product of Chuvashia in the domestic tourist market" (in % of the number of respondents).



The residents of the republic answered the question "What in your opinion can cause the inefficient use of regional resources for the development of domestic tourism?" as follows: 25.6% – the lack of interest from the part of business representatives; 23.2% – the ineffective activity of the state authorities of the region; 21% – strong external competition; 18.6% – the lack of demand for a regional tourist product; 11.6% – the social and economic instability in the country.

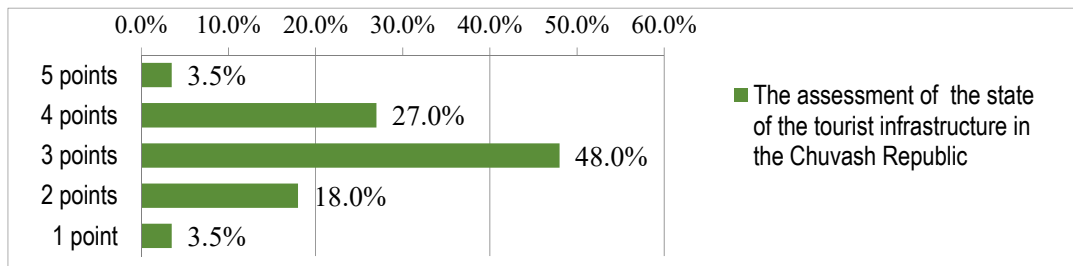
## 2.2. The answers of the experts in the field of tourism

Let us consider the percentage of responses to the questions given by the experts in the field of tourism.

77.8% of the respondents answered positively the question *"Has the Chuvash Republic got a rich resource potential for the development of domestic tourism?"* In the opinion of 63.9% of the experts, the number of tourist routes in Chuvashia was insufficient for promotion of the cognitive tourism.

The next question required the respondents to assess the state of the tourist infrastructure in the Chuvash Republic according to a five-point scale: 1 point – 3.5%; 2 points – 18%; 3 points – 48%; 4 points – 27%; 5 points – 3.5% (Figure 9).

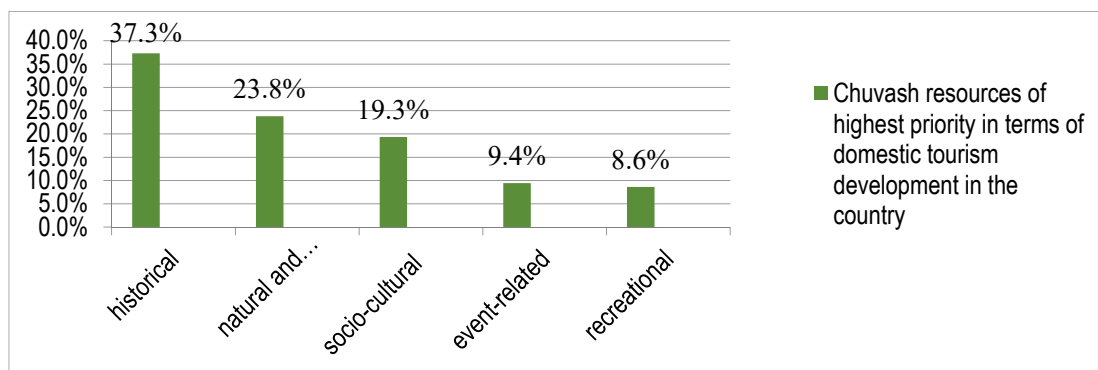
Figure 9. Distribution of the experts' answers to the question *"Assess the state of the tourist infrastructure in the Chuvash Republic according to a five-point scale"* (in % of the number of respondents).



Also, the respondents identified the municipal districts of Chuvashia, which, in their opinion, had the most developed tourist infrastructure: Cheboksarskiy district – 16.3%; Mariinsko-Posadskiy district – 16.3%; Alatyrskiy district – 12%; Shemurshinskiy district – 8.6%; Yadrinskiy district – 7.7%, etc.

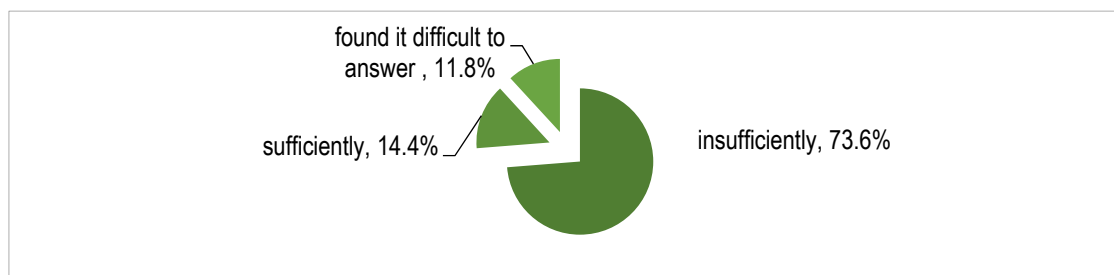
The experts were asked about the regional resources of highest priority in terms of domestic tourism development in the country. The answers could be lined up as follows: 37.3% – historical resources; 23.8% – natural and climatic resources; 19.3% – socio-cultural resources; 9.4% – event-related resources; 8.6% – recreational resources, etc. (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Distribution of the experts' answers to the question *"Which regional resources are of the highest priority in terms of domestic tourism development in the republic"* (in % of the number of respondents).



The respondents answered the question *"Is the tourism development in the region sufficiently supported with the funds allocated currently from the republican budget in Chuvashia?"* as follows: 73.6% – insufficiently; 14.4% – sufficiently and 11.8% – found it difficult to answer (Figure 11).

Figure 11. Distribution of the experts' answers to the question *"Is the tourism development in the region sufficiently supported with the funds allocated currently from the republican budget in Chuvashia?"* (in % of the number of respondents).

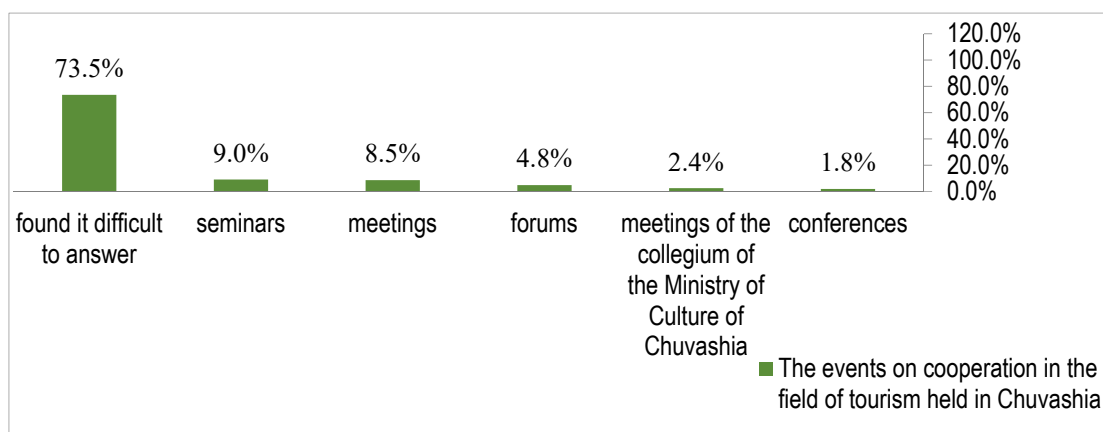


Another question was also related to the financial matter: "Are the methods of state financial support for local individual entrepreneurs in the tourism sector in Chuvashia applied at the regional level?" The answers received were as follows: 51.4% – no; 25% – yes; 23.6% found it difficult to answer.

The experts responded the next question: "Is the sphere of tourism considered currently by the state authorities of Chuvashia as a source of creating new jobs in the republic?" as follows: 59.7% – yes; 29.9% – no; 10.4% found it difficult to answer.

The respondents also were to list the measures taken in the republic for the interaction and cooperation of state (municipal) authorities with the tourism companies: 73.5% of experts failed to name any event; 9% – mentioned the seminars; 8.5% – the meetings; 4.8% – the forums; 2.4% – the meetings of the collegium of the Ministry of Culture of Chuvashia; 1.8% – the conferences (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Distribution of the experts' answers to the question "What measures are taken in the republic for the interaction and cooperation of state (municipal) authorities with the tourism companies?" (in % of the number of respondents).

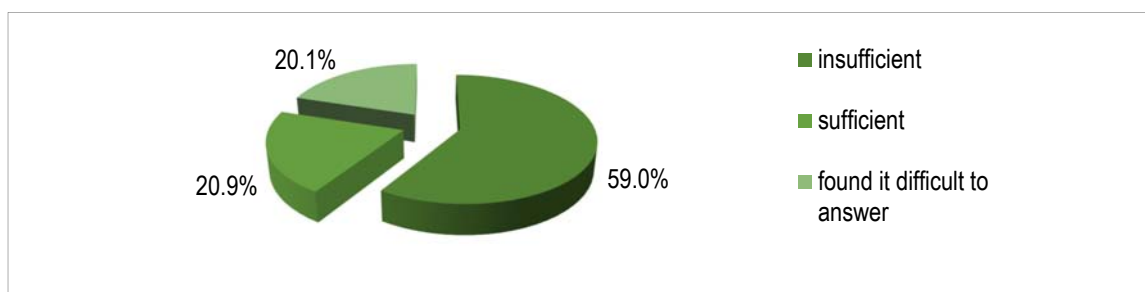


The experts were to name the business projects implemented in Chuvashia in the tourism sector on the basis of public-private partnership: 72.5% found it difficult to answer; 20.8% named the investment project "Creation of a tourist and recreational cluster "Ethnic Chuvashia" of the Chuvash Republic" implemented in the region in 2013 as part of the federal target program "Development of domestic and incoming tourism in the Russian Federation (2011-2018)"; 6.7% – gave other answers.

The experts answered the question "Is there any state policy in Chuvashia aimed at the establishment of the interregional cooperation in the tourism sector, with a view to developing the inbound tourism in the country?" as follows: 60.4% – yes; 29.9% – no; 9.7% – found it difficult to answer.

The respondents were also asked the question formulated in the following way: "Do you think that today there is a sufficient number of specialists in the bodies of the state (municipal) authority of the Chuvash Republic that oversee the tourism industry?" The experts answered as follows: 59% – insufficient; 20.9% – sufficient; 20.1% – found it difficult to answer (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Distribution of the experts' answers to the question "Do you think that today there is a sufficient number of specialists in the bodies of the state (municipal) authority of the Chuvash Republic that oversee the tourism industry?" (in % of the number of respondents)



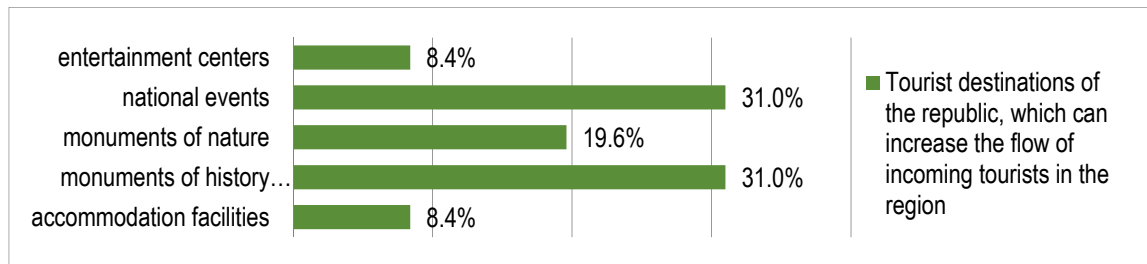
### 2.3. Answers to general questions

The following questions were asked as general questions for the residents of the region and the experts in the field of tourism:

The respondents answered the question *"To date, is the tourist product of Chuvashia represented widely enough in the regional tourist market?"* as follows: 64.5% – insufficiently; 10.2% – sufficiently; 25.3% – found it difficult to answer.

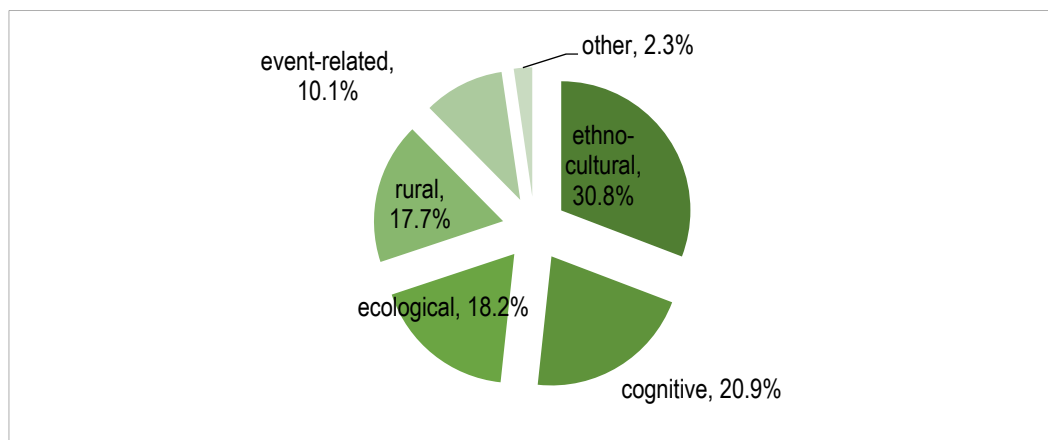
The respondents answered the question *"In your opinion, the development of which tourist destinations (sights) would increase the flow of incoming (foreign) tourists in the republic?"* as follows: 31% – national events; 31% – monuments of history and cultural heritage; 19.6% – monuments of nature; 8.4% – accommodation facilities; 8.4% – entertainment centers, etc. (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Distribution of the respondents' answers to the question *"In your opinion, the development of which tourist destinations (sights) would increase the flow of incoming (foreign) tourists in the republic?"* (in % of the number of respondents).



The next general question for the residents of the region and the experts in the field of tourism was presented in different wordings: for the first – *"What kinds of tourism would you prefer for your holiday within Chuvashia"*, and for the second – *"Name the types of tourism that, in your opinion, are the most promising for development in Chuvashia"*. The general answers were as follows: 30.8% – ethno-cultural tourism; 20.9% – cognitive tourism; 18.2% – ecological tourism; 17.7% – rural tourism; 10.1% – event-related tourism and other (Figure 15).

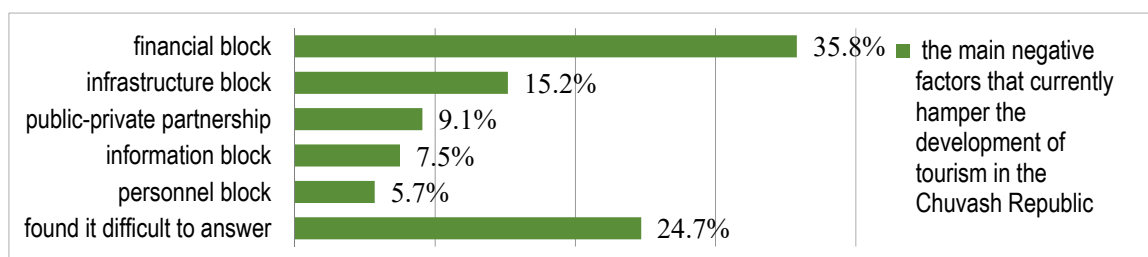
Figure 15. Distribution of the respondents' answers to the question *"Name the types of tourism that, in your opinion, are the most promising for development in Chuvashia"* (in % of the number of respondents).



In general, the answers of the residents of the republic and the experts were similar. However, the votes for the rural tourism should be considered in more detail: this type of tourism was named by 25% of the experts and 4% of the residents. Such a discrepancy in indicators is very likely due to the fact that the experts in the field of tourism consider the development of rural tourism in the region in terms of an external (foreign) tourists. As for the residents of Chuvashia, for many of them there is no understanding that the vacation can be organized in the countryside. This paradoxical phenomenon is caused by the fact that an ordinary resident of the Chuvash Republic usually can organize his or her vacation in the province only in the form of going to the plot of land in the village or visiting relatives living there. However, there is a lot of work pending in the village at any time of the year, which practically leaves no time for rest for the newcomer. It is not by chance that the cognitive tourism (40%), which does not require a long stay in the countryside, received more preferences among the surveyed residents of the region.

The next question required the respondents to *list the main negative factors that currently hampered the development of tourism in the Chuvash Republic*. The answers of the respondents could be attributed to the following blocks: 35.8% – financial block; 15.2% – infrastructure block; 9.1% – public-private partnership block; 7.5% – information block; 5.7% – personnel block; 24.7% – found it difficult to answer (Figure 16).

Figure 16. Distribution of the respondents' answers to the question "List the main negative factors that currently hamper the development of tourism in the Chuvash Republic" (in % of the number of respondents).



The financial block includes the following negative factors: the insufficient funding of the tourism industry from the regional budget; the lack of financial (grant) support of republican individual entrepreneurs in the sphere of tourism; the high cost of tourist services in the region; the low level of wages of the local population of the Chuvash Republic.

The negative factors constituting the infrastructure block are the following: the weak tourist infrastructure of the region; the lack of a developed network of public catering in the municipalities of Chuvashia; the bad quality of the roads; the absence of means of transport in municipal areas of the republic for the organization of tourist trips; the lack of general improvement; the contamination of the environment with garbage, in particular the roadside zones, etc.

Answering the questions related to the development of public-private partnership in the sphere of creating and improving the conditions for domestic tourism, the respondents noted the lack of interest of the state and municipal authorities of Chuvashia in the development of this form in the sphere of tourism. In addition, they noted the inertness on the part of the regional tourist organizations in establishing the cooperative relations with the authorities. There is also a disconnection of tourism organizations and regional authorities in the development of the tourist product, which makes it monotonous, devoid of original ideas. A serious problem is that the authorities of the Chuvash Republic are not entitled to control the quality of services provided by the tourist organizations of the republic, etc.

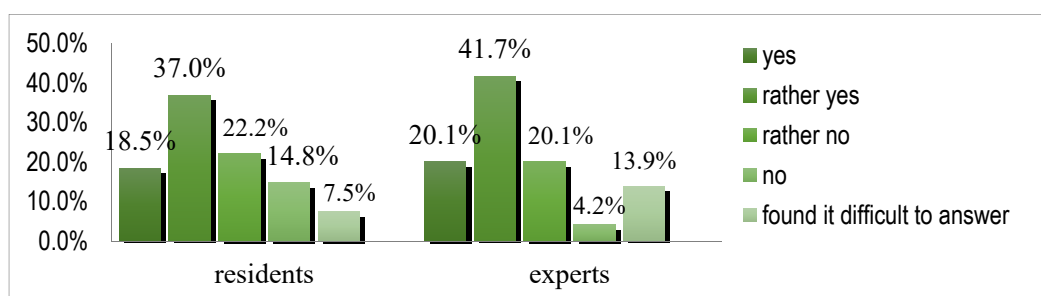
The analysis of the answers to the questions about the information and advertising activities related to the work of tourist organizations of Chuvashia revealed a number of substantial shortcomings: the insufficient information support for the Chuvash tourist product in the internal and external tourist markets. Moreover, the lack of tourist navigation signs in the municipalities of the republic was noted.

The question about the personnel status of this field of activity revealed some problems related to the fact that in the structure of the state and municipal authorities of the Chuvash Republic the insufficient number of employees oversaw the tourism industry, while in many municipal districts of the republic the sphere of tourism was supervised by incompetent specialists. The personnel-related problems also exist in the tourist organizations of Chuvashia. Most often, they are associated with the prevalence of a low level of culture among the staff, the availability of only a small number of professional guides and organizers of tourist events in the republic.

The next question for the residents of the republic and the experts in the field of tourism was aimed at the identification of the preferences. For the residents, it sounded like this: "Would you prefer tourism in Chuvashia instead of the recreation outside the region, if the country offered a tourist product of equal quality in terms of the potential external tourist product?", and for the experts it was worded as follows: "Do you think there is any demand among the local population of the republic for the presence of a developed tourist sphere in the region?" The answers of the residents of the republic were as follows: 18.5% – yes; 37% – rather yes; 22.2% – most likely not; 14.8% – no; 7.5% found it difficult to answer (Figure 17). According to the results, 55.5% of the respondents in Chuvashia were interested in organizing their vacation within the republic, and only 14.8% definitely did not want it.

The experts answered the question related to the sphere of tourism as follows: 20.1% – yes; 41.7% – rather yes; 20.1% – most likely not; 4.2% – no; 13.9% found it difficult to answer (Figure 17). According to the answers obtained, it is evident that the majority of experts (61.8%) are confident that at present there is a demand in Chuvashia among the local population for the presence of a developed tourist sphere in the republic. Moreover, this indicator as a whole converges with the opinion of the majority of the respondents in the region.

Figure 17. Distribution of the Chuvashia residents' answers to the question "Would you prefer tourism in Chuvashia instead of the recreation outside the region, if the country offered a tourist product of equal quality in terms of the potential external tourist product?" and the experts' answers to the question "Do you think there is any demand among the local population of the republic for the presence of a developed tourist sphere in the region?" (in % of the number of respondents).



### 3. Discussion

#### 3.1. Results of the survey of residents of the region

Summarizing the answers to the questions from the questionnaire given by the residents of the Chuvash Republic, it can be concluded that the local population of the region prefers the collective recreation; one way or another it tries to learn and to travel around the local sights of the republic, which explains each second respondent's awareness of at least one tourist route in Chuvashia. But, at the same time, it should be noted that, in the opinion of the majority of the respondents, the quality of the domestic tourist product in the tourist market remains at a low level.

It was discovered that the absolute majority of the respondents in Chuvashia (96.3%) did not have a firm belief that the state supported the development of the domestic tourism. In this regard, it was not at all surprising that 74% of the respondents assessed the activities of regional authorities in the development of tourism at a low level.

Also, according to the opinion of the interviewed residents of the region, today in Chuvashia the interest on the part of the state authorities of the republic in the development of public-private partnership in the sphere of tourism is insufficient. This indicator is confirmed by the answer to another question – according to about half of respondents in the domestic tourist market of the region, the level of advertising and information promotion of the tourist product of the Chuvash Republic is low. Moreover, it is no coincidence that 48.8% of the interviewed residents of Chuvashia named both the absence of interest in this from representatives of business and the ineffective activity of the state authorities in the region as possible reasons for the ineffective use of regional resources for the development of domestic tourism.

#### 3.2. Results of the expert survey

Based on the responses received from experts in the field of tourism, it can be concluded that the Chuvash Republic, in one way or another, has rich resource potential in tourism, but at the same time, the number of available tourist routes in the country is insufficient and the tourist infrastructure is poorly developed.

As it was noted by the majority of experts during the survey, currently in the Chuvash Republic, the development of domestic tourism was insufficiently financed from the republican budget. In this regard, in Chuvashia, no measures are taken by the regional authorities to provide the financial support to the local individual entrepreneurs who are beginning to operate or operating in the tourism sector.

It was also absolutely striking that 73.5% of the experts, mostly republican and municipal officials, failed to name any event conducted by the bodies of state (municipal) authority of the Chuvash Republic aimed at interaction and cooperation with the regional organizations of the tourism sphere. From this follows the clear conclusion that in the Chuvash Republic, in particular at the level of municipalities, there is no interest on the part of the authorities to establish and to implement the mechanisms of public-private partnership in the tourist sphere. It is worth noting that this conclusion is consistent with the main answers of the residents of the republic to a similar question posed to them.

Moreover, out of the experts interviewed, 72.5% found it difficult to mention at least one business project implemented in the tourist sphere of the Chuvash Republic on the basis of public-private partnership. Only 20.8% of respondents named the investment project "Creation of a tourist and recreational cluster "Ethnic Chuvashia" of the Chuvash Republic implemented in the region in 2013". Thus, 74% of the respondents in the course of survey

of the residents of Chuvashia absolutely objectively gave low assessment of the activities of the authorities on the domestic tourism development. One of the main reasons for this problem is well reflected in the following response of the majority of experts: currently the state and municipal authorities of the Chuvash Republic lack the specialists in charge of the tourism sector.

However, at the same time, the survey conducted also revealed the positive aspects. It has been defined that, despite the inadequate financing of the domestic tourism by the authorities of the region, currently, the government bodies of the Chuvash Republic consider the tourism sphere as a source of creating additional jobs in the region. Moreover, in order to develop domestic and inbound tourism, Chuvashia is pursuing a state policy to build interregional cooperation in tourism industry.

### 3.3. Results of the analysis of the answers to general questions for the residents and the experts.

As for the answers to general questions, both for residents of the region and the experts in the field of tourism, the following should be noted herein. The residents of the Chuvash Republic for the organization of the recreation within the region most of all prefer the excursion tours in the form of cognitive tourism including visiting the monuments of history and cultural heritage, establishments of culture. It is no accident that the experts voted for historical and socio-cultural resources as the priority resource for the development of domestic tourism in the republic. However, currently, the tourist product of Chuvashia is not represented in the regional tourist market in a sufficiently broad spectrum. Also, based on the answers, given by both the residents and the experts in the tourism sphere, one can note the presence in the country of a positive trend towards the ethno-cultural tourism. The respondents consider this type of tourism not only as a priority for organizing their holidays, but also as a way to increase the inflow of external (foreign) tourists in the Chuvash Republic.

### Conclusion

The study conducted has shown that at present in Chuvashia there is a potential high demand among the local population for the presence of a developed tourist sphere in the republic. However, despite the availability of great tourist resources in the region, currently, the tourist product of the Chuvash Republic in the domestic and foreign tourist markets is presented in a narrow range and, at the same time, this product is of low quality. Among the main reasons for the low competitiveness of the Chuvash tourist product, there are the following: the weak tourist infrastructure of the region; the insufficient promotion (advertising) of the tourist product of Chuvashia in the tourist market; the prevalence of low level of professionalism and culture among service personnel (Zaernjuk *et al.* 2014, Ilina *et al.* 2016) in the tourist organizations of the republic; the insufficient funding of the tourism industry from the regional budget; the lack of mutual interest between the authorities of the Chuvash Republic and the tourist organizations of the region for joint cooperation in the field of tourism, etc.

Proceeding from this, it should be noted that according to the scientific data obtained, currently the republic lacks the efficient activity of the authorities in the tourist sphere, as it is no coincidence that 74% of the respondents in Chuvashia have rated low the activities of the regional authorities in the domestic tourism development. It should be noted that the development and promotion of the local tourism product in the domestic and international tourism markets depends largely on the implementation of a targeted and active state policy in the tourism sector in the region (Pisarevskii 2014). It is not accidental that The Hague Tourism Declaration of April 14, 1989 clearly states that "tourism should be planned by the state authorities on an integrated and consistent basis, taking into account all aspects of the phenomenon" (Mikhoparov 2016).

Also, in the course of the scientific study of the domestic tourism of the Chuvash Republic, the presence of a personnel problem in the region has been revealed, both in tourism organizations and in the authorities of the republic. In tourism organizations, this problem, as noted above, is due to the prevalence of low professionalism and low cultural level among the staff servicing the clients. Hence, the heads of the travel agencies, hotels, recreation centers and health facilities of the republic should pay special attention to the selection of personnel for their organizations (Sakharchuk 2014).

As for the state bodies and, above all, the municipal authority of the Chuvash Republic, here the personnel problem is as follows. First, currently, there are not enough specialists supervising the tourism industry in the structure of the republic's authorities, and the administrations of some municipalities in the region have no such specialists. This situation, of course, contradicts the process of development of the efficient regional policy in the tourist industry in the republic. Secondly, according to the results of the study, it can be noted that among the municipal officials of Chuvashia, which oversee the tourism industry, the number of employees with no special education is predominant. To date, most municipalities in the country lack any means of interaction with local entrepreneurs to build public-private partnerships in the tourism sector. Proceeding from this, it should be noted

that in order to successfully solve the personnel matter in the regional authorities, it is necessary to implement the measures for the proper selection and assignment of the managerial specialists to supervise the tourism industry on the basis of objective assessments of their professional competence and the result of their activities (Yanovskii and Kirsanov 2013).

As a result of the study conducted in the Chuvash Republic, a growing interest in ethno-cultural tourism has been identified, which, according to the opinion of the majority of tourism experts in the region, is recognized as one of the promising areas for the development of domestic and incoming tourism in Chuvashia. This positive trend has a logical explanation. So, since the beginning of the 21st century in the world there has been a significant increase in the number of tourist trips aimed at making other peoples aware of the ethnographic heritage. 40% of the world tourist flow is due precisely to the motives associated with the desire of tourists to get acquainted with local national traditions, cultural values and ethnographic features of living peoples in the tourist destination region (Butuzov 2013).

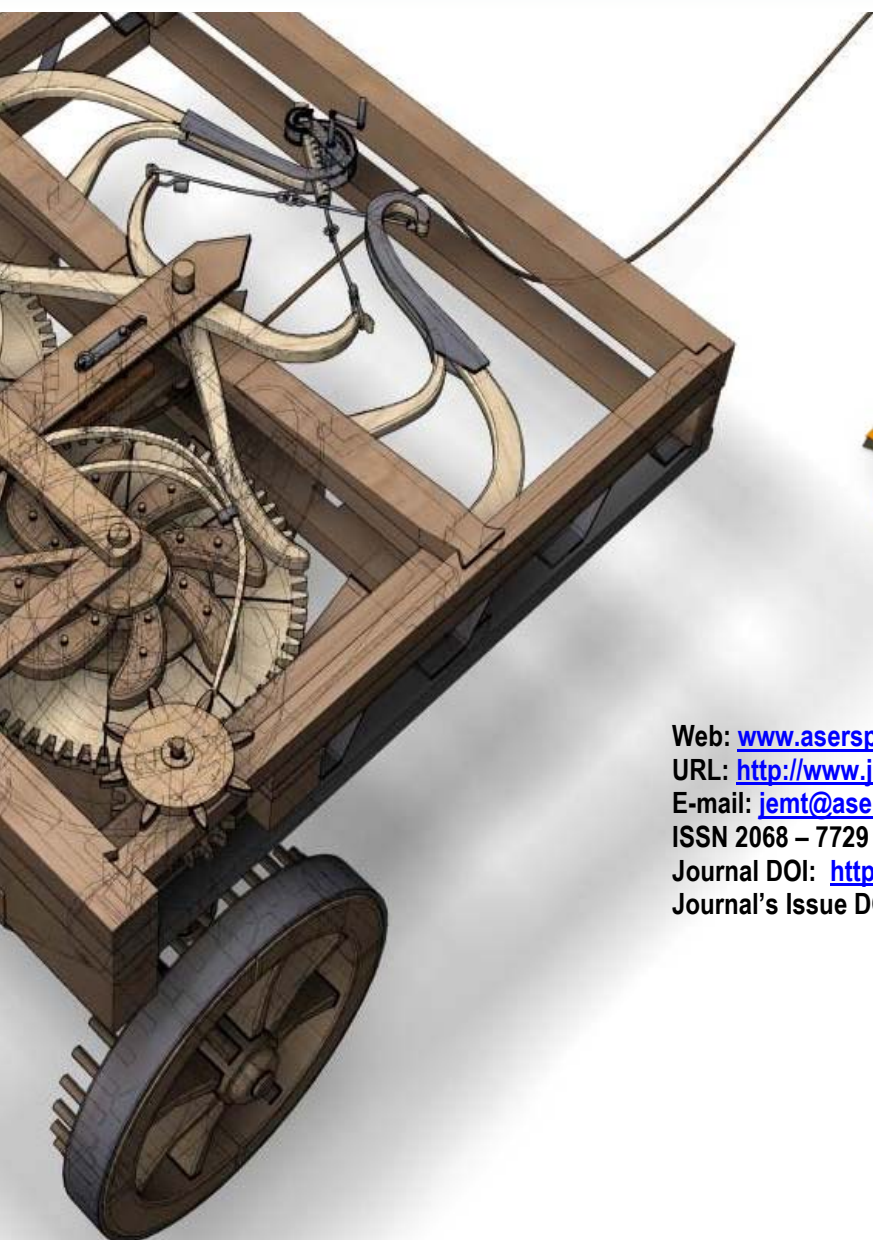
The most important factor for the promotion of the ethno-cultural tourism in the Chuvash Republic is the ethno-cultural potential of the Chuvash land. A great interest for the tourists can be presented by its titular people – the Suvars (Chuvashes) – who managed to preserve and carry through millennia to the present day their ancient culture and traditions (The Concept of the Development of Rural and Ecological Tourism in the Chuvash Republic for 2015-2020 2014). The cultural and historical factors are also important for the development of the region in this area, namely: the availability and accessibility of the local theaters and local history museums, organization of songs and theatrical arts in the region, holding traditional national holidays of the title people "in the region of one hundred thousand words, one hundred thousands of songs and one hundred thousand embroideries", etc.

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