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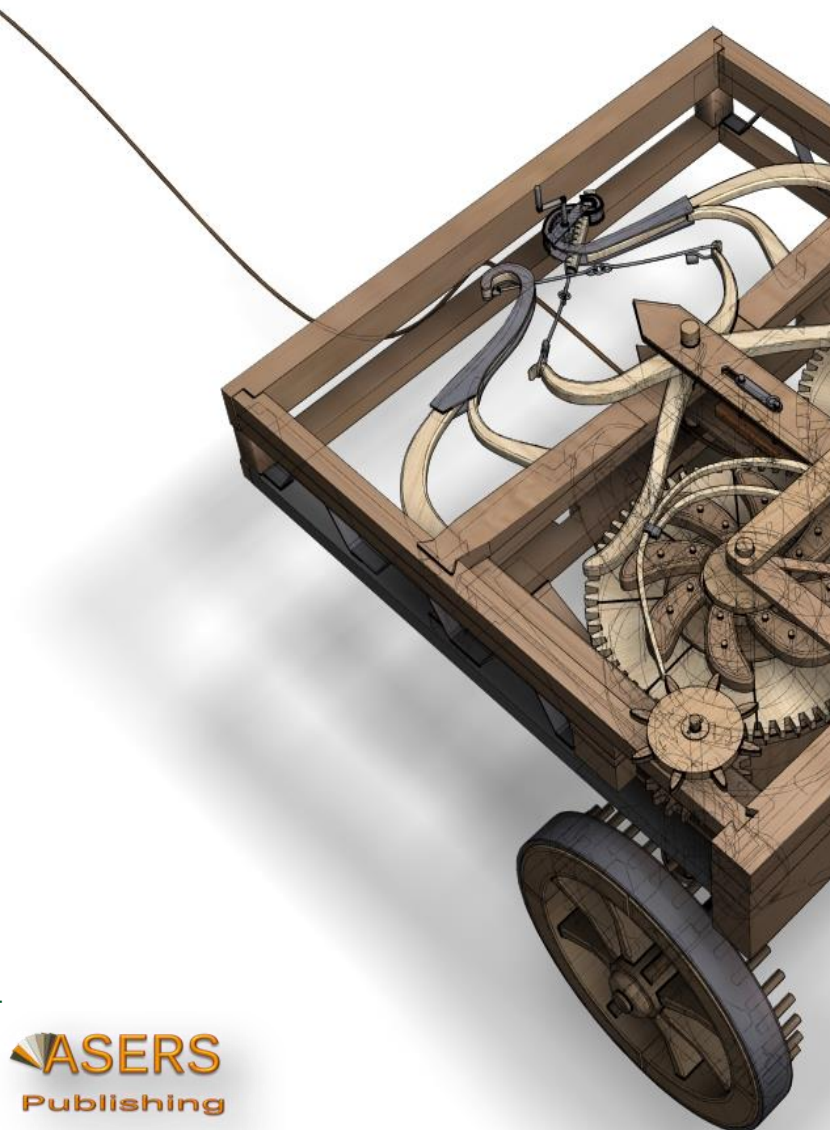
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Call for Papers

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Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism

Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism is a young 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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Eco Tourism as a Recreational Impact Factor on Human Condition

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Abstract:

This set of our research problem, which is to find ways of eco-tourism impact on the physiological and psycho-emotional state of a person, increasing his resistance to stress, emotional recovery, well-being, mood, etc. The purpose of research is to identify the nature of eco-tourism's recreational facilities on the basis of state of tourists monitoring during a trip.

The object of the study is a tourist, as the subject of eco-tourism. The subject of research is the list of recreational changes in tourists' state in ecological tour conditions. The research hypothesis is the following: the tourists' state in the environmental tour conditions will demonstrate positive dynamics of the psycho-emotional and physiological state as a result of the natural conditions' impact, which will allow us to introduce such recreational term as "Eco therapy".

The study showed that there is a little change in the tourists' hemodynamics and heart rate in the end of the Ay River rafting as a form of ecological tour. Both males' and females' blood pressure and heart rate remain in the normal range and meet the normal state throughout the tour. The group's emotional state self-esteem and the level of anxiety and depression entered the set limit and are at a high level, indicating the favorable and positive impact of travel on the human body.

Keywords: ecological tourism, rafting, anxiety and depression level

JEL Classification: L 83.

1. Introduction

Eco-tourism - is one of the most promising types of tourism. The term "ecotourism" was proposed in 1980 by Mexican economist Hector Ceballos-Lascurain and meant "naturalists' traveling to the untouched natural places specifically for the study, observation of wild flora and fauna and to obtain the joy of contact with nature, as well as ancient and modern cultural values, possessed by these territories". Currently, scientific literature provides many definitions of ecotourism, and the researchers emphasize the fundamental difference between eco-tourism and other types of tourism, i.e. the beneficial effect on the socio-economic environment and the ecological state of the regions

2. Background literature

The issues of human interaction with environment habitat, restructuring of biorhythms influenced by climate and seasonal variations, crossing time zones, shifted work and leisure became the subject of E. P. Gora's

research at "Human Ecology". Environmental physiology and human body reserves in extreme and sport types of tourism are analyzed in the works of N. A. Aghajanian, G.A. Bobkov, A. I. Volzhina, E. V. Evstafieva, A. N. Kislitsyna, A. G. Maracheva.

The problems of natural and physical factors use for the improvement of the body's functional reserves are discussed in the works of I. P. Bobrovniksky. The undertaken analysis of the scientific literature shows that questions of different types of tourism impact on human body have been thoroughly studied. However, the issues of mental and emotional state and human hemodynamics in terms of eco-tourism still have not been investigated sufficiently. One kind of ecological tourism is rafting. It can have a sport, cultural and recreational character.

Technology entering our lives, increase of scientific and technological progress leads to the living conditions change in large metropolitan areas, which ultimately leads to the nervous system overload and generates constant psychological tension and leads to stress. Residents of large cities are more likely to suffer from nervous disorders and all sorts of nervous system diseases. They have a natural and understandable desire to leave for the country, to release the nervous system from the stresses that have accumulated under the conditions of daily life in communion with nature. The purpose of such travels to the environment is to improve the emotional state, relieve psychological stress. The mechanisms that attract city residents to nature and the curing effect of the natural environment impact is confirmed even at the genetic level, as evidenced by the data of modern medical research.

People are willing to communicate with nature, in order to get an "urban compensational" calmness, or vice versa to be charged by an "active" holiday in natural environment.

In this sense, eco-tourism includes such forms of travel as weekend trips, weekends in nature, rural, green, or agricultural tourism, etc. In this case, the basic criterion of travel motivation is having rest in order to release the nervous system from everyday stresses or, on the contrary, giving it an active load due to the environment changes and new experiences. All this has an indirect relationship to eco-tourism, as nature is regarded as a resting condition, and the tourist is a consumer of goods provided by nature, that is a subject passively reacting to it. Thus, ecotourism is a form of active recreation with ecologically meaningful content, acting as the direction of people's recreational activities integrating environment. The people build their relationship with nature and other people on the basis of mutual benefit, mutual respect and understanding. Such a communion with nature gives the tourists a certain physical, psychological, intellectual and emotional reserve of strength and health.

In modern conditions the contradiction between the potential of eco-tourism in human improvement and the inadequate use of the recreational functions of eco-tourism in the structure of health preservation. This set to our research problem, which is to find ways of eco-tourism impact on the physiological and psycho-emotional state of a person, increasing his resistance to stress, emotional recovery, well-being, mood, etc.

The purpose of research is to identify the nature of eco-tourism's recreational facilities on the basis of state of tourists monitoring during a trip. The object of the study is a tourist, as the subject of eco-tourism. The subject of research is the list of recreational changes in tourists' state in ecological tour conditions. The research hypothesis is the following: the tourists' state in the environmental tour conditions will demonstrate positive dynamics of the psycho-emotional and physiological state as a result of the natural conditions' impact, which will allow us to introduce such recreational term as "ecotherapy".

In accordance with the problem, the intended purpose and hypothesis put forward we have formulated the following research objectives:

- to study the basics of eco-tourism, and select the area and type of ecological tour;
- to study and select techniques for experimental work;
- to define and implement a package of practical researches on tourists' status change during the ecological tour;
- to conduct a comparative analysis of the tourists' changes in mental and emotional state and hemodynamics in a variety of modes and eco-tourism's natural resources attractiveness.

2. Research methods

The tourists' physiological state assessment was carried out on the results of hemodynamic measurements - blood pressure (BP) and heart rate every tourist in the rafting conditions as a form of eco-tourism. Anxiety and depression level assessment before and after the rafting was carried out on the basis of the HADS

methodology. The tourists' emotional states self-assessment analysis was carried out daily on the basis of techniques by A. Wessman and D. Ricks.

Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) developed by Sigmund and Stein in 1983 to identify and assess the severity of depression and anxiety in general medical practice. The benefits of the discussed scale are in ease of use and handling (the scale filling does not require a long time, and does not cause difficulties in the patient), that allows to recommend it for use in somatic practice for the primary detection of anxiety and depression among respondents (screening). The scale has high discriminant validity in relation to two disorders: anxiety and depression.

The methodology "Emotional states self-esteem" by Wessman and Riks and used for self-assessment of emotional states and the degree of wakefulness. This technique is effective, if it is necessary to identify changes in a person's emotional state for a certain period of time. It is possible to analyze the changes of individual parameters, and to operate only with the integral result. However, an integral component of this methodology is more sensitive to the mental maladjustment state, than to adjustment one.

3. Experimental part

3.1. Characteristics of the ecological tourism territory

We have chosen water travel, i.e. rafting on the Ay River as the conditions of our research.

The tourist's willingness to travel, physical activities (preparing swimming facilities, ascents and descents in the river valley, visiting caves, etc.) - is a willingness to transfer from daily life to long journeys and nature excursions in the shortest possible time. The tourist achieve optimal efficiency, related to boating and cooking, preserving attention to cognitive information, transition from one type or level of tourism loads intensity to other, providing the required quality of the tourist load and perception. Readiness - one of the characteristics of the tourist performance in active eco-tourism, as in many cases it is important not only for taking part in the rafting with certain intensity and duration programs, but also for the need for travel creation which helps to restore the physiological and psycho-emotional state of a tourist.

Water tourism is a kind of travel in which the relaxation comes on water using boats, kayaks, catamarans, pleasure boats and other swimming facilities. It is a travel along the rivers, reservoirs and lakes on boats that are considered to be touristic.

Rafting / boating is an activity known to mankind since ancient times. For many centuries BC, ancient people traveled along the rivers by canoe. With the civilization progress, rivers were used for floating wood. The prospectors and geologists crossed the mountain waters using various types of swimming facilities. Rafting is a real adventure, a chance to see different beautiful untraded areas where there are no roads, and where you can get there only by water.

Catamaran rafting along the Ay river could be a river walk, and a real water campaign - it depends on the time of year, length of the route, activity of the group. But in any case, one is filled by vivid emotions and unforgettable impressions. The Ay river rafting is a contact with the pristine nature, dive into the world of the forest sounds and quietness away from city hustle and worries. This is a communion with nature the smoke of fire. Steep cliffs, meadows smells, sounds of the forest and the sound of the river, a few days spent away from civilization are going to leave the warmest memories. Rafting on the Ay River - is not just a journey. It is a real adventure that will help to see the reality of nature from the other side. It is a quiet and peaceful, and at the same time, an active pastime in the fresh air, lots of romance and discovery.

There are no serious riffles on this river, only small ones. Rafting down the Ural rivers is unique it is not as dangerous as mountain river rafting and at the same time it is much more fun and diverse than rafting down plain rivers. The Ay river in summer is a quiet but not a dull the river, its shores are rocky, twists and turns of the channel open more and more beauty to people on a raft tour. The Ay river is very popular with tourists-rafters. A large number of natural monuments, quaint and picturesque cliffs and caves are concentrated in its valley and located directly on its shores.

The Ay river is the Ufa river's left tributary, it originates in Chelyabinsk region, near the town of Zlatoust. The river is 549 kilometers long. The total drop is 714 meters. The Ay flows from its source as a noisy river among boulders. This site is not suitable for water routes. But the segment from the Kusa town to Laclau is chosen by the tourists. Here the river flows in a wooded valley, and below the Novaya Pristan' (Mezhevoy) breaks through the rocky mountains.

From the Mezhevoy village, the most scenic part of the Ay river begins. Here the river makes a bend towards the Novaya Pristan'. At the apex of the bend is Ischelka River, at the mouth of which once was a marina. In half a kilometer from the mouth of Ischelka, downstream, the river leaves the artificial tunnel through which the reserved waters of the Kamenka River flow.

After the villages, the river makes a right turn. Two kilometers downstream there is an island on the river. Kurgazaksky log and Kurgazakskaya cave are on the left of it. After Kurgazakskaya cave there is Malie Pritesy towering cliffs along the shores, behind them, after the turn, there is a rock wall - Bolshie Pritesy (up to 90 meters high). Below there is Kulmetovo village where you can find a cattle farm. Over the next corner there is a Razboynik rock. Even lower on the left there is Alekseevka village. Then, on the left, the river Uluir flows into the Ay River and the river narrows. Here are strong currents and simple rapids. Then again, the river expands, it flows along the forest and turns 90° to the right near the Sikiyaz-Tamak village. Here, in the rocks on the right bank is the Sikiyaz-Tamaksky cave complex and the observation site. Further downstream, around the corner, on the right bank there is the Aiskiy fountain. Its height is about 3 meters. In front of the Lacy village there is another attraction - Kapkatash Rock or Stone Gate. Using the trail you can climb up to the top and have a magnificent view of the Ay river valley. The rafting route ends in Lacy village, from where the road leads to the M5 highway.

3.2. Research results

The rafting took place in June 2015. 21 people participated in research. The tour program began in the city of Chelyabinsk, where the travel participants under the supervision of the tourism enterprises manager and tourism instructor charged catamarans, paddle, tents, fire equipment, food, and personal equipment into the bus. Then a comfortable tour bus took them from Chelyabinsk to Mezhevoy village (195 km). On the bank of the river Ay tourists were actively involved in the discharge of tourist equipment.

The next stage - the main one - started with the preparation of vehicles to be launched and getting on the catamarans. For rafting the travel agency provided 4 rafting catamarans and 8 tents. The tourist group included 2 families with children of primary school age, secondary school age adolescents, students, one male of retirement age. Rafting members were familiar with each other only through a few small groups of 3-4 people and did not know each other before the trip. As a result of rafting tourists got acquainted with the beautiful scenery of the river Ay, visited the Kurgazak cave, Dry Falls, Sikiyaz Tamaksky cave complex and natural artesian fountain.

The research results confirmed the possibility of conducting research in the area of the water tour influence on the change in the tourists' of psycho-emotional state. The average age of the rafting participants was 24.3 years. (Table 1, Figure 1)

Table 1 - Average Age of the Rafting on the Ay River Participants

INDICATOR	SEX	
	Male	Female
Tourists' average age	26,0	23,2

The average women's age was 15-39 years, males - 8-63 years, respectively. The male and female age comparison of the rafting participants did not show statistically significant differences; however, speaking about the sex ratio, females significantly predominated.

PARTICIPANTS' AVERAGE AGE

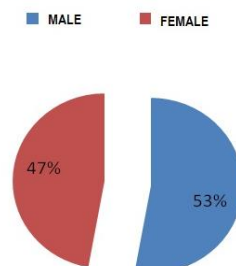


Figure 1 - The Male and Female Ay River Rafting Participants' Age

Let us analyze how the blood pressure and heart rate of males and females changed at the time of rafting.

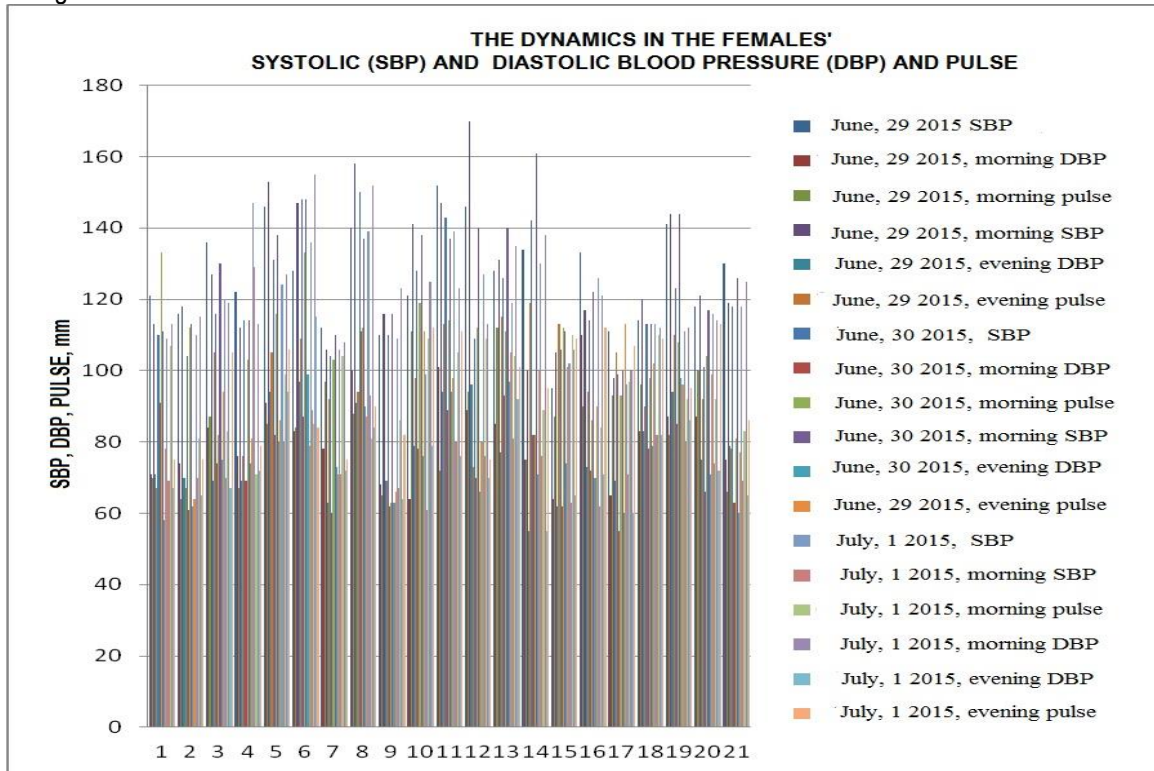


Figure 2 - The Dynamics in the SBP, DBP and Pulse of the Female Participants of the Ay River Rafting

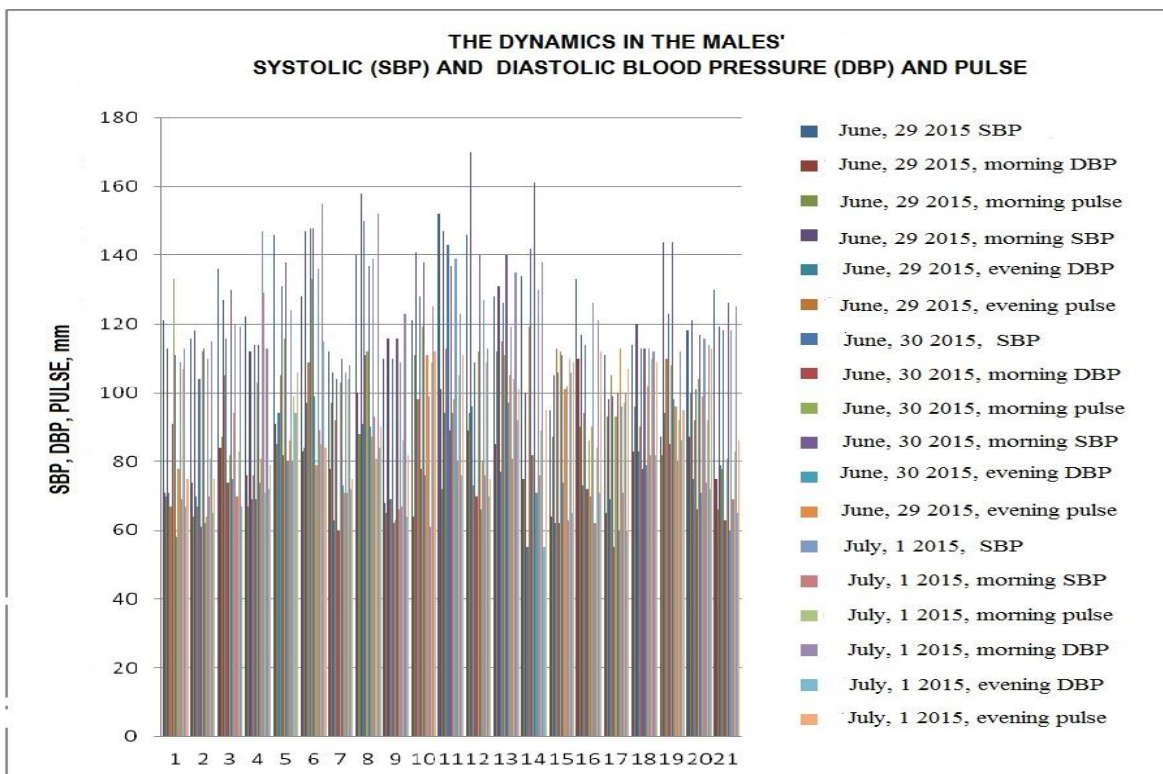


Figure 3 - The Dynamics in the SBP, DBP and Pulse of the Female Participants of the Ay River Rafting

The results of blood pressure and heart rate measurement of both men and women have shown that no significant changes in blood pressure rating and the pulse were not detected under the conditions of water travel along the Ay River (see Figures 2 and 3). The indicators did not exceed the upper normal levels of blood pressure (100 mm Hg) during the whole rafting period. There was not a single case when the systolic pressure exceeded the borderline level of 160 mm Hg (Figure 2) of females and 170 mm. Hg of males respectively.

The average heart rate of both sexes did not exceed the rate of 95 bumps per minute during the whole rafting period. There was not a single case when the pulse exceeded the borderline of 120 beats per minute. Let us analyze how the indicators of anxiety and depression changed among the participants before the start and after the finish of rafting (Figure 4).

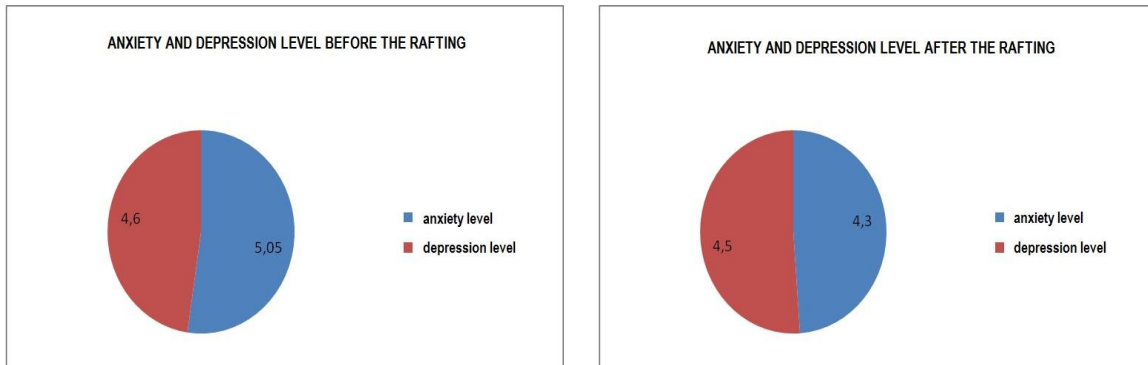


Figure 4 - The Dynamics in the Anxiety and Depression Levels before and after the Rafting

All figures have average value, entering the optimum limit of anxiety and depression evaluation. The indicators were included in the scale from 0 to 7, indicating the absence of reliable demonstrated symptoms of anxiety and depression within the group of rafting participant. Let us analyze the indicators of the participants' emotional state before and after the rafting (Figure 5):

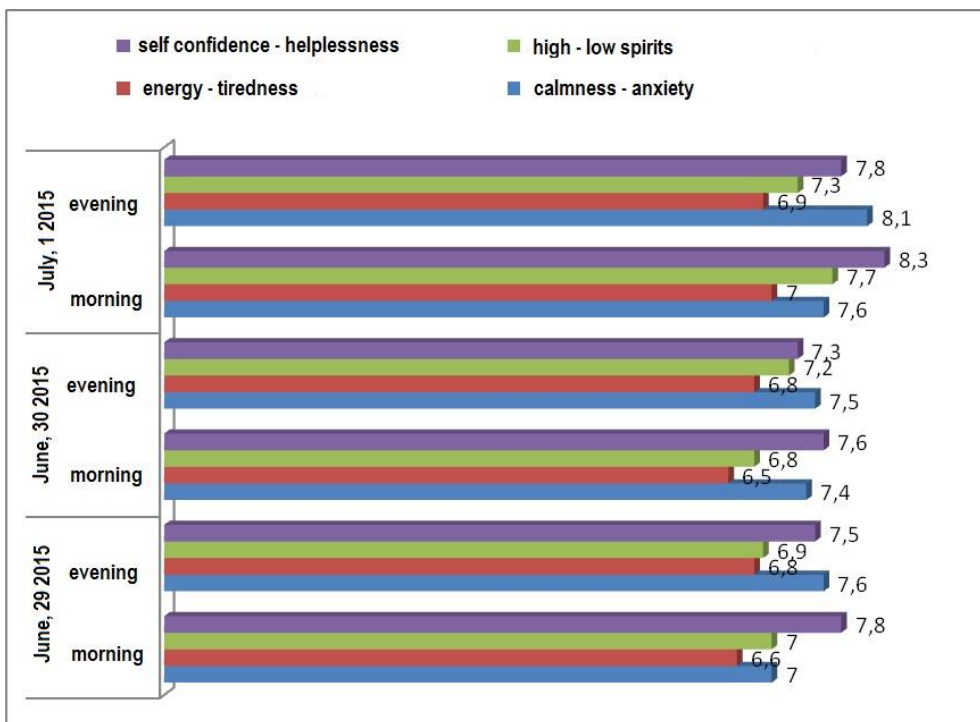


Figure 5 - The Dynamics of Emotional State Self-esteem of the Ay River Participants

According to the Weissman and Ricks methodic, the tourists' mood rises towards the rafting finish, their self-confidence becomes more stable, the peace of mind comes, but at the same time tiredness appears and

increases. Based on the processed data, we can say that the average value of the group's emotional state self-esteem indicators is rather high. The calmness-anxiety scale - describes the group as a balanced, patient and prudent one. The energy – tiredness scale - describes the group as a proactive and enterprising one. The high – low spirits scale describes the group as a healthy and vigorous one. The self-confidence – helplessness scale described the group as strong and working. The analysis of measurement data showed that in the result of the rafting according to the HADS method some psychological and emotional state of participants took place. The level of anxiety decreased, but the depressive state increased. We believe this happened due to tedious evening move.

Conclusions

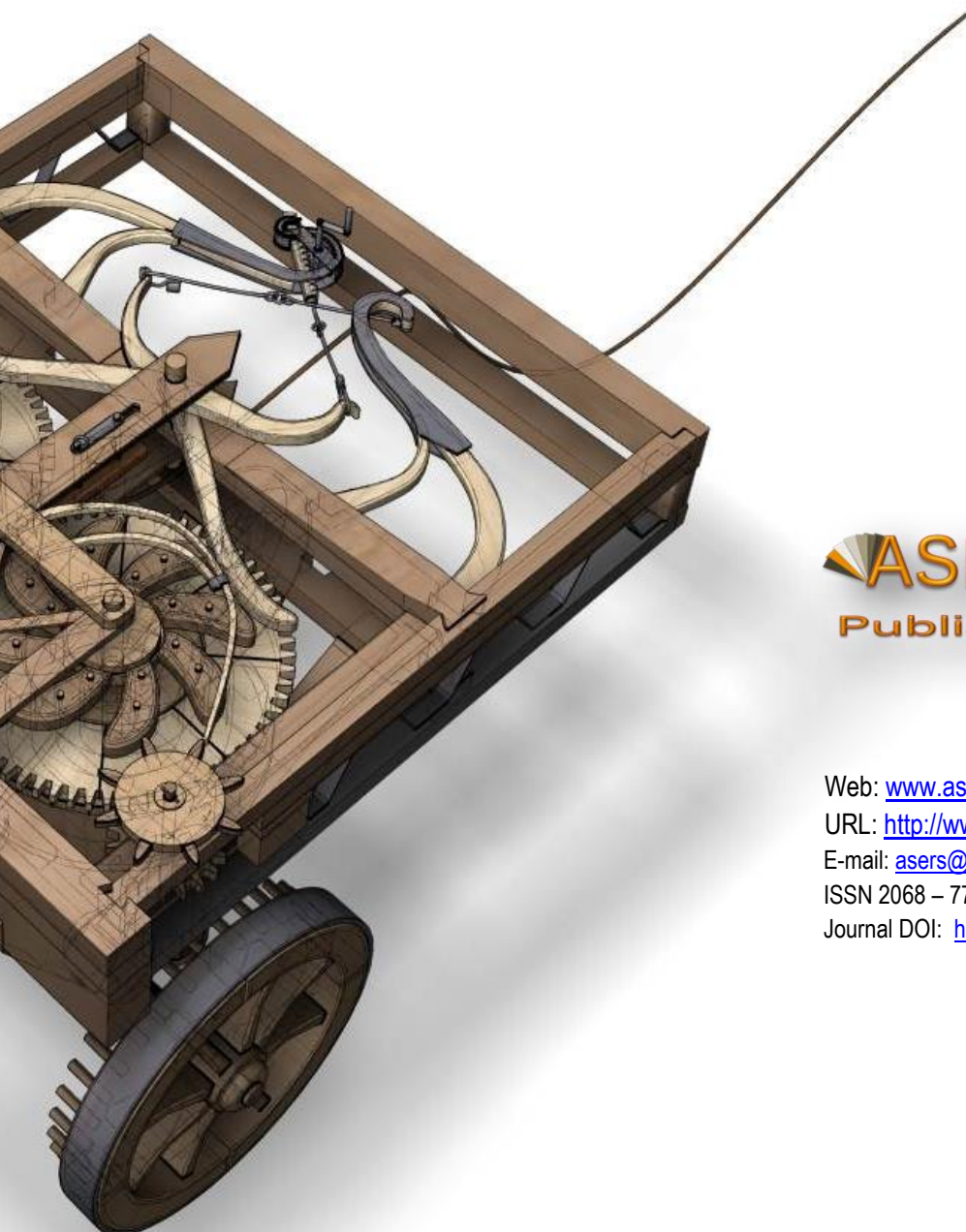
Thus, the study showed that there is a little change in the tourists' hemodynamics and heart rate in the end of the Ay River rafting as a form of ecological tour. Both males' and females' blood pressure and heart rate remain in the normal range and meet the normal state throughout the tour. The group's emotional state self-esteem and the level of anxiety and depression entered the set limit and are at a high level, indicating the favorable and positive impact of travel on the human body. All this proves the positive effects of ecological tourism's recreational functions and allows us to introduce the term "Eco therapy", revealing the essence of the natural recreational impact on the human body. Our hypothesis contains confirmation and development in a number of other countries researches, where, along with the measurement of hemodynamic parameters the tourists' psycho-emotional state was measured and analyzed during the travel period. The scientists call this the recreation effect "forest therapy".

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