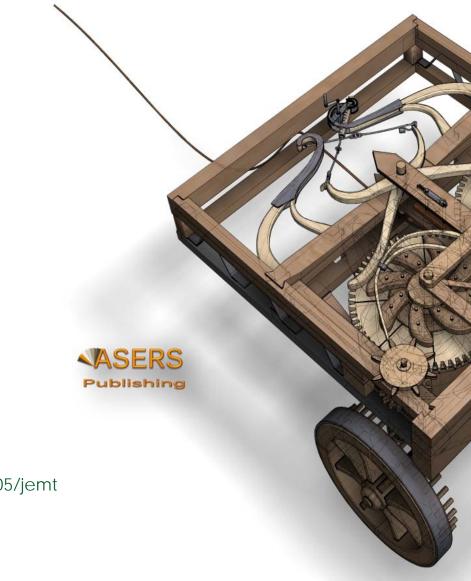
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Modern Approaches to Assess Tourism Industry - Related Environment

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Abstract

This paper is devoted to the development of approaches to assess tourism industry-related environment. It is proved that the concept of sustainable tourism development arose as a response to the need to develop profitable industry in the context of limited available tourist resources. It is revealed that the lingering financial and economic crisis has led to a situation of essential reduction in amount of tourist business and significant loss of tourist potential of the country. The authors' suggestions will allow improving and elevating the tourism industry to a totally new level in the national economy that includes social responsibility for the fulfillment of the mission to society, the integration of economic potential and abilities of the professionals involved in the tourism industry, as well as efficient use of resources in achieving set goals. The authors propose to establish the Association of Tourism Business Leaders of the Russian Federation and transform it into an institution, which would combine and implement the interests of its members.

Keywords: industry-related environment; potential; business; monitoring; concept; tourism; demand

JEL Classification: L80: L83.

Introduction

Tourism as a complex economic activity is characterized by considerable elasticity to the natural (ecological), general economic, social, and political changes in any country. The complexity of the situation in the tourism sector of the national economy lies in the fact that it is under negative impact of set of factors of mega-, macro-, and mesoenvironment.

All of this requires constant monitoring of events, implementation of measures to reduce the impact of negative factors, market research of changes in geospatial vectors of tourist flows in order to quickly satisfy the

established effective demand of consumers, the development of the strategic orientations aimed at the sustainable recovery and development of tourism.

The concept of sustainable tourism development is a response to two problems: on the one hand, the need to develop industry sector, which would be profitable for our country, while on the other hand, the necessity to take into account the restrictions on the availability of natural resources and their conservation. Lingering financial and economic crisis has led to a situation of essential reduction in amount of tourist business and significant loss of tourist potential of the country.

Studies indicate that socio-economic uncertainty ambiguously affects development trends in tourism. Tourism is rapidly developing. A positive trend could be achieved as early as in the next period, as evidenced by the growth in demand for tourism services.

In contemporary conditions of informatization, globalization of the economy, and hypercompetition it becomes apparent that an important factor in the functioning of any economic system is its provision with an adequate management system. One of the key management approaches in the context of universal dynamism and unpredictability of the business environment is strategic management.

Studying the tourism development issues through the prism of the industry-related environment valuation is reflected in works of G.L. Belov (2014), E.A. Dedusenko (2017), S.A. Kazakova (2014), M.A. Los' (2013), A.A. Medvedev (2017), and other researchers. The analysis of scientific sources testifies that management of tourist development issues in the context of the implementation of the sustainable development strategy of the Russian Federation still remains insufficiently investigated. Moreover, in the scientific works little attention is paid to selection of the optimal strategy in the context of dynamic industry-related environment.

1. Methods

The methodological basis of the present study includes a variety of research methods, such as analysis, comparison, systematization and generalization; dynamic, economic, statistical and comparative analysis, used to study the marcoeconomic indicators of tourism development and to assess the tourism industry-related environment; as well as survey and expert evaluation - to analyze tourist market conditions.

Theoretical and methodological approaches of the research were based on the works of domestic and foreign researchers and practitioners in the effective management of the tourism development based on the concept of strategic management in the context of uncertainty and variability in the business environment (Buiok *et al.* 2014; Romanenkov *et al.* 2017, Zhokhova 2013).

Information base of the study included current codes and laws of the Russian Federation, delegated legislation of state bodies regulating individual issues of tourist business, statistical data in terms of the indicators, analyzing the development of tourism, as well as periodical materials available from mass media.

During research, it is planned to improve approaches to the elaboration of tourism development strategies, to develop measures for coordination of activities between the key participants of the tourism business, to justify the concept on the strategic management of sustainable development of tourism at different levels of the national economy.

2. Results

Most tourism organizations in the Russian Federation conduct market research and perform segmentation of consumers according to the method, which envisages carrying out a survey among the customers using different methods, such as interviewing by telephone, by mail, and personally using specially designed questionnaires.

Despite the fact that many tourism companies use specially developed questionnaires, they usually carry out segmentation based on just one indicator, i.e. use one-dimensional distribution. For example, the LLC "Sirena Trevel" tourism organization, when asking during the survey a question "What type of recreation do you prefer?" has received from consumers the following answers describing their preferences: a significant proportion among the interviewed potential customers gave the preference to the active tourism (36%), sightseeing tours (32%), and beach-related rest (21%).

To the question "What type of recreation abroad do you prefer?" questioned respondents answered in the following way: 44% of the potential tourists chose sightseeing tour programs, 32% of holiday-makers preferred beach-related holiday, while 11% of the respondents chose active tourism.

At one-dimensional segmentation tourism company encounters difficulties when proceeding to the choice of target segment, on which the company should focus. Therefore, it is appropriate processing the obtained questionnaire survey data in the following order: 1) to carry out initial segmentation based on one-dimensional

distribution; 2) to carry out segmentation based on two-dimensional distribution (based on two characteristics); 3) to be sure in the course of segmentation that the resulting segments are measurable, sufficiently large, attainable, and stable.

When posing a question "Specify, which factors and segmentation criteria are used by your company when planning tour packages and developing new tourist destinations?" the respondents were asked to rate the criteria on a 5-point scale, where 5 meant very important, 4 – rather important than unimportant, 3 – hard to say, 2 – rather unimportant than important, and 1 – absolutely not important (Table 1).

The obtained results have shown that two factors have received the highest rank (1.6), namely social and psychological factors. This is evidence of the fact that the domestic tourism companies when forming their tourism product are primarily driven by the income level of the average consumer, mentality and traditions, as well as climatic specifics of the region.

No	Formulation of criterion	The importance of the criterion on a 5-point scale	Assessment of the criterion, points	Rank of the criterion
1.	Geographical factor	4	10	4
2.	Demographic factor	5	11	3
3.	Social factor	4	12	1.6
4.	Psychological factor	5	12	1.6
5.	Behavioral factor	5	8	5

Table 1. Assessment of segmentation factors and criteria of tourist services consumers

Understanding consumer needs is the main principle of market management, and in our opinion, it is much better to start the process of market segmentation exactly with customers' perspectives and group them according to the similar needs. In general, consumers of tourism services can be divided into 5 segments (Table 2).

The next step after grouping customers into segments based on their needs is identification. For example, the main descriptive factors that distinguish segment A from other segments include level of income, age and marital status. Also, quite obvious is the assumption that individuals in this segment are characterized by self-confidence, individualistic behavior, and a wide range of interests beyond the home.

Although the segment B is in the same age category as the segment A, its representatives have lower level of incomes. This segment includes most likely families with small children, and therefore they may be more sensitive to the selection of tourist destination and the expectations of its approach.

Segment C can be described as the category of young people with not-too-high salary, who predominantly tend to budget trips without extra amenities, as well as to sightseeing tours and active recreation. Representatives of this category will likely turn a blind eye to the shortcomings in the course of organizing the tour. Segments D and A have two features in common (age and the level of income), however there are some differences between them.

In particular, the segment D includes customers, who are married and have children. Based on this circumstance, we can assume that the price and reputation of the tourist company for such consumers have a great importance. For these customers, the security issue will play an important role.

Segment E characterizes customers with low incomes, who choose specific offers from tourism companies, and for whom the main selection criterion is the offer of various benefits and discounts. This segment is prepared to accept the lack of work and some inconveniences.

To check the comprehension of the needs of the certain segment and the company's ability to transform this comprehension into the value proposition, we need to develop a strategy of segment-based positioning. This strategy can be successfully applied at the level of tourist destinations, regions, as well as at nation-wide level.

The initiative for its implementation may come from different participants of tourism process, which involves public authorities, tourism organizations and their associations, institutions engaged in the protection of cultural monuments, architecture, or nature conservation objects, etc. Each of them is interested in the development of tourism as a lucrative activity and opportunities for improving employment, developing infrastructure, raising the standard of living and welfare of the population.

Basic need	Recreation with a certain risk and a set of additional services for a high price (it may be – a "hot tour")	Recreation with no risks with a set of additional services at an average or high price	Budget vacation or "hot tour"	Recreation with no risk with a set of additional services at an average price	Budget vacation without additional services	
Segmental breakdown	Segment A	Segment B	Segment C	Segment D	Segment E	
		Demogra	phic profile			
Age	25-35	30-45	17-25	25-35	45-60	
Income, rubles	30000 - 50000	15000 - 30000	10000 - 15000	30000 - 40000	15000 - 30000	
Marital status	Unmarried	Married	Unmarried	Married	Married	
Children	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
		Life	estyle			
Using tourist services throughout the year	2-3 times a year (30%)	once a year (40%)	for the first time (11%)	once a year (12%)	once a year (7%)	
Behavioral patterns of the use						
Reason for choosing a particular tourism company	Recommendations of friends, acquaintances, and relatives (25%)	Previous experience of contacting this company (23%)	A specific proposal that attracted interested (24%)	Recommendations of friends, acquaintances, and relatives (16 %)	A specific proposal that attracted interest (24%)	
Criteria for choosing a tourist product	Quality of services (16%)	Reliability of services (21%)	Price (19%)	Price (19%)	Availability of discounts (21%)	
Expenses for a tourist trip (per person /	500 – 700 euros	300 – 500 euros	200 – 300 euros	300 – 500 euros	no more than 200 euros	

Table 2. Market segments of tourism services consumers based on the identification method

In our opinion, the Federal Agency for Tourism of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation should carry out the segment-based positioning in accordance with two aspects: 1) to conduct segmentation of tourist destinations or regions to obtain information on the amount and structure of demand for those or other tourism services, and specific needs of consumers, that will allow implementing more efficient management, including strategic management of tourist activities, as well as efficiently allocate funds between participants in the business process; 2) to propose actors, which compose a certain tourist destination, carry out periodically segment-based positioning and identify specific consumer needs (e.g., improvement in road infrastructure in order to increase the accessibility of a particular tourist site, the reconstruction of architectural or cultural monuments, etc.).

3. Discussion

The reliability of the presented approaches to the assessment of the tourism industry-related environment is confirmed by the fact that the segmentation process of consumer tourism services, which is shown by the example of tourism company can be effectively applied at the regional and nation-wide level.

If domestic tourism companies would have conducted customers segmentation on the regular basis, while providing the obtained data to the appropriate state authority, namely the Federal Agency for Tourism, such information would have been very valuable, and in some cases just necessary for the efficient strategic management of tourism industry, primarily in the elaboration and implementation of development strategies and programs, since one of high-priority tasks of such management is stimulating consumer activity of the population, which cannot be implemented without knowing the needs and requirements of potential customers.

At the same time, at the macrolevel, it is necessary to identify sustainable target segments of potential consumers, combining all features into a single chain (Hung, Li, Pan and Petrick 2010, Vorobei and Kirdyapkin 2014). In addition, it is recommended to conduct assessments of consumers by identifying the set of factors

influencing consumer demand as the value most important for the strategy development. The difficulty here lies in the fact that the assessment of tourism services quality by the consumer is quite subjective and depends on different economic, socio-psychological, socio-demographic, and behavioral factors.

National state management bodies should also use all existing means and methods influencing the tourism development in general, and in this particular context, stimulating consumer demand based on motivation theories. So, for example, almost all the tourists are concerned about their safety (the threat of terrorism, and health security). In this regard, the Federal Agency for Tourism, the task of which is to improve the tourist image in the global market, must necessarily take into account this circumstance, promising tourists' personal safety, special conditions of insurance and medical care.

In tourism, underestimating the demand is just as dangerous as overestimating it. In the case, where the travel company is not able to serve a significant number of tourists, suffer both reputation of the company and tourist destination. Exactly the same happens at the level of state, *i.e.* foreign tourists, who received low-quality services will disseminate negative information about the state in their home countries, thereby alienating potential visitors. This will affect the overall tourist image of the country.

Because of the existence of conflicting needs, such as settled lifestyle and activity, recreation and work, passive consumption and creative approach to leisure, tourism needs careful marketing research of consumer behavior motives as the basis to form effective system of strategic management in the tourism industry.

Contemporary domestic realities show that despite the fact that in the Russian Federation tourism is positioned at the state level as a priority sector of the national economy development, in fact, the number of relevant activities aimed at real development and encouragement of the tourist industry, is guite small.

In our opinion, one of the reasons for this situation is the lack of understanding by executives of the public administration of the importance of tourism as an industry, rather than just a form of leisure. Countries that are advanced in the field of tourism, such as France, Italy, the USA, Spain, the UK, Egypt, and many others have long passed to a qualitatively new level of the industry development, where strategic management is the basis of such development. Strategic management incorporates all tourism-related activities as well as their management including regular advertising campaigns, long-term development programs, and systematic participation in various world tourism forums.

Conclusion

Summing up, we can note that above proposals will allow improving and raising the tourism industry sector at a totally new level in the national economy that will include social responsibility to society for the fulfillment of the mission, integration of the economic potential of the tourism industry and the abilities of the professionals involved in the tourism industry to more effective use of resources in the course of achieving set goals.

The proposed measures will also contribute to the development of innovation processes that involves continuous improvement of technological, informational, and managerial processes to ensure the compliance of the subjects of the tourism business with the requirements of the external environment.

With the purpose of improving coordination between key players of tourism business and developing the mechanism of strategic management of tourism business in the face of constant changes in the external environment, we propose to establish the Association of Tourism Business Leaders of the Russian Federation and transform it into an institution, which would combine and implement the interests of its members, *i.e.* players of different hierarchical levels of the tourism industry (government, business, and consumer sector) as equal partners to meet needs and requirements of each of them, as well as to attract common efforts for tourism development in the Russian Federation.

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