



Ensuring physical activity of the population by involving citizens in sports tourism events

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Abstract

Objective of the study was to assess the opportunities for sports tourism provided by tourism operators in Yekaterinburg for various categories of citizens, as well as the preferences of specific age groups.

Methods and structure of the study. The activities of 14 travel companies registered in Yekaterinburg and positioning themselves as domestic tourism operators providing services of one- and multi-day active tours designed for categories of citizens with different levels of physical fitness are considered.

Results and conclusions. It is shown that currently tourism operators in Yekaterinburg offer a wide range of active tourism services designed for the population of all age categories and various levels of physical fitness. These events are in fairly high demand among the population of the region, giving citizens the opportunity, if they have the appropriate motivation, to provide themselves with the necessary level of physical activity in the form of weekend tours. It is shown that the preferences of different age categories in the field of active tourism of the population differ significantly, which must be taken into account by operators creating tour programs. At the same time, in terms of gender, the main consumers of tourism services are females; the predominance of any specific age groups of the population has not been identified. A high level of satisfaction with the provided tourist services is demonstrated equally by all age categories of the population: 56.7% of people of retirement age and 58.3% of hikers under the age of 35, which indicates the good organization of tourism activities in the region.

Keywords: *sports tourism, travel companies, physical activity.*

Introduction. Currently, the problem of preserving and maintaining an acceptable level of physical activity, which is one of the components of a healthy lifestyle, is becoming relevant for all categories of the population [1, 3, 4]. It should be recognized that modern Russian megacities, despite the many factors that have a negative impact on the general health of the population, provide a wide range of opportunities for physical education and sports, which can be used, if desired, by almost all categories of citizens - from young people to the elderly age.

One of the forms of physical activity, successfully implemented and promoted at the level of the Sverdlovsk region and the Ural Federal District as a whole,

is sports tourism, carried out mainly in the form of so-called "weekend tours", ensuring the achievement of several goals at once: familiarizing the population with natural sights of the region, fostering environmentally responsible behavior and maintaining the required level of physical activity of city residents. Contrary to popular belief, tours of this type are in demand among people belonging to different age groups, although the priorities of specific sports may differ.

Objective of the study was to assess the opportunities for sports tourism provided by tourism operators in Yekaterinburg for various categories of citizens, as well as the preferences of specific age groups.



Methods and structure of the study. The study examined the activities of 14 travel companies registered in Yekaterinburg and positioning themselves as domestic tourism operators, providing services of one- and multi-day active tours, designed for categories of citizens with different levels of physical fitness. The total volume of tourist flow, the age of the event participants, as well as the latter's opinions about the level of services provided were assessed based on exchanges of opinions on the social networks VKontakte and Telegram and personal conversations with participants in tourist trips.

In Figure 1 shows the percentage of various categories of consumers that form the basis of the tourist flow of companies founded in different periods of time. As follows from the data presented, tourism operators with a longer history of existence give priority to consumers belonging to the older age group (the maximum age of participants is 85 years), which may be due to the desire to maintain the established contingent of participants, adapting to their needs. At the same time, the youngest travel companies, whose managers are characterized by a dynamic attitude to the formation of route programs, naturally try to attract the population belonging to the middle and younger age groups (the maximum age of participants in this case was 60 years, the average - 38.3 years) . Thus, it can be noted that almost all categories of the population are covered by active tourism services, and the latter can choose the company that is most suitable in terms of age composition.

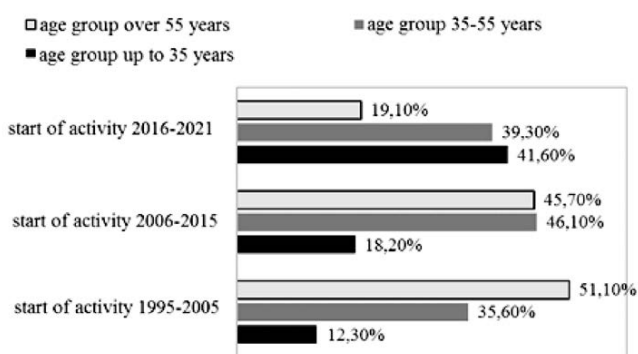


Figure 1. Age composition for this period of time (2023) of consumers of tourism services. The y-axis is the beginning of the activity of the travel company. The x-axis is % of the total number of participants

Results of the study and discussion. The analysis of the activities of travel companies shows that the categories of tour operators mentioned above differed significantly in the range and ratio of active tourism

services offered. Figure 2 shows the most common types of active tours and their percentage in the total list of activities in the spring-summer period (May-September 2023). As you can see, enterprises aimed at working primarily with the population of older age groups give preference to quieter routes - excursion trips to the forest and one-day rafting of the first category of difficulty along the Ural rivers, which does not require extreme physical effort from the participants, but at the same time provides tourists with the necessary level of physical activity and communication with like-minded people. In general, events of this type make up less than 50% of all offered excursion routes, but are in constant demand among consumers of tourism services: the average number of participants in an excursion group is 35-45 people (maximum - 70 people), the most popular type of program is catamaran rafting and rafts is the only event among the participants of which all age groups of the population are represented in almost equal proportions.

Relatively recently operating travel companies, as shown in Figure 2, give priority to active tours, which make up about 75% of the total list of services provided. Among the latter, mountain routes of a higher level of difficulty predominate, including those with the possibility of overnight stays in a tent camp, one-day (on Sup-boards) and multi-day rafting with elements of extreme loads. It is obvious that events of this kind are designed primarily for people with a good level of physical fitness, good health and a relatively young age (the limit is 60 years, but often lower). It should be noted that all officially registered operators and tourist clubs strive to comply with the requirements for ensuring the safety of tourists to the maximum extent possible, by engaging trained instructors, renting the necessary equipment and equipment, etc.

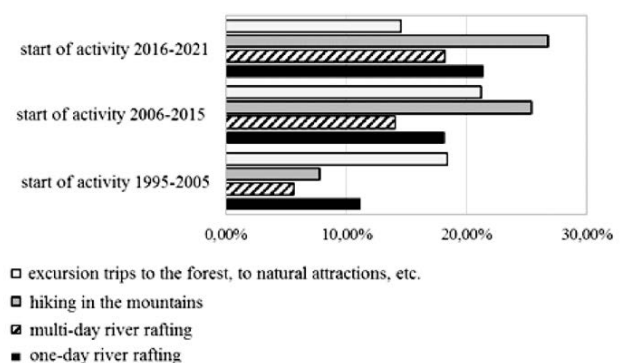


Figure 2. Sports tourism services offered by travel companies in Yekaterinburg. The x-axis is % of the total range of tourism services



Thus, it can be stated that the population of Yekaterinburg and neighboring cities has the opportunity to realize their needs for additional physical activity by participating in a variety of sports tours, the routes of which are offered by tour operators for all categories of the population with different levels of training. Currently, 72 weekend tour programs are being implemented in the region, 2/3 of which relate to sports tourism routes of varying levels of difficulty.

In terms of gender, the ratio of consumers of tourism services remains at the level of 3:1 (women: men), regardless of the age category and level of difficulty of the route, the number of participants in the group varies from 10-15 (hiking in the mountains) to 50-70 (one-day rafting Ural rivers).

The study did not confirm the data on the leading role of collective behavior influencing the motivation of people of retirement age to engage in physical education and health activities: the number of single participants in hiking trips averages 16% (for younger people the figures are similar) [1, 2, 5].

Of all participants in tourist trips, 62.3% learned about the routes and activities of travel agencies from their acquaintances, colleagues, friends, relatives, etc., 12.4% - from advertising mailings and 25.3% looked for specific information on their own, which allows us to conclude that the rather low effectiveness of advertising campaigns and the high importance of personal communications up to the present day.

A high level of satisfaction with the results obtained is demonstrated by 56.7% of people of retirement age and 58.3% of hikers under the age of 35, extremely low - 5.1% and 3.9%, respectively, which demon-

strates the generally good organization of tourism activities in the region.

Conclusions. The conducted research allows us to conclude that travel companies in Yekaterinburg offer a fairly diverse range of sports tours, the levels of which are adapted to different age categories of the population, which allows, if there is internal motivation, to satisfy the needs of citizens for additional physical activity, combined with environmental education and upbringing of the population.

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