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## **Tendencies and Prospects of Tourism Industry in Russia: Sociological Analysis of Stereotypes among Population during Tourism Trips**

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**Abstract:**

*This article deals with the current problem – development of cultural and educational tourism industry. The information for the study was collected from the questionnaires of population of municipal districts of Russia, from the information provided by the Federal Service of State Statistics, and the results of the surveys conducted by the Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM), etc.*

*In the course of the study, the authors revealed that the diverge social groups of the Russian society perceive Russian cultural and educational potential, tourism service in the cities in a different way; the tendencies and basic principles of domestic tourism industry have been revealed. In the article the authors defined direct dependence between weak developed domestic infrastructure and stagnation of domestic tourism industry. The results of the study showed the stereotypes which tourists follow while choosing destinations for their trips. These stereotypes may be divided into the following groups: price, comfort, climate. They range in different social groups that lead to the market fluctuation of the domestic tourism industry.*

**Keywords:** *tourism attractiveness of the territories, tourism potential, tourism, tourism service, tourism trips, stereotypes, social groups.*

**JEL Classifications:** *L10, L83*

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## 1. Introduction

Global and integration trends of social development are leading to the increase of tourism industry, as one of the leading and the most dynamically developing fields of the world economy. In this context, identification and choice of prosperous tourism market, analysis and demand forecasting on the tourism trips are becoming fundamental bases for the economy of many developed and developing countries ensuring inflow of investments in the development of objects of historical and cultural potential of the territories, their infrastructure.

The peculiarity of tourism industry allows observing it from both sides: as a subject of economic analysis and social study. It reveals such aspects as: immersion of population in the cultural and historical values, style and life of peoples of different countries. Besides, social characteristics of tourism service directly depend on the stereotypes different social groups have, peculiarity of social and cultural perception of tourism potential of the regions.

Due to the prolonged economic crisis, and unstable political situation in the world, economists and social scientists are focusing their attention on strategic planning of tourism trips considering rapid transformation of social and economic conditions of modern states. This situation is particularly acute in Russia. According to the results of the independent social survey, the level of attractiveness of some regions is not high enough (except such traditional destination, as the Black Sea coast of the Caucasus).

## 2. Analysis of recent publications on this problem

Significant amount of studies has been devoted to the problem of tourism development and to the main aspects of planning and organising tourism activity. Theoretical issues, analysis of the conceptual framework of working and developing tourism industry and tourism infrastructure were analysed in the studies of such scientists as M.A. Zhukhova (Zhukhova, 2006), V.G. Gulyaev (Gulyaev, 2003), M.B. Byrzhakhov (Byrzhakhov, 2014), S. Medlik (Medlik, 2012), Kh. Godfree (Godfree, 2000), Lasha R. Zhiba, Khatuna K. Shat-ipa (Zhiba, Shatipa, 2012), D. MacCannell (MacCannell). Special attention in the modern studies is being paid to the mechanisms of tourism development providing high quality of tourism service (Ottenbacher, Harrington, 2013; Massidda, Mattana, 2013, Emsden, 2013). It is highly interesting to pay attention to the works on creating demand on tourism service, especially among students, gamification of tourism business (Kirillov *et al.*, 2016; Vinichenko *et al.*, 2016; (Anikina *et al.*, 2016; Bashmakov *et al.*, 2015; Menshchikova and Sayapin, 2016; Shatkovskaya *et al.*, 2017; Faizova *et al.*, 2015).

There are also important studies devoted to factors of development of tourism territorial potential, territorial image, activity of local authorities with the aims of social and cultural economic development of the territories including tourism

infrastructure (Kryukova *et al.*, 2014; Frolova, 2016; Jones and Stewart, 2012; Bondaletov *et al.*, 2015; Kryukova *et al.*, 2016; Firescu and Popescu, 2015). The less worked out issues refer to the mechanisms and administrative ways of influence on the processes of the development of cultural and educational tourism.

Goals and objectives of the study include analysis and definition of the stereotypes which diverse social groups of Russian society follow while planning their trips. We also study their perception of the cultural and educational tourism potential and tourism service in the Russian cities.

### **3. Methods**

Considering the necessity of solving the mentioned-above goals and objectives, as well as the aim of expansion of social knowledge, developing prospects for the Russian tourism market, the authors conducted a social study in 2016. The topic was the following: “The prospects of the development of tourism industry in modern Russia”, underpinned with the empirical base of the municipal districts of Moscow region. We had multistage sampling: the first stage is a cluster sampling; the second stage is a simple random sampling. Population sampling includes 680 people. Statistical uncertainty does not exceed 2,8%. We used questionnaire as the leading method.

The informational basis for the study is federal and local legislation, statistics, informational and analytical reports of the federal, district and local authorities. In the course of the study, the authors applied such general-purpose methods as analysis and synthesis, deduction, induction, generalization, theoretical modelling. The authors also applied empirical methods, such as analysis of documents, social survey, and observation.

Besides, the authors used the results of the studies conducted by the Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM) and Public Opinion Foundation (POF) as empirical bases. In this article, the authors use the results of the surveys among the population conducted by these organizations. Multiple-staged random stratified sample ensure the accuracy of the data.

Application of the mentioned-above methods has allowed proving the analysis, its theoretical and practical conclusions.

### **4. The main results of the study**

The respondents are divided into the following groups according to the traditional segmentation of tourism market with respect to demographic indexes (Table 1):

**Table 1:** Segmentation of tourism market

Age Category	Sampling fraction (number of people)	Level of income (number of people)		
		low	middle	high
Youth tourism (under 30)	217	67	115	35
Middle-aged tourism (from 30 to 50)	276	71	159	46
The third aged tourism (above 50)	187	89	69	29

As our intense interest is the analysis of stereotypes which the Russians have while planning their trips, the authors defined three research groups according to the “income level” (Table 2):

**Table 2:** Characteristics of the population sampling

Social group	Sampling fraction (%)	Sampling pattern (%)		
		under 30 year old	from 30 to 50 years old	above 50 years old
Low level of income	33,3	29,3	31,3	39,4
Middle level of income	50,5	33,5	46,4	20,1
High level of income	16,2	32,0	41,7	26,3

Thus, a little bit more than a half of all the respondents (50,5%) can be referred to the group with the middle level of income, insignificant percentage of the respondents relates to the group with high level of income (16,2%) with the age category ranging from 30 to 50 years. A little bit more than one third part of all the respondents (33,3%) has low level of income with the tendency to its decrease while getting older.

In this view the Russian tourists differ from the tourists from other countries (Japan, the USA, etc.). It is more typical for them to expand the segment of the middle age (40% of the foreign tourists are older than 50 years).

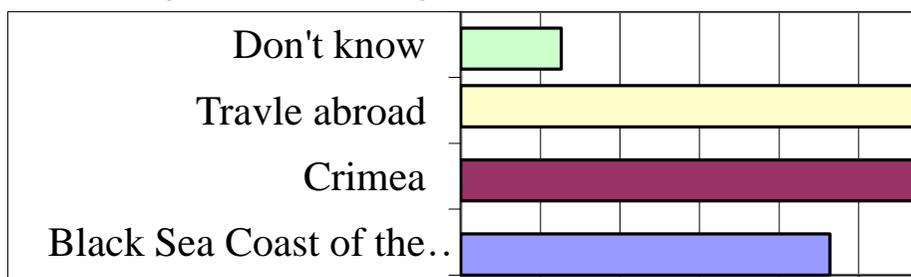
According to the opinion of 56,4% of the respondents from all social groups, one of the main factors influencing on the choice of destination is general situation in the world. However, for the tourists with low income (67,5%), its most significant consequence is an economic crisis (it impacts on the budget of a trip). For the respondents with upper-middle income the most significant it includes terror threat (34,2%), natural disasters (9,4%), some other random fluctuations (13,2%).

As the study shows, the respondents with low income are tending to decrease their tourism activity that must be the consequent of a continuing crisis. In comparison with the previous year, more respondents prefer to stay home (44,7%) or to spend their holidays in their country houses (33,9%). The respondents mention the

following reasons of their refusal to take tourism trips: financial difficulties (46,2%), lack of time for rest (16,4%), their “advanced age” and problems with their health (14,5%). 9,6% of the respondents could not take any trip due to family circumstances (small children, household, repair of a flat, etc.), and 5,1% do not know what to answer.

As for the respondents with the middle income, they assess the reasons for less tourism activity in a similar way. However, financial question is not so sharp (36,2%), less people mentioned their age as a reason for refusal of taking trips (8,7%). Nevertheless, more people specified family circumstances (13,1%) and terror threat (almost 38,4% of the respondents have fear of taking international flights) as the explanation of their decision to travel less. That is why those who have decided to travel, prefer to take trips over the country: 23,2% of the respondents are going to the Black Sea coast of the Caucasus, and 36,4% to the Crimea. 34,1% of the respondents are planning to go overseas, 6,3% have not decided anything yet (Figure 1).

**Figure 1:** Plans of the Russian citizens for their vacations in 2016



These results have not met the expectations of the government of the Russian Federation relating to the increase of domestic tourism after banning flights to Egypt and tense strained with Turkey. Besides, as VCIOM survey showed, increased exchange rate (a considerable factor for trips abroad) did not have a significant impact on domestic tourism, because of poor developed local infrastructure. The Russian citizens prefer either to stay home or to search for more affordable trips abroad. Besides, the rating of foreign resorts traditionally includes Greece, Italy, Spain, France. According to the survey, last five years many Russian citizens travelled abroad several times (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Answers for the question: “Did you spend you vacations overseas during the last 5 years?”

Social group	Low income	Middle income	Upper-middle income
Answers			
Yes, once	13,8%	12,6 %	12,2%
Yes, two times and more	11,2%	16,9%	22,7%
No, I did not.	73,1%	69,3%	65,1%
I do not know	1,9%	1,2%	0%

In the context of general situation, tourism statistics on the Crimea has become better. Nevertheless, the experts suppose that it was the result of the tourist outflow from the resorts of Krasnodar region.

The respondents with high income have other factors influencing on their choice of tourism destination for vacations. The main peculiarity of this group from others is the reason to refuse from trips: insignificant amount of the respondents (6,4%) mentioned lack of time for rest (“I work, my chef doesn’t allow me to have vacations now”), 3,7% of people chose the answer “other”. Health problems and small children are not the reasons to refuse from a trip but a landmark for choosing a proper place for rest. Considering the mentioned-above circumstances, most of the respondents from this group aim at the trips abroad (68,9%). They explain it with their demand for comfort and personal attention by the staff.

This disproportion between international and domestic tourism attracts attention to the necessity of defining peculiarities of perception of Russian educational and cultural tourism potential and tourism service. Thus, the respondents assess international tourism higher than domestic that we can see in the Table №4. There is almost no difference between the assessments of people from different social groups. Nevertheless, we can observe insignificant increase of the indexes in accordance with increase of income. Besides, we can see more significant changes when we describe assessment of international tourism, as there is a direct correlation between the level of income and the choice of place for vacations.

**Table 4:** Assessment of Russian and international educational and cultural tourism on a one to five scale, where 1 is a minimum threshold, and 5 is a maximum

Index	Russia		Average point		International tourism			Average point
	low	middle	upper		low	middle	upper	
Comfort boarding	3,5	3,6	3,6	<b>3,6</b>	4,3	4,3	4,6	<b>4,4</b>
Reasonable price	3,4	3,5	3,6	<b>3,5</b>	4,1	4,3	4,5	<b>4,3</b>
Service	3,6	3,6	3,7	<b>3,6</b>	4,3	4,4	4,7	<b>4,5</b>
High quality of food	3,3	3,4	3,6	<b>3,4</b>	4,3	4,4	4,6	<b>4,4</b>
Ecological environment	3,6	3,7	4,1	<b>3,6</b>	4,2	4,4	4,7	<b>4,4</b>
Eco tours and Health tours	3,2	3,3	3,5	<b>3,3</b>	4,5	4,6	4,8	<b>4,6</b>
Criminal situation	4,1	4,1	4,0	<b>4,1</b>	3,6	3,6	3,5	<b>3,6</b>
Threat to security (Terrorism acts)	3,7	3,7	3,8	<b>3,7</b>	4,4	4,5	4,5	<b>4,5</b>
Climatic peculiarities	3,2	3,3	3,3	<b>3,3</b>	4,2	4,3	4,5	<b>4,3</b>
Historical and cultural peculiarities	4,1	4,2	4,2	<b>4,2</b>	4,2	4,2	4,2	<b>4,2</b>
Landmarks famous in the whole world	3,1	3,2	3,2	<b>3,2</b>	4,3	4,4	4,7	<b>4,5</b>

These indexes are a little bit higher in all other parts of Russia. It may relate to more critical approach which follows people living in Moscow and Moscow region. They may be more demanding to assessment of domestic and international tourism. There is especially significant difference in the assessment of the basic factors for planning tourism trips: comfort boarding (3,6 versus 4,4 points), affordable price (3,5 versus 4,5 points), food quality (3,4 versus 4,4 points), service (3,6 versus 4,5 points respectively). The respondents assess the level of criminal situation in the country as stable. It influences on the geography of tourism demand. In Russia, this index exceeds general assessment of the foreign destinations by 0,5 points. It is a significant factor for decrease of domestic tourism. Nevertheless, as the respondents think, terror threat is more dangerous for international (3,7 versus 4,5) than domestic tourism. Terrorist and extremist groups are becoming more and more active, that is why people have fear to choose a plane as a mean of transport for their trips.

Global decrease of ecological situation is boosting the demand for medical tourism and ecotourism (Frolova and Kabanova, 2015; Liapis *et al.*, 2013; Srimuk and Choibamroong, 2014). The survey shows that there is a considerable difference between healthy tours and ecotourism in Russia and in foreign countries (3,3 versus 4,6 points). Besides, when a person gains more income, it gives an opportunity to have more choice and services. As the result, service quality, price–performance ratio, only increase this difference. The respondents assess ecological situation and climate peculiarities of the foreign resorts as positive, and it also influence on this situation. Moreover, people with upper-middle income can arrange VIP trips that explains difference between them and people from the groups with lower income (3,2 versus 4,8).

As a positive result of the analysis we can distinguish that tourists admit cultural and historical value of the cities. For the last decade, the approach to cultural and cultural values has changed. It is playing more and more important role in the development and moulding the social capital (Medvedeva and Shimanskaya, 2016).

Russia has great potential for tourism development. There are many cities with great cultural and historical legacy, in which tourists can see well-balanced combination of monuments, nature, objects of cultural and historical legacy (Kabanova *et al.*, 2016). The respondents think that this potential is high (4,2 points). They connect it with great historical and cultural legacy of Russian civilization (54,6%), positive influence on the images of collective memory and historical consciousness (45,9%), integrational civilizational historical and cultural uniqueness of the Russians. (32,8%).

Russian citizens aspire to immersion into historical and cultural values, life styles of different peoples, and it is one of the main factors which they consider while planning their trips. It is typical for a group of tourists with low and middle income (above 30 years old) to be engaged as much as possible in the local style of life, contacts with local people, and local nature. Their plans for their tourism trips reflect

this peculiarity of their expectations, that's why this group of people prefers to travel abroad. It gives them opportunity to learn more about cultural values of other peoples of the world. They also have great interest for the most famous landmarks in the world which they can visit in foreign countries. Most of the respondents think that in Russia there are not so many tourist attractions with such status (3,2 versus 4,5).

With the aim of revealing peculiarities of perception of different social groups of Russian educational and cultural tourism potential, the respondents were asked to define the main tendencies in modern life of people living in the developed countries which arouse their interest for tourism trips. For the groups with low income the following features are the most current: "individualism", "freedom from gender stereotypes", "nomadic type", "little joys", "adventure of their dream". The respondents with middle income prefer the following characteristics: "female logic", "health", "pleasurable activities". As for the respondents with high income, they distinguished such characteristics as "rejuvenation", "strive for life", "life outside big cities", "clannishness".

In general, preferences of Russian social groups are equal to the preferences of foreign tourism groups. American research agency Brain Reserve has found 16 leading trends in modern life of the developed countries. Besides the mentioned-above tendencies there were also the following ones: minimization, intolerance to counterfeiting. Russian society has rather broad scope of the same main tendencies which the developed countries have. It proves that Russian citizens are highly interested in tourism industry, and want to realize their aspiration for learning more about the world culture. They admit that tourism is an important aspect of cultural self-identification.

As we have already mentioned, most of the respondents do not travel or travel not so much due to financial difficulties which were caused by financial crisis. All possible expanses for the trips over Russia exceeded the result of the previous year only by 3%: 33 653 rub versus 32 810 rub. Travelling abroad was significantly more expensive (more on 30%): 58 659 rub. versus 41 061 rub.

Besides, actual budget exceeded the expected expenses. Only 36,2% have accumulated money for travelling (mostly people with middle income). Citizens with low income, mostly, decided to spend their holidays at home or country house. Only citizens with high income can make payment within frameworks of their current budget, 21,2% of the respondents from other groups borrowed money to pay for tourism service. The category of the respondents under 30 years old chose budget travel and borrow money from their parents or friends.

In this context, it is interesting to consider the study of VCIOM. As it states, there are no convincing proofs of "deteriorating financial welfare" of Russian citizens.

According to the survey of 2007-2016, there were the following answers explaining their decisions to stay at home during their vacations.

**Table 5:** *Dynamic assessment of the Russian population relating to reasons of their lack of trips during their vacations*

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Lack of money</b>	54	60	52	57	54	49	47	49	43	<b>44</b>
<b>High workload</b>	10	10	9	6	11	12	12	11	15	<b>17</b>
<b>State of health, diseases, age, etc.</b>	12	9	11	10	12	13	10	14	13	<b>13</b>

*Source:* Based on the research conducted by VCIOM

As we can see, “lack of money” was the main reason for the citizens in 2008 when the first wave of economic crisis had made that type of trips unavailable for them, although they wanted to take these trips. Besides, for the last 8 years we can observe general increase of workload. As experts suppose, it is undermining citizens’ health. According the VCIOM survey (VCIOM 2016), 53% expected that the forthcoming vacations would be equal to the previous one, 13% expected worse vacations. Indirect verification of these anticipations were the following results: those who stayed at home or in a country house (almost 55,2%) had worse vacations (42,4% of the respondents with low and middle income assessed their vacations in a negative way) than those who took trips (12,3%).

As a rule, the respondents with middle income complained about their trips because of high prices (11,8% of general number of people were dissatisfied with their vacations) and not enough number of days they could afford (9,4% respectively). For our study of stereotypes, it was important to define expectations which the Russians had, when they planned their trips. We can show the following rating of expectations for different social groups (Table 6).

**Table 6:** *The rating of expectations of the Russians for their tourism trips*

<i>Social group Reason</i>	<i>Low income</i>	<i>Middle income</i>	<i>Upper-middle income</i>
Social group reason	34,9%	46,4 %	45,8%
Quietness	37,4%	34,1%	35,2%
See something new	28,7%	35,6%	31,1%
Improve health	36,8%	33,2%	33,9%
Socialize with interesting people	30,8%	24,4%	26,0%
Entertain	25,2%	24,9%	25,1%

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## **5. Discussion**

Except the mentioned above expectations, the experts revealed three “traditional” stereotypes which tourists follow when they choose their destinations: price – comfort - climate. The respondents with low income (64,6%) and middle income (52,1%) consider price as the most important factor when they choose their destination. Besides, they are ready to sacrifice their comfort if the price is affordable and climate is suitable for them, climate and comfort are not enough for increase of price segmentation. It is especially typical position for young people under 30 years old with low income. Besides, behaviour stereotypes within the framework of each group influence on moulding personal priorities relating to the tourism programme.

Young people under 30 years old with low income prefer trips for more affordable price under less comfortable conditions, and excursions which include more contacts with local people and active entertaining programme. Young people with middle income prefer sports tourism, activities which include contact with local people and visit of memorable attractions. Tourists of this type can easily take long-distance trips without any special demands to comfort.

The Russian citizens older than the age of 50 require more comfort, informative excursions relating to their professional interests or hobbies. Tourists with middle income choose short trips with many new places. Tourists with upper-middle income tend to change their social and cultural environment, pay much attention to quality and diversity of tourism service, and duration of their trips is several times longer.

## **6. Conclusion**

The results of the study show that there is a distinct imbalance between domestic and international tourism. The Russians assess trips abroad more than trips over Russia regardless of their social group. Ecological and climatic peculiarities of foreign resorts influence much on such result.

As a positive aspect of Russian tourism market, we can distinguish that Russian citizens admit cultural and historical values of Russian cities. Rather broad scope of the main prospects in the segmentation of tourism market service shows interest of Russian citizens for the tourism industry.

In the course of the study, the authors revealed some contradictions which different social groups have when it relates to cultural and educational tourism potential and tourism service of Russian cities. Among these contradictions, we can distinguish the following ones:

- on the one hand, the representatives of all social groups have increasing interest for tourism trips, on the other hand, less and less citizens are taking trips;
- positive perception of international tourism dominates among Russian citizens, at the same time, they are travelling abroad less;

Besides, we can observe changes of tourist flow to the Black Sea resorts (Krasnodar region, the Crimea) in the domestic tourism for those who had planned to travel abroad. Besides, there is a significant number of citizens with low income who in general could not afford themselves to travel anywhere.

Summing up the results of the study, we can distinguish the following tendencies:

1. Increase of the citizens with low income due to increase of citizens who earn less while getting older;
2. Decrease of tourists among the citizens with low income due to economic crisis;
3. Influence of economic and political situation on the choice of a place for vacations.

In the course of the study, the authors revealed some dependencies: lack of well-developed infrastructure in Russia impact on low demand for domestic tourism industry.

The study showed the stereotypes which follow tourists while choosing tourist destinations. We can divide them into following categories: price, comfort and climate. Most of the Russians with low income consider affordable price as the main factor for choosing a trip. This social group is ready to decrease the level of comfort if price and climate are suitable for them; at the same time reasonable price and comfort are not enough conditions for price increase.

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