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PROS AND CONS OF TOURISM IN KAZAKHSTAN

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In modern world, tourism has become an important social and economic phenomenon that has a crucial influence on the economy of different countries. Tourism plays irresistible role in creation of jobs, formation of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and increase of trade deficit. The U.S. Travel Association claims that each 35 tourists ensure the creation of one workplace. The World Trade Organization says that in many developed countries tourism is that sphere of economy which provides replenishment of the budget of the country for 15%. They include Italy, France, Turkey, Hungary and the Czech Republic. «Training of human resources for tourism is held differently within the different countries and represents the influence of concrete historical, social, political and economic factors» [1]. However, nowadays tourism has several negative effects on our society, such as pollution problems, seasonable jobs, also local cultures and traditions are destroyed.

A large number of governments want to develop tourism to receive maximum benefits; even some governments spend much more energy and money on development of tourism. Tourism has a big role in development of Kazakhstan like in other countries. According to the Statistics Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the country has seen a rise in indicators for the last years, which shows the state of the tourism in it. For four years, the amount of tourism revenue has increased by 43.6% and by the end of 2012 the direct contribution of the tourism industry to the country's GDP amounted to 486.79 billion US dollars. The volume of investments from other countries in the tourism sector increased by 28% to 107,2 billion KZT [2]. The diversity of tourist resources in our country allows the development of many types of inbound and domestic tourism: cultural, educational, health, sports, ski, business, cruise, ecological, rural, fishing and hunting. To date, much has been done in the field of tourism development, which means that other countries see Kazakhstan's potential in the field of tourism development.

The goal of this paper is to determine pros and cons of tourism in Kazakhstan, to investigate how tourism can be developed in Kazakhstan, to know how it benefits on economy of Kazakhstan, and to find out what factors hinder the development of Kazakhstani tourism.

To achieve the goal of this study, the following questions have been set:

1. What are the benefits of tourism development in Kazakhstan today?
2. What are the disadvantages of tourism development in Kazakhstan?
3. How to decrease the disadvantages of tourism industry to develop our country?

Aforementioned questions will allow us to identify the solutions for the issue that is essential in Kazakhstan.

Our hypothesis is: tourism has more positive economic effects than the negative ones. The significance of our research is in identifying positive and negative factors that can be used to improve the tourism industry in our country.

The research design covers different types of methods. Thus, it was decided to use mixed research design because, it includes both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

It gives an opportunity for people to know more about the tourism problems in Kazakhstan and to get acquainted with the specialists' perspectives on the issue.

As the data collection methods, literature review, also, interviews and survey, have been used. In order to collect data concerning the topic a background research on the web and libraries have been conducted initially.

Therefore our theoretical base was Paul Goodman who is a librarian, a teacher and a freelance writer that wrote a research work about the advantages and disadvantages of tourism in the world. However, there was no such work in Kazakhstan before.

Tourism is one of a dynamic developing industry of economy in the past 10 years. In many countries such as France, U.S.A, Spain tourism plays an important role in the formation of GDP and creation a lot of workplaces, also it has a huge impact on key economic sectors such as transport, communications, construction, agriculture that is, it acts as a kind of catalyst for socio-economic development. It is a certain sphere in which the national economy exerts a strong impact on the social and economic life of society and for this reason many foreign and domestic scientists call it 'a phenomenon of the 21 century'. The World Travel & Tourism Council's research shows Tourism's contribution to the World Gross Domestic Product in 2016 outstrips the economy for the 6-successive years raising the World GDP for 10.2% [3]. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2015) 8% of exports, above 31% of the market for services, 100 million jobs (every 10 jobs) of the world belongs to tourism industry [4].

Tourism in Kazakhstan is a branch of the country's economy, revenues from which for 2014 amounted to 0.3% of Kazakhstan's Gross Domestic Product. By 2020, the government of Kazakhstan plans to bring this figure to 3% (Lillis.J, 2016) [5]. In 2000, 1.47 million foreign tourists visited Kazakhstan. By 2012, their number has increased to 4.81 million, which puts the country on the 51st place among all countries in terms of the number of visits with tourist purposes (J. Lillis, 2014) [6].

It may seem that tourism brings only benefits, but further consideration shows that it also has disadvantages.

1) Higher prices in local places. Anyone who has been to a popular tourist destination knows that they're going to spend a lot of money. Tourist destinations tend to jack up the prices of everything such as food, hotels, drinks, services, etc. Many tourists don't think about this, but the locals must also pay them exorbitant prices, which are at their current state directly due to tourism.

2) There is an inevitable change in the environment in the process of tourist activities. It causes environmental and social problems. The natural resources such as water, energy, food and habitat areas feel much more strain when a large population is using them. In fact, tourism contributes to more than 5 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, with transportation accounting for 90 percent of it.

3) International tourism acts as a catalyst for the transition from the traditional way of life to the so-called modern Western forms of society, with all its inherent attributes. Accordingly, tourism often brings with it the introduction of new trends in the social sphere. Often they contradict traditional norms that exist in this society and there is a conflict with perennial cultural customs. Tourism has become associated with the violation of human rights.

4) As a result of the development of tourism an increase in crime, prostitution, alcohol and drug use occurred. In addition, according to estimates made by the ILO (International Labor Organization) from 3 to 19 million children and adolescents work in the tourism sector [7].

A geographer, a editor, a explorer traveler of Kazakhstan, Andrey Mikhailov said: «As soon as the objects of any cult - temples, altars, monasteries - become tourist objects, they cease to carry their deep cementing function of the centers of power, faith, and worship. And soon they generally lose their sacredness and all meaning, turning into ordinary commercial enterprises. A great number of such precedents have happened before my eyes in recent years, the negative impact of tourism on the culture and society of any country can be clearly seen in Asian countries» [8].

The information about public opinion on tourism industry problems in Kazakhstan have been constructed with the help of two primary research methods. The first was a survey. It enabled

to gain quantitative data about how much people are aware of tourism development. Data collection for this research has been gathered with the help of interviews which had well-structured open – concluded questions. It was used to gather more detailed information. To be more exact, the interview asked about interviewee’s personal opinions about this problem. Moreover, quantitative research is more scientific than qualitative research. Both methods provided answers for questions.

The survey has been targeted among people of different ages (10-40) because it helped to get different ideas on alternative solutions for this problem. Also, everyone had an opportunity to become a participant in a survey. The first part of the survey has been designed to gather information about the respondents so that different ages could be compared. The second section tested the level of awareness of the tourism issue in Kazakhstan by its people. The third section has been designed to get an idea for the solution of the problem. The surveys have been completed in writing by the respondents and it took about 3-5 minutes to complete.

To gather more detailed information about the importance of the problem, face-to-face interviews have been used. Two professionals such as a geography teacher and a tourist guide have been interviewed, who had knowledge on this topic. They have been asked structured questions, so it helped to gather accurate answers. Each interview lasted 4-7 minutes. During the interview notes have been taken. The participants have been provided with an informed consent form for the agreement to participate in the research.

The data gathered have been analyzed and applied to the research questions. The results have been shown in diagrams.

The research conducted on the Internet has been very useful as it helped to evaluate the problem’s relevance. The main findings show that global public awareness about tourism issues is increasing but that it is still at low levels in most parts of the world. The past research showed that insufficiently developed tourist infrastructure, the inconsistency of interests of the state and a private sector are constraining factors for the development of the tourist industry of Kazakhstan.

This part of the work deals with the presentation and analysis data collected through the survey and interviews. The data collected is presented in tabular and graph forms. The analysis of data for each question has been made. The main findings from the questionnaire can be summarized as:

- 50 people answered our questionnaire;
- 74% of respondents’ gender were female, while 26% were males;
- The average age of participants in the survey ranged between 15-65 years, the majority of them were between 18-25 old (86%);
- 88% of participants are students of higher educational institutions, bit 8% are employees;
- 42% of respondents think that tourism helps improve social-economic development, other 16 % stated that it can influence for increasing gross GDP. 23.3 % of participants agreed that it has benefits to develop the infrastructure. See Figure 1;

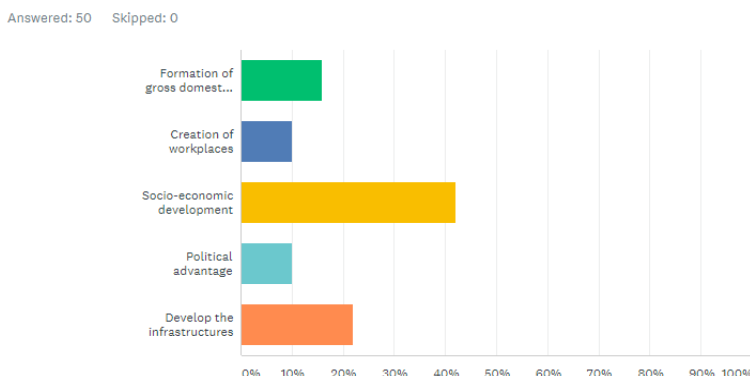


Figure 1. The benefits of tourism in Kazakhstan according to respondents

- According to Figure 2, 38% of participants answered that tourism has a negative impact on the ecosystem, while others think because of tourism the country can lose its culture. 11% of answers believe that tourism increases crime and illegal marketing;

Answered: 50 Skipped: 0

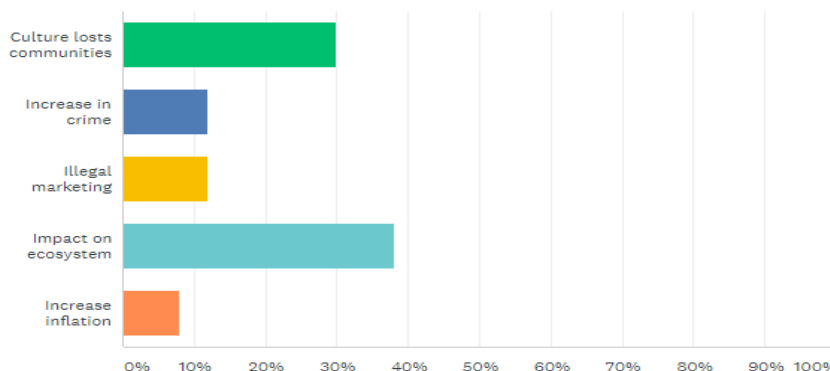


Figure 2. The negative impacts of tourism in Kazakhstan according to respondents

- 52,08% of respondents have chosen 3 from 5 for the level of tourism in Kazakhstan, other 27,08% have chosen 2 levels;

- As seen in the Figure 3, the most popular area in Kazakhstan is South Kazakhstan because 30% of respondents visited this region. Central Kazakhstan occupies the next place because 24% of participants come from that region;

Answered: 50 Skipped: 0

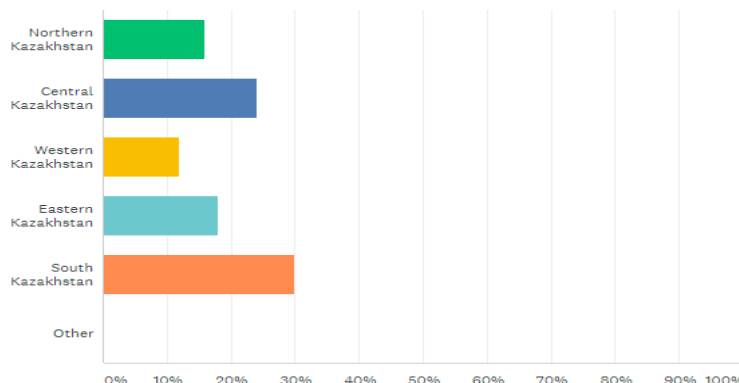


Figure 3. The most visited places in Kazakhstan according to respondents

- About 64% of the respondents answered that the main problem in the tourism sphere is happening because of the poor service sector. 26% think that the main reason is this problem, due to the lack of advertising. 5 people have chosen the lack of sightseeing places. Others offered own variants such as high prices and low quality of places;

- For decreasing the disadvantages of tourism respondents suggested improving technology which can control better the bag of tourists, also, improve the infrastructure;

- About 50% of respondents answered that they use to travel for leisure, 38% for meeting friends and relatives. 10% use for business purposes, 2% in educational purposes.

The interviews, taken from 2 professionals, have been also useful, because both interviewees have shared their knowledge and experience. To sum up, the received answers differ from each other, but the idea is the same.

Finally, the structured interviews revealed that:

- Tour guide claim, the main problem is the poor infrastructure in the country. The lack of low-cost hotels in Kazakhstan, poor infrastructure discourages foreigners from visiting our country;

- The tour guide said that the service sector should fit the world standards. Also, she suggested that the government should develop internet portals with new technologies and advertising;

- Similarly, another interviewee, the teacher of geography suggested that «firstly, we should develop the tourism infrastructure. However, the main problem is finance. For example, according to an experience of the leading country such as Saudi Arabia, they spent all money from oil to tourism. That is why nowadays tourism industry gives lots of benefits to Arabia economy.»

Finally, answers for both interviews and survey have been essential, as they consisted of some questions which were mentioned in the aims.

What are the benefits of tourism development in Kazakhstan today?

The majority of people in research answered that the main advantage of tourism is the socio-economic development. About a half of the respondents think that tourism has a particularly positive effect on the infrastructure. Other respondents think that the benefits of tourism sphere are: the formation of the GDP, the creation of workplaces and political advantage.

What are the disadvantages of tourism development in Kazakhstan?

It may seem, that tourism brings only benefits, but further consideration shows that it also has disadvantages such as illegal marketing, impact on the ecosystem, the culture lost communities, increase in crime and inflation. The majority of people in the research believe that tourism has a negative effect on the destruction of the culture of the local population. In order to decrease the disadvantages of the tourism industry in Kazakhstan it is necessary to improve the following aspects of tourism development:

- development of tourist infrastructure; stimulating the development of tourism infrastructure by attracting domestic and foreign investment for the reconstruction and construction of tourist facilities;

- development of small and medium-sized businesses in the field of tourism;

- preservation and rational use of cultural-historical and natural-recreational resources;

- development of tourism services in line with international standards;

- development of the system of training and advanced training of the personnel in the field of tourism;

- creating a tourist brand - a logo that should be bright, informative, and positive, convey the image of Kazakhstan, hospitality. Creating anchor brands that should be associated with the country;

- development of international cooperation in the field of tourism;

- formation of Kazakhstan's image as an attractive tourist market (advertising).

To conclude the results of this research, the development of tourism in Kazakhstan will contribute to the increase in the share of tourism in GDP, the creation of new quality and modern workplaces both in the tourism sector and in the auxiliary sectors, the introduction of world standards for the provision of services, construction of infrastructure facilities, raising the level of service culture, qualifications and training workers in the tourism sector, attracting foreign investment and new technologies, as well as popularizing Kazakhstan and its achievements. That is why it is important to consolidate the efforts of all participants in the tourism market, public and private sectors.

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