
Factors of Functioning and Development of Tourist Clusters at Regional Level

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Abstract:

Under the condition of tough competition, lack of proper support for tourist industry at the state level, and necessity for development and bringing this sector to a new level, which consists in capability for offering a consumer a high-quality and competitive product, the necessity for search for effective solutions is obvious. One of the perspective and effective means for solving the problems of tourist sphere at present is formation and development of tourist clusters. The article studies existing approaches to determination of tourist cluster, analyzes the current state of internal tourism, and views factors which hinder the creation of competitive product and factors which stipulate the increase of effectiveness of functioning of tourist clusters at regional level.

Key Words: *Internal Tourism, Tourist Cluster, Factors*

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1. Introduction

Nowadays, tourism is viewed as a source of financial revenues of budgets of all levels; satisfying the needs of incoming tourists, tourist industry is a source of additional tax revenues, as means of increase of employment and quality of life of population, means of improving the health of population, basis for development of socio-cultural environment and propaganda of patriotic feelings of the youth, and a powerful tool of enlightenment and formation of moral platform of development of civil society. Despite the fact that over the recent years there was a substantial progress in systematization of existing statistical data on some or other aspects of tourism, the current statistical observation in Russia cannot fully cover all the range of tourism's influence on the economy of the country and its regions.

Under the modern conditions of development of tourism sector in Russia, the cluster approach is used more actively – it is capable of influencing positively the effective functioning of tourist industry. The Federal targeted program "Development of internal and incoming tourism in the Russian Federation (2011 - 2018)" supposes state support for 12 tourist clusters and projects for more regional tourist clusters without federal support. As a rule, this approach is based on formation and use of unique tourist product.

Dynamic development of tourism requires something more than unique tourist resources, convenient geographical location, and developed infrastructure. A huge role belongs also to economic and political environment, attitude of the state and local population to foreign tourists, foreign investment, and foreign way of life on the whole. That's why it is necessary to determine factors that hinder and factors that stipulate the development of cluster.

Tourist cluster plays a very important role in development of not only municipal entities, subjects of the RF, and federal districts, but the country on the whole, solving the problems of social nature, including the ones related to creation of additional jobs, problems of increase of quality of internal tourist products and services and increase of investment and tourist attractiveness of regions and the country.

2. Modern Approaches to Determination of Tourist Clusters

Development of theories and concepts of enterprises' placement on certain territory became a precondition for the formation of cluster concept. Its founder, M. Porter, defined cluster as groups of interconnected companies, specialized suppliers, suppliers of services, and companies in corresponding spheres, which are concentrated geographically, and organizations in certain spheres, which are

connected to their activities and which compete but at the same time conduct joint activities (Porter M. 2003). This treatment determines key attributes of a cluster: geographical localization, commonness of activities, and market orientation. Thus, classic treatment of cluster determines its understanding as a group of geographically close interconnected companies and connected organizations of certain sphere, which are characterized by commonness of activities and supplement each other (Porter M. 1993).

Thus, P.S. Rudneva views cluster as a group of localized interconnected companies, suppliers of equipment, components specialized services, infrastructure, R&D institutes, higher educational establishments, and other organizations which supplement each other and increase competitive advantages of particular companies and cluster on the whole (Rudneva P.S. 2007). T.V. Tsikhan thinks that in scientific and practical research and works it is advisable to use the definitions of cluster as regionally limited form of economic activity within related sectors, which are usually connected to some or other scientific establishments (R&D institutes, universities, etc.); vertical production chains, narrowly determined sectors, in which neighboring stages of production process create cluster core; industry sectors or groups of sectors, determined at a high level of aggregation (Thikhan T.V. 2003). Using the theory of systems, N.A. Larionova defines cluster as a group of subjects of economic activities of interconnected spheres which are combined into single organizational structure, the elements of which are interconnected and interdependent, functioning together with certain goal (Larionova N.A. 2007).

Thus, it is fair to say that there are enough definitions of cluster which are based on identical meanings and specifics of this notion, but approaches to its definitions depend on the goals of scientific research and may be unique for each author. Correspondingly, scientific research in regard to tourist clusters with their specifics and peculiarities are a part of general theory of economic clusters. As to the notion of “tourist cluster”, there are definitions offered by various researchers with individual approaches.

In recent years, there has been a quick growth of attention to clusters and cluster policy in literature as to the problems of hospitality and tourism. The authors emphasize their substantial meaning for creation of long-term advantages of territories which are aimed at successful attraction of tourist flows.

Thus, I.S. Miloslavskiy viewed tourist cluster as a group of geographically localized interconnected companies, suppliers of specialized services, infrastructure, educational centers, and other organizations which supplement each other and are oriented at satisfaction of social needs for tourism (Miloslavskiy I.S. 2012).

E.G. Kropivina and A.V. Mitrofanova's definition offers to view tourist cluster as a localized tourist-recreational system, consisting of groups of production enterprises in the sphere of tourist servicing and related spheres, as well as various additional organization, the joint activities of which provides strengthening of individual competitiveness and specialization of cluster members due to emergence of synergetic effect of service complex and leads to creation of regional concentrated tourist labor market (Chernenko V.A., Kolpashchikova T.Y. 2012).

E.G. Karpova analyses clusters in tourism as innovational form of modernization and diversification of economy of territory and factor of its sustainable competitiveness and thus offers to define tourist cluster as totality of cooperating and connected companies and organizations which are functionally separated within the system of value accumulation ("chain of channels of sales – transport services – means of placement – food enterprises – entertainment means – consumption of complex tourist service"), which unite on the basis of cooperation and competition for the purpose of receiving maximum income on the basis of local advantages of territory, including tourist attractions and infrastructure (Karpova E.G. 2012).

O.V. Belitskaya specifies the notion of resort and tourist cluster as geographically concentrated group of interconnected economic subjects and objects of infrastructure, formal institutes, research and other organizations, particular persons, and connections and relations between them, oriented at formation of competitive sector of economy and bringing together interests of three parties: business, society, and state (Belitskaya O.V. 2011).

It should be noted that as a result of study of scientific research, it is possible to say that from all the diversity of existing definitions of "tourist cluster" two main approaches may be distinguished which are used for its definitions and are the basis for definitions formulated by one or another author. The first one consists in determination of the notion "tourist cluster" as a group of institutes, functioning in one sphere tourist and recreational nature. The second one consists in viewing tourist cluster as a special economic area with tourist and recreational features.

Cluster, as a group of geographically cooperating companies and organizations, should have territorial positioning, own geographical borders, and geographical frame. Geographical frame is formed by transport communications (road network, river and sea communications), which connect "supporting points" of cluster within its limits. "Supporting points" are communities which are interesting for organization of tourist activities and possess the necessary infrastructure. Besides the "supporting points", tourist cluster can have "tourist flows centers" – large communities, through which tourist from other region and countries arrive in cluster. As a rule, such centers are not only the points of arrival and departure of tourists and

the starting points of all routes but have powerful tourist resources. Main characteristics of cluster (structure, geographical borders, type of geographical frame) are used in the process of cluster identification and analysis of its state (determining the competitive advantages and problems, negative factors which hinder cluster development; analysis of current state of cluster as compared to previous period or competing clusters) (Galiullina G.K., Galimov S.S., Shabanov L.B. 2014).

According to territorial principle, there are the following types of tourist clusters:

- cross-country (cluster goes beyond the administrative borders of its country and is integrated with territories of foreign state);
- country-cluster (cluster occupies the whole territory of the state, the economy of which is oriented only at tourist sphere);
- regional (within country).

Tourist and recreational cluster should include structural departments of travel company with high competitive advantages. Besides, cluster can include other competing travel companies which offer their services on certain territory, use common tourist potential, common infrastructure, and common state regulation.

Based on the above, it is possible to distinguish features of tourist cluster: belonging to tourist industry and specialization of cluster at provision of competitive and high-quality tourist products and services which are capable of satisfying tourist's needs; location on the same territory which has tourist resources and is visited by tourists; investment attractiveness and possibility for improvement of image of geographical sphere cluster location; institutional components of cluster, i.e., cluster should be a group of enterprises and objects of tourist infrastructure with clear interconnections within cluster, on the basis of which the main combining element exists and functions.

3. State of Tourist Sphere in Regions of the Russian Federation

Under the modern conditions of development of market economy, the increasing role belongs to management of socio-economic effectiveness and stability of development of specific regions, including regions oriented at provision of tourist and resort & recreational services. According to the Federal targeted program, development of regions is a top-priority direction of development of travel services in Russia.

At present, according to specialists' estimates, cultural and natural potential of Russia is used for the tourism's purposes only by 20%. As compare to the level of the European and developed Asian countries, these numbers are very small. Main tasks and purposes of any type of tourism include efficiency restoration, supporting

and strengthening health of population – which is one of the main tasks of the state. It is necessary to pay special attention to creation of motivations and conditions for healthy living. In this regard, development of regional tourism is an actual task and one of the real tools of nation's health improvement (Arakcheeva Z.V. 2015).

According to the Federal State Statistics Service, the number of foreigners who arrived to Russia in 2014 constituted 32,421,000, which is by 5% more than in previous year (Fig. 1). The largest share in the structure of trips belongs to private trips – 65%, and business and tourist trips account for 19% and 8% correspondingly. It should be noted that 2014 saw the reduction of the number of tourist trips by 3%. The leading countries as to arrivals to Russia are Poland, Finland, and Germany (Table 1).

Table 1. Leading countries as to arrivals in the RF

	Citizenship	Number of trips
1.	Poland	1,823,143
2.	Finland	1,446,169
3.	Germany	635,153
4.	Lithuania	487,206
5.	Latvia	374,701
6.	Estonia	363,942
7.	Great Britain	228,346
8.	Italia	219,976
9.	France	219,210
10.	Spain	100,206

The reasons of reduction of growth of foreign tourist flow to Russia are the following: unfavorable political situation in the world; constant growth of prices for tourist package due to growth of air and railway tickets prices; insufficient quality of services provided to foreign tourists; preservation of negative stereotypes of Russia's image, supported by some foreign mass media, etc. (Istomina T.S., Samoylenko A.A., 2015).

Fig. 1. Number of trips of foreign citizens to Russia, thousand.

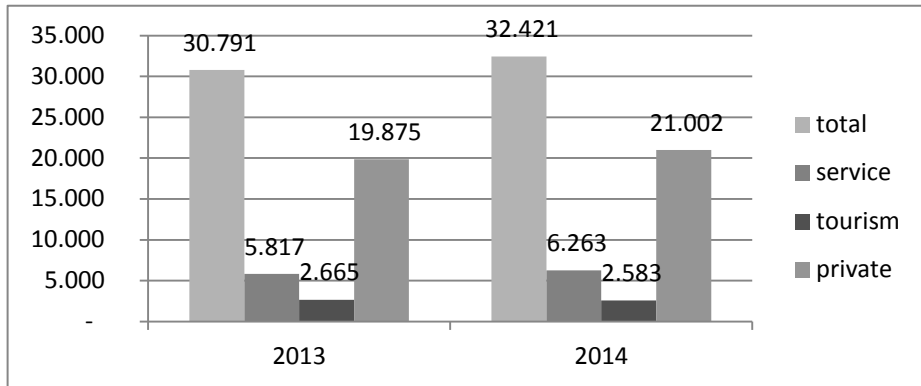
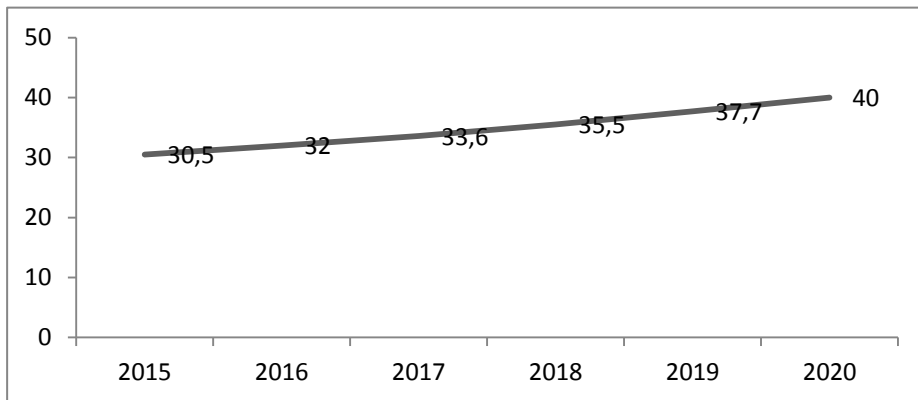


Fig. 2 shows expected values of one of the targeted indicators of implementation of the Strategy of development of tourism in the Russian Federation until 2020 – arrival of foreign citizens to Russia.

Fig 2. Expected value of targeted indicator of the Strategy – arrival of foreign citizens to Russia, million trips

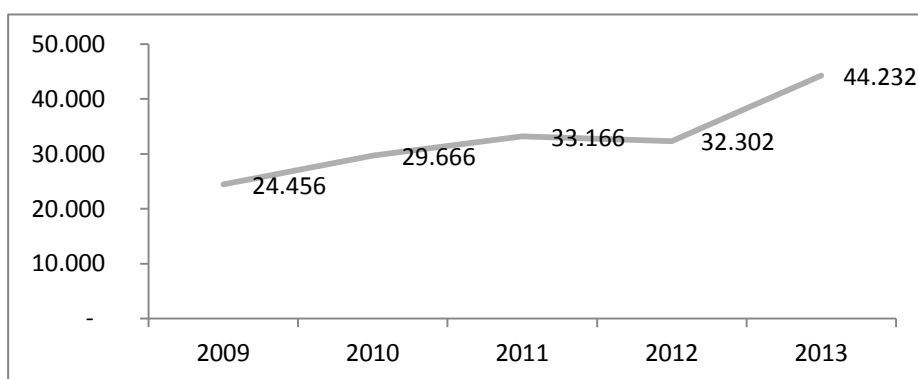


As to the volume of provision of paid tourist services, the Central Federal District leads with RUB 44,232 million in 2013, while the smallest volume of revenues are observed in the Far East and the North Caucasian Federal Districts – RUB 6,848 million and RUB 6,750 million, correspondingly. The leader as to all indicators is Central Federal District. The federal district’s center is Moscow. Subjects of CFD:

Belgorod Oblast, Bryansk Oblast, Vladimir Oblast, Voronezh Oblast, Ivanovo Oblast, Kaluga Oblast, Kostroma Oblast, Kursk Oblast, Lipetsk Oblast, Moscow Oblast, Orel Oblast, Ryazan Oblast, Smolensk Oblast, Tambov Oblast, Tver Oblast, Tula Oblast, Yaroslavl Oblast, and the federal city Moscow.

Volume of paid tourist services in the CFD in 2013 constituted RUB 44,232 million, which is by 37% more than in 2012 (Fig. 3). In 2009-2011, there was active growth of volume of paid tourist services from RUB 24,464 million to RUB 33,166 million. As of year-end 2012, there was reduction by 3% to RUB 32,302 million.

Fig. 3. Dynamics of volume of paid tourist services in the CFD in 2009-2013, RUB million



Studying the money flow from paid travel services in view of the regions of the CFD, it is possible to see that 62% of it consists of paid travel services, provided in Moscow, the volume of which constituted RUB 27,444.6 million in 2013. Moscow Oblast is the second as to the volume of paid travel services – in 2013, it constituted RUB 6,840 million, which is 15% of the money flow of paid travel services.

Main regions of visiting with cultural purposes are Vladimir, Kostroma, Moscow, Tver, Tula, and Yaroslavl Oblasts, and Moscow. One of the most popular transregional tourist excursion routes through ancient historical places is the "Golden Ring of Russia". Tours and excursions along the "Golden Ring of Russia" are very popular all year round, and the places of interest of historical places, which are a part of this route, attract a lot of tourists.

Many sectors of the Russian economy, including tourism, use cluster approach as a main tool for their further development. Very often, creation of clusters starts from authorities of various levels making decisions on creation and structure of certain

cluster. For example, in 2007, the Government of the Russian Federation approved creation of 7 special economic areas of tourist and recreational type. The corresponding provisions were passed at the government session. Creation of special economic areas of such type is approved in Altai Krai, the Republic of Altai and the Buryat Republic, Kaliningrad Oblast, Krasnodar Krai, Irkutsk Oblast, and Stavropol Krai. However, as practice shows, the process of cluster emergence goes in natural way. As a result of long partnership relations of enterprises that participate in certain economic processes, tourist and recreational clusters, as the most important growth points of region's territories, arise. Developers of targeted programs of development of these territories use methods of expert evaluations to determine the most perspective clusters for the purpose of financing their development (Galiullina G.K., Galimov S.S., Shabanova L.B. 2014).

At present, the main problems of regions are formation of competitive tourist industry with the use of internal tourism, provision population with jobs, and increase of income of the state and population. Achievement of this goal requires the necessity for the use of managerial methods in the sphere of tourism. Marketing is known as means which fully takes into consideration the current market processes and develops the system of management and organization of activities of enterprise, production, and society on the whole. Use of innovational technologies in tourist sphere stipulates the increase of its competitiveness and development.

4. Factors of Functioning and Development of Tourist Clusters at Regional Level

Under the condition of economic and political instability, the necessity for re-orientation of the flow of international outgoing tourism at development of internal tourism is obvious, this leading to the necessity for being ready to satisfy the needs of foreign and internal tourists in the oblast or region of stay.

It is obvious that development of strategy and plans of development of tourism in the Russian Federation requires taking into consideration positive and negative factors which can have a significant influence.

Main reasons that hinder functioning and development of tourist clusters at regional level include:

- insufficiently comfortable tourist informational environment;
- lack of highly-qualified staff;
- lack of centralized and unified informational resources for search for tours in Russia (at that, the Internet has a very important role in promotion of tourist services) (Vetitnev A. M., Ashkinadze Y. A. 2009);

- non-conformance of standards of provision of safety of foreign citizens in the Russian Federation to the international standards;
- low level of development of tourist and transport infrastructure;
- bad ecological state of coastal areas of water reservoirs and natural territories which are used by individual tourists;
- insufficient business activity of the population in the sphere of tourism;
- difficulty in obtaining loans and high interest rates;
- high transaction costs caused by transfer of ownership right for land;
- small number of competitive local suppliers and enterprises of related spheres;
- tendencies for monopolization of the tourist service market from large federal players of tourist business;
- high level of tax load (Egorova E.N., 2013);
- lack of client-oriented policy of managing the cultural establishments, requirement for modernization of their services;
- negative stereotypes about Russia;
- seasonality of demand;
- insufficient promotion of tourist product of Russia in the internal market.

It should be noted that despite the fact that infrastructure of internal tourist business does not correspond to global level, it has developed a lot over the recent years – which is proved by the growth of the number of collective means of accommodation, increase of length of hard-top roads, and investments into this sphere.

Factors that positively influence internal tourist market include:

- analysts expecting the growth of indicators of tourist revenues;
- large potential in regard to the Russian Federation's capability for satisfying need for cultural and cognition interest;
- growing demand from the Russians for internal tourist services and cultural & educational travel products;
- growth of the number of collective means of accommodation, growth of the length of hard-top roads and investments into this sphere.

As the process of creation and provision of tourist services include many enterprises: transport, food, accommodation, consumer services, there is also a large number of laws and rules which regulate these types of activities. Their final goal is provision of safety, interests, and rights of consumers. Elimination of barriers gives a push for development to all cluster members without violating the foundations of competition and rivalry.

5. Conclusion

Thus, tourist clusters at regional level have substantial perspectives of development and possibilities for positive influence on the tourist sphere on the whole that allows speaking of rather high potential for development of the sphere of tourism. However, the research showed factors that hinder the creation of competitive tourist product and restrain intensive development of related and accompanying spheres of economy. Effective use of human, informational, material, and other resources in view of labor market and tasks of socio-economic development of tourist industry at regional level requires deeper research which is to be carried out by the authors in the future. Effective use of the existing potential is possible only under the condition of systemic and complex approach to solution of the problems which hinder the development of tourism.

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