The Study of the Present State and Prospects of Cultural Tourism in the Russian Federation (Exemplifying Moscow Region)

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Abstract: The rising importance and scope of cultural tourism in Russia is due to two main factors. First, the increased demand for cultural tourism is directly related to global internationalization processes, covering all aspects of society and, as a consequence, culture tourism goes beyond the limits of its historical and value components, where in addition to excursion services consumers aim to get a whole range of associated services. Second, the increased interest in cultural tourism can be attributed to the presence of enormous tourist resources in Russia. This study, based on secondary and primary data, aims to identify the problems and prospects cultural tourism in Russia, specifically in creating productive human capital in the industry, with major deficiencies in that field highlighted and solutions proposed.

Key words: Cultural tourism - Moscow region - Cultural tourism sites - Tourism development - Questionnaire - Survey - Employees in cultural tourism - Education and training in cultural tourism

INTRODUCTION

In the traditional sense cultural tourism - is one of the areas of tourism, targeting cognitive, intellectual and spiritual powers of man, with the purposes of enlightenment and comprehension of cultural values. From this perspective, the main resource of cultural tourism - are sites of cultural and historical display.

Another perspective is focusing on the elements of discovery and experience. Cultural tourism - is a form of modern tourism that aims to learn about the history and culture of the country (region) in all its forms (architecture, painting, music, theater, folklore, traditions, customs, crafts and the ways of life, etc.).

Irrespective of definitions, cultural tourism exceeds the boundaries of the historical and cultural components. As a consequence, consumers have formed a strong opinion that, in addition to direct excursion services, they are supposed to receive a whole range of services, including:

- Attending places of pilgrimage, thematic lectures on religion, familiarizing with spiritual and religious customs, traditions, rituals and ceremonies;
- Visiting archaeological sites, participating in archeological expeditions;
- Attending cultural and ethnic objects, participation in ethnic festivals, familiarizing with the customs and ways of life of indigenous populations;
- Acquaintance with crafts, participating in master classes;
- Visiting natural and cultural ensembles, participating in cultural and environmental programs;
- Visiting cultural and leisure facilities, recreation facilities.

And all these and other activities need robust research methods, of which a particular interest may present those used in a series of surveys of the ATLAS cultural tourism research projects [1], especially given that problems of cultural tourism development, in fact, lie in two fields - tourism and culture and that makes them complicated. And, arguably, in the area of economic development. Ideally, further studies are needed as to
how transform cultural tourism potential of Russia into a tool of economic development, in the same way as it is investigated in some Western studies [2, 3].

At present, the development of cultural tourism in the Russian Federation has received increased attention from both the government and municipal management in the tourism sector as well as the business community. The leading in terms of cultural tourism region in Russia is Moscow region, uniting Moscow and Moscow oblast (province), the area on average within 120 kilometers from Moscow itself. Arguably, in terms of cultural tourism Russia is 15-20 years behind Europe and for that very reason some studies of cultural tourism in Europe [4] conducted in the middle 1990-s can be very insightful and bear considerable resemblance with regards to general tendencies and patterns of cultural tourism production and consumption in present-day Russia. This study focuses on two areas: the present state and general problems of cultural tourism in Moscow region (which are very indicative and typical for all Russia) and deficiencies in the competencies and employability of personnel in that industry.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study on the state and prospects of the development of cultural tourism in the Moscow region was carried out within the methodological framework, depicted in Table 1, taking into account previous studies on marketing research in tourism [5, 6] and in the field of culture [7].

Stage 1: The secondary data study of cultural tourism in Moscow region

About half of all valuable objects of cultural heritage of the Russian Federation are located in Moscow. Currently, the World Heritage List of UNESCO regarding Moscow is made of 3 items: Moscow Kremlin and Red Square, Church of the Ascension in Kolomenskoye, Ensemble of the Novodevichy Convent. The official candidates for entry in the list of World Heritage Sites in Moscow are: the architectural and historical complex "Shelter of count N.P. Cheremetev", Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, Architectural and Park Ensemble "Tsar's Country Estate Izmaylovo" [8].

Table 1: The methodology of research on the state and prospects of the development of cultural tourism in the region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The object of study</th>
<th>Objects that can be attributed to cultural tourism, located in Moscow region</th>
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</table>
| Research objectives for the first stage | 1. Classifying objects of cultural tourism, depending on their type and function  
2. Summarizing information on the state of cultural tourism in the region  
3. Overall assessment of the region's tourist potential in cultural tourism  
4. Determining the prospects of cultural tourism development in the region |
| Research objectives for the second stage | 1. Conducting a survey of employees and managers in cultural tourism  
2. Compiling information on the main issues of cultural tourism, resulting from poor training and competence of personnel  
3. Considering approaches to lessening the problems by increasing the level of education and qualification of personnel |
| Sources of information | • Information provided by state and municipal tourism management authorities of Moscow and Moscow region;  
• Web-sites of organizations in cultural tourism;  
• Information in the public databases, including the database objects of tourist resources, formed by Russian State University of Tourism and Service;  
• Data from specialized periodicals;  
• Reports of specialized organizations and individual researchers;  
• Information obtained in the course of questioning employees and managers of cultural tourism sites |
| Research methods | • Analysis of certification and reporting documents of sites and facilities;  
• Questionnaires (surveys);  
• Systematization and synthesis of information;  
• Content analysis |
| Rationale for samplings | 1. In forming the sampling the quota method is used, i.e. the number of objects in each classification group is in proportion to the existing database of the University adopted for the general population. Within each group, the objects are selected at random.  
2. Questioning employees and managers of at least 150 objects of cultural tourism, located in Moscow and Moscow region differentiated by functional features. |
In Moscow, there are more than 400 museums, 200 galleries and exhibition halls, 129 theaters, 3 circuses. Within the city there are more than 60 architectural and park ensembles of varying degrees of preservation and over 160 natural sites and 16% of urban land are especially protected natural territories. Also Moscow has 14 amusement parks, which mainly operate year-round with more than 300 objects of cultural and leisure destination. According to experts so far remained in Moscow 64 architectural and park ensembles, including 37 in a good state of preservation and 27 partially preserved [9].

Moscow region outside Moscow also has significant resources for the development of cultural tourism with more than 6,400 sites of cultural and historical heritage. In the total amount of the monuments there are 2,609 objects of civil architecture, more than 1,400 objects of ecclesiastical purposes (churches, chapels and monasteries), 341 homestead and 350 monuments of military glory. In Moscow region there are 88 museums (including exhibition halls, art galleries, museums and exhibition centers).

Moscow region has historically been the center of the Russian Orthodox Church, located in the territory of more than 1,000 monasteries and churches, including the unique object, related to the UNESCO World Heritage Site - the Trinity-Sergius Lavra. By the volume of tourist traffic in Moscow region the object occupies the first place [10]. At present, the region also has more than 200 estate complexes, there are old art commercial centers, which are known far beyond the borders of the country and represent the whole world an image of Russia [11].

For a more detailed study 250 objects of cultural tourism were selected, located in Moscow and Moscow region. To facilitate further analysis the objects have been codified as follows (Table 2).

Generalization of the collected information in the course of the study led to the following conclusions.

First, in terms of visits in the city of Moscow and Moscow region cultural tourism is dominated by sites’ display. Typically, this is due to the traditional orientation of tour programs. But this approach is already inefficient and hinders the development of cultural tourism in the region and in the whole of Russia. In world practice more flexible approaches to the organization of excursions are used. Excursion programs are more comprehensive, interactive, allowing using at the same time a wider range of tourist resources. In the region under this scheme works while still a small percentage of cultural tourism facilities (about 20%).

Table 2: The classification of the selected sites of cultural tourism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functional area</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Number of sites</th>
<th>Detailed composition of sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Objects of sightseeing</td>
<td>1.1. Museums</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>Regional history museums, museum-reserves, estate, house and thematic museums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2. Galleries</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Art galleries, showrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.3. Monuments and historic buildings, associated with famous people and events</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Historic buildings; monuments to people, animals, things, events; sculptures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.4. Folk arts and cultural centers</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Painting; toys; porcelain; shawls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Entertainment facilities</td>
<td>2.1. Theatres</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Theaters; art theatres; puppet theatres; concert halls; movie theatres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2 Circuses</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>State circuses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.3. Amusement parks</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Parks and recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.4. Gastronomy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pubs (Russian cuisine)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sites of religious tourism</td>
<td>3.1. Religious and sacred sites</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Churches, temples, chapels; monasteries; burial mounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Events</td>
<td>4.1. Cultural events</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>International film and culture festivals; religious events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.2. Popular culture</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Themed celebrations; town days; air shows</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: The results of SWOT-analysis of cultural tourism in Moscow region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Moscow region is a leading area in Russia in terms of tourist flows</td>
<td>1. Growth in demand for cultural tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. It’s a cultural and historical centre of the country with the largest number of cultural objects (sites of sightseeing, cultural events, religious and sacred objects, etc)</td>
<td>2. Increasing tourist flow due to state policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Development of new types of cultural tourism is taking place (religious, events)</td>
<td>3. Development of mixed tourist products in cultural tourism (where in the framework of a tour several segments of cultural tourism are combined)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Introduction of new approaches to service (individual excursions, electronic assistance)</td>
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</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Excessive focus on excursions with other forms of tourist services being underdeveloped</td>
<td>1. Lack of specific legislative and tax treatment of cultural tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Unsatisfactory and negligent attitude of organizations, which run facilities, towards preserving and repairing cultural objects</td>
<td>2. Quite often the price level is not comparable to the quality of the services offered, widespread price discrimination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Lack of awareness about cultural tourism facilities</td>
<td>3. Lack of infrastructure (transportation, catering)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Introduction of new approaches to service (individual excursions, electronic assistance)</td>
<td>4. Lack of training for professionals working in the field of cultural tourism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Second, self-visiting tourists are increasingly choosing objects that are "open air": museum-estates, museums-reserves, parks, etc. Inside Moscow walking tours, walking ways, walks are the most popular, including among foreign tourists. Unfortunately, tourist objects are in an inappropriate state: some monuments and sculptures are in a dilapidated or dirty state, removed or completely missing information boards. What should be specifically stressed is unsatisfactory and negligent attitude of organizations, which run facilities, as well as state and municipal administrations in the field of culture and tourism towards preserving and repairing cultural objects.

Third, foreign tourists focus primarily on Moscow. This is mainly due to a lack of awareness of facilities near Moscow. In addition, poor development of transportation has it bearing on the attractiveness of tours and excursions. The exception is the Trinity-Sergius Lavra, as noted earlier. It is necessary to strengthen the promotional activities of both the institutions and tourism companies operating in this sector.

Fourth, pricing policy for paid services of cultural tourism should be revisited and overhauled. Quite often the price level is not comparable to the quality of the services offered. At the same time the prices of cultural sites in a very wide range of cultural and historical value are almost equalized with each other. There is also a widespread price discrimination of certain categories of consumers. Especially foreigners, with prices for that category being up to 10 times higher. That is an outdated legacy of the beginning of the previous decade when the gap in the purchasing power of locals and tourists from developed countries was much greater. And also prices have little to do with financial performance and that minimizes the possibility of sites to operate at least at the break-even point.

Fifth, cultural-recreational tourism in Russia is just beginning to develop as an substantial branch of cultural tourism. Among the reasons for restraining is the high price of services (especially theaters, concert halls, restaurants). Catering also lags behind the requirements of the market and that in turn has its bearing on the tourism and hospitality industry. Even in Moscow relatively few businesses are providing the Russian cuisine, the most popular food segment for the foreign tourists. And on top of that gastronomic tours are practically non-existent.

At the end of the first stage it is worth mentioning that one of the main causes of the above shortcomings is the lack of training for professionals working in the field of cultural tourism. Moreover, the lack of professional competence is pertinent not to specialists and workers in direct contacts with tourists, but also to the managers responsible for effective organization and operations and employees of state and municipal management in the tourism industry, who are supposed to regulate tourism activities at the regional level.

Stage 2: The primary data study of cultural tourism in Moscow region

The following research was conducted through questionnaires of employees in cultural tourism. Selected were 194 cultural tourism sites in Moscow and Moscow region from those studied in the framework of Stage 1, including: objects of sightseeing (museums, art galleries, crafts and ethnic cultural centers) – 95; entertainment facilities (theatres, circuses, themed parks, gastronomy objects) – 29; sites of religious tourism – 54; organizing committees in event tourism – 16. Participated in the survey 157 heads of cultural tourism objects and
The average length of service of employees in cultural tourism is more than 17 years. However, this indicator should not be considered as positive, because, for example, at the objects of sightseeing and religious tourism work a large number of retirees, without special education. Most of the employees have non-tourism education. However, about 60% of employees believe that higher vocational education is crucial for career growth in cultural tourism. The study also revealed that most of the professionals in the field of cultural tourism are experiencing difficulties with foreign languages. In a number of institutions in order to conduct tours with foreign tourists individual experts with knowledge of foreign languages are invited.

According to heads of cultural tourism sites about 70% experience problems with filling vacancies. For example, managers of objects of sightseeing (museums, galleries, ethnic and cultural centers) noted the lack of qualified guides who can not only hold, but also accumulate and present material for new and interesting excursions. At present, on the basis of the museums is practically no research activity. Leisure facilities are in need of professionals for the entertainment industry. At companies in cultural tourism there are almost no graduate managers and marketers. And the general lack of qualified specialists for the cultural tourism is a major problem of labor market in the region.

The managers of cultural tourism objects recognize as the most important characteristics the qualifying characteristics of employees practical experience and competencies. Intrapersonal skills and age are taken into account in the second turn.

The main problems which, in the opinion of managers, are facing their subordinate institutions of cultural tourism are the lack of financing facilities, decent material and technical base and the lack of qualified professionals.

With regards to the responses to this question from managers with those of other employees, despite some variances in percentage points, opinions on the issue of rank are equal. It should also be noted that a large value is ascribed to professional characteristics by both managers and employees.

CONCLUSION

Summarizing the overall results of the second phase of research, the need for increased attention to the training and re-training both employees and managers in cultural tourism should be emphasized. The key areas for improving the system of training employees for cultural tourism can be the following:

- Ensuring the content of vocational education is adequate to the emerging tourism market in the region, including its cultural segment;
- Implementation of supplementary professional education, which relies on competency-based approaches, that demands constant monitoring on the part of tourist organizations and cultural institutions;
- Introduction of new forms and types of training focused on meeting not only the needs of the economy but also the specific educational needs;
- Ensuring the openness of tourism education to attention and influence of tourist and cultural institutions;
• Development of individual talents of every student;
• Joint training and practice-oriented activities of institutions that train in tourism and hospitality with tourist organizations and cultural institutions;
• Practicing case-studies with a particular emphasis on creative tourism strategies, a point rightly highlighted by some authors [12] in view of the need for even further differentiation in the industry.

Findings: Excessive focus on excursions, lack of awareness of facilities, inadequate pricing and insufficient training of personnel, poor infrastructure, deficiency of open-air facilities, non-existence of gastronomic tours, underrepresentation of the Russian cuisine are highlighted as the main weaknesses, impeding a faster growth of cultural tourism in Moscow region, including a greater number of foreign visitors. And the primary research of personnel demonstrates a vast lack of proper training, education and professionalization in the industry. A major shift in this field needed with a focus on practical and service competencies, marketing and creativity.

REFERENCES