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Geographic features and tourism development in the Czech Republic

The article deals with tourism development in the Czech Republic, which is one of the leading and most dynamic economic sectors in many countries and is recognized as an economic phenomenon of the century. The main objective of the study is to identify a dynamic demand for tourism and the usage of its potential in the country. Applying the random method, the authors found out tourist vacation preferences, what criteria they take into account when choosing a country for leisure, what goals are pursued and how the service in that country is assessed. Comparing the tourist potential of the two countries, the authors believe that Kazakhstan with a great uniqueness of the natural and historical component, has all the necessary conditions for the tourism cluster development to meet world standards. Developing this economic sector ensures an opportunity to develop and make the country appealing to the world.

Keywords: the Czech Republic, the Republic of Kazakhstan, tourist cluster, tourism, random research method, UNESCO, recreation, Schengen visa, entertainment industry, health resort tourism, cultural and cognitive tourism, business tourism, sports (active) tourism, religious tourism, beach tourism.

The main objective of the research was to identify positive experience in satisfying tourist demands and generated tourism potential in the Czech Republic.

According to the Czech Statistical Center in 2013, the Czech Republic was visited by more than 13.9 million tourists. The most visited region of the country was Prague, the capital is visited annually by more than 5 million people. The city was founded in the 9th-10th centuries, but only in 1992 it was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. It is popular for cultural diversity and cognitive features. A large number of castles, churches, monasteries and museums in the city make it no place parallel in the world. A religious-pilgrimage, business, gastronomic, romantic, wedding and even extreme kinds of tourism have advantage of appealing to people of all ages. In addition, shopping and sex tourism as a separate type of tourism is developed as well. More than 600 thousand tourists annually suburban areas of Prague.

In the course of the research, the task was to find out the tourist vacation preferences, what criteria they took into account when choosing a country for recreation, what objectives were pursued and how the service in that country was assessed. Respondents were selected by random selection, i.e. We interviewed 25 people of different ages, nationalities and genders.

It is known as a country with an ancient culture and history which dates back to 1000 years. The country attracts its tourists both with magnificent landscapes, and a fascinating centuries-old culture. It can be noted that the most popular types of tourism are the following (Fig. 1).

Data of the Figure 1 reflect main objectives of vacationers, and they are rather various, i.e. suit different category of people.

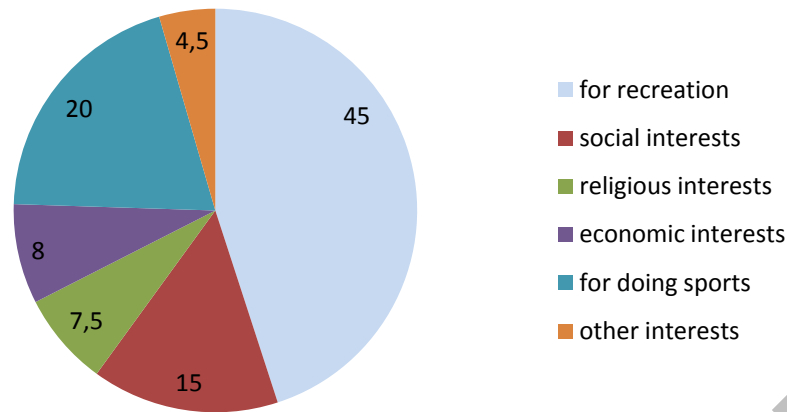


Figure 1. Types of tourism in the Czech Republic

The main objective of the tourists visiting the country is for leisure or cultural-cognitive tourist trips. Other category of people focus more on recreation and less targeted to study cultural potential. Further it is possible to note business travel and shopping tourism. Shopping has become a motive to travel and is now a major tourist activity. Visitors are increasingly choosing shopping as a way to experience local culture through an engagement with local products and local craftspeople, and some destinations provide special tourist shopping activities for tourists to shop for goods which is especially attractive to tourists from Germany. Sports Tourism is defined as a specific travel outside of the usual environment for either passive or active involvement in competitive sport where sport is the prime motivational reason for travel and the touristic or leisure element may act to reinforce the overall experience. Another definition worth noting explains sport tourism as a combination of sports activities and travel. Sports tourism is optimum in winter when tourists come to ski resorts for the purpose of skiing and other sports leisure [1].

A prolonged stay in a visiting destination, the study of its tourism potential, the characteristics of tourists have also been examined, i.e. the visitors who arrived for recreational activities to the Czech Republic. It should be noted that the research was conducted during the summer period excluded the respondents who visited country for sports activities. 25 tourists from the different countries of the world have been polled. The age and gender category of tourists are presented (Fig. 2, 3).

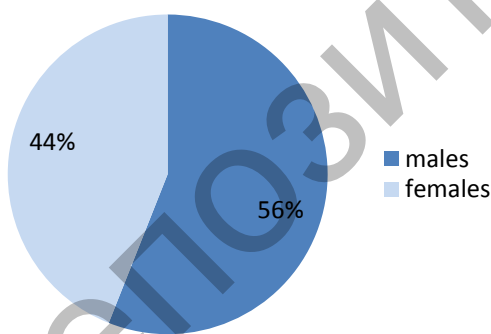


Figure 2. Gender of tourists visiting the Czech Republic

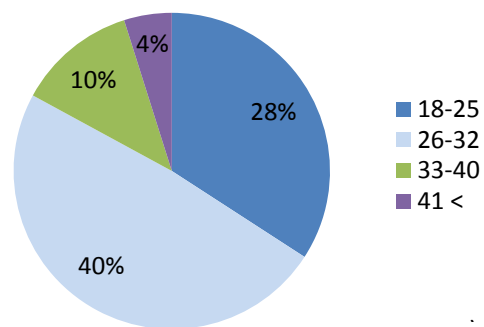


Figure 3. Age category of tourists visiting the Czech Republic

Fifty-six percent of all polled are male respondents. The analysis of the conducted research allows to draw a conclusion that the most number of tourists is a category of people aged from 26 to 33, and another category is under these ages. This is due to the fact that the Czech Republic is a country with a rich nightlife.

Prague is also very popular for its nightlife after Amsterdam in Europe. In addition, there are many universities and colleges, since education in the Czech Republic is relatively cheaper if to compare to other European countries. According to the results of the analysis, 16 % of respondents, who made up 4 people from the total number of respondents, answered that they got the invitation from friends who study in Prague.

There are many beautiful landmarks for sightseeing. It takes approximately 7–8 days. Then it may become boring and the soul will ask for new impressions. It is easy to travel around the country: kiosks are installed at all stations and almost in every square in Prague, where you can buy a ticket for a bus or train to the most remote corner of the country [2].

If we talk about the representatives of other ethnic groups, it is difficult to give an unambiguous answer, because we could not interview tourists from different Asian countries, because of a language barrier.

The results of the survey conducted at the local airport, auto and railway station showed that the majority of respondents were from the CIS. They turned out to be 17 out of 25 people, they account for 68 % (Fig. 4).

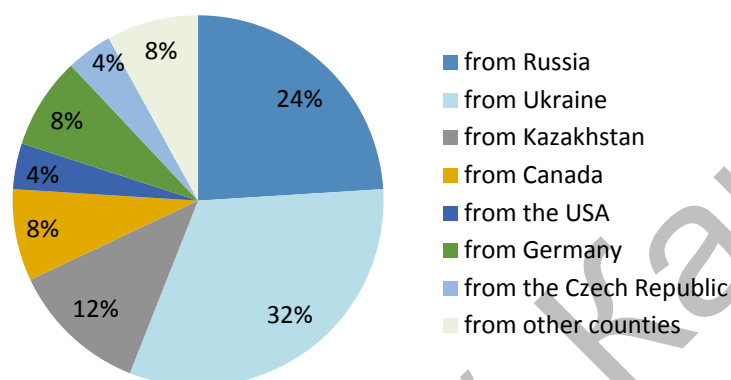


Figure 4. Citizenships of tourists

If to take into account the fact that a large number of flights was carried out by Ukrainian airlines, thus it is possible to assume that dominant number of tourists from this country. In the top list there were also citizens from Russia 24 % and Kazakhstan 12 %. The visitors from Georgia, Germany and Canada (8 % each) come in at a close second place. The least number of tourists from the United States (4 % each).

In terms of service quality, 100 % of respondents answered «excellent», which is not surprising, because tourism is one of the main economic branches of the country, therefore the service is presented at the highest level and meets international standards.

According to the local Internet portal, the number of arriving tourists to the Czech Republic only for the summer of 2016 exceeded the number of 1 million people. The annual income from tourism in the country is more than 200 billion kroons.

Variable weather in the summer of 2016 did not reduce the interest of tourists to travel to the Czech Republic, but the attendance of pools fell more than twofold. The Czech hoteliers said that the current summer season is very successful one.

During the summer of 2016, the number of Czechs staying in local hotels has significantly increased. Instability in the world, including Europe, a deterioration of security environment cause an obstacle for tourists from the Czech Republic to other countries. A regular stay at campings, although most often they used more lodges than tents for overnight stays. During the period under review, because of the very changeable weather, tourists visited more than before. The most visited sight was the Prague Castle. The less visited was pools because of weather conditions [3].

According to hoteliers, in the summer of 2016 tourists rented hotel rooms for a longer time than last year, and there was a certain increase of interests in additional services, for example, to wellness. At this time, tourists actively visited the mountains. The summer flow of tourists to the Krkonoše Mountains was the same as in winter season. The same situation was in the Jizera Mountains. The funicular on Mount Jeshted in Liberec hardly handle the influx of visitor

In comparison with the last tropical summer, the season of 2016, as already noted, became a failure for swimming pools in Prague and throughout the Czech Republic. Their profits fell by tens of percent. For example, in Hultschin in 2015 43,000 visitors were counted, and in 2016 — only 13,000. In Jihlava city where you can find Aquapark Vodní ráj (Water Paradise) suitable for rest and relaxation after a hard day. In hot season 25,000 visitors were registered. The water park saw an attendance slip in twice. A similar situation has been noticed in other Czech basins.

Prague hotels called last summer season successful. In 2016 Prague attracted more tourists and because it is considered a safer place to relax. The number of tourists who stayed in Prague in 2016 grew by 2 %, that was, by 50,000 people. Czech tourists grew by 9 % in number.

All the respondents put security aspect to the first place in the list of the criteria to choose a visiting country. From this we can conclude that the Czech Republic meets consumer demands and attracts more and more new tourists.

The conducted analysis helped to identify the categories of tourists by gender, age and other criteria. Taking into account the tourists' needs, it is possible to monitor the tourist potential of any country, determine its level and improve tourism development programs.

In 2016 the Czech Republic was visited by a record number of foreign tourists — 8.69 million people. This is 7.3 % more than in 2014. Such data was defined by the Czech Statistical Office.

So many foreign guests the republic has never taken before. And the statistics department takes into consideration only those who stayed overnight in hotels, hostels and other hotel rooms for at least one night. The most popular destinations for foreigners were Prague (5.68 million), Karlovy Vary (541 thousand) and South Moravian Region (492 thousand).

In 2016, the number of tourists from Russia and Ukraine decreased significantly — by 37.4 % and 10.7 %. In total, Czech hotels registered 432,768 Russians.

However, more guests came from other countries: from Germany, tourist flow grew by 12.6 %, from Slovakia — 14.6 %, from the USA — 14.9 %. The number of travelers from China (by 35.3 %) and South Korea (by 31.8 %) increased even more. On average, each foreigner spent about three nights in Czech hotels.

The number of local people visiting national landmarks in the Czech Republic over the past year increased by 13.3 % to 8.49 million people. The most popular regions are the South Moravian Region (1 million), the South Bohemian Region (928,000) and Prague (893,700 visitors).

As for the Czech capital, it also boasts a new record. In 2016 the city was visited by 5.68 million foreign tourists, which is 6.9 % more than in the previous year.

As for the Czech capital, it also breaks a new record. In 2016 the city was visited by 5.68 million foreign tourists, which is 6.9 % more than in the previous year.

The survey was conducted among tourists, during which it was possible to establish the most popular tourist routes (Table 1).

In addition to Czech cities and major tourist destinations, many tourists who have a Schengen visa also travel outside the Czech border. First of all, this is due to the economic and geographical situation of the Czech Republic itself. The country borders Poland in the north (658 km), Germany — in the northwest and west (646 km), with Austria — in the south (362 km) and Slovakia — in the east (214 km). The total length of the border of the Czech Republic with neighboring states is 1880 km.

The largest number of people who visit the Czech Republic is from Germany. The Germans come to the Czech Republic on weekends, as a usual leisure place or for the purpose of shopping.

Table 1

The percentage of tourists visited cities of the Czech Republic

City	A number of people visited cities given in the list	%
Prague	25	100
Kutna Hora	21	84
Plezn	12	48
Cesky Krumlov	18	72
Drno	10	40
Karlovy Vary	3	12
Olomouc	2	8

Note. Made by authors.

Since the survey was held in the city of Prague, all respondents those who were visiting the city of Prague. Kutná Hora has been found as the most popular tourist destination. This is not surprising: Kutná Hora, the city of silver, is deservedly attributed the other name «national treasury». This is to say that its wealth helped to ensure the boom of the Czech Kingdom. The centre of the city was included in the UNESCO world

heritage list. All of the streets, houses and churches exude a long history full of important events. The symbol of Kutná Hora is the unique late Gothic Cathedral of St. Barbara. It attracts lots of tourists with a mystical legend and atmosphere. The least visited city was Olomouc, this can be explained by it is situated far away from Prague.

The next important information is the travel purpose of all respondents. Usually, the tourism potential of the Czech Republic meets the tourists' needs who came for the purpose of resort, health, cultural, educational, business, sports or active tourism, religious and just few for beach activities (Fig. 5).

Due to the fact that the questioning took place in the summer season, the absence of tourists who came for sport activities does not indicate to the country's unattractiveness from this aspect. This type of tourism becomes popular in winter or in special places, near rivers and mountains.

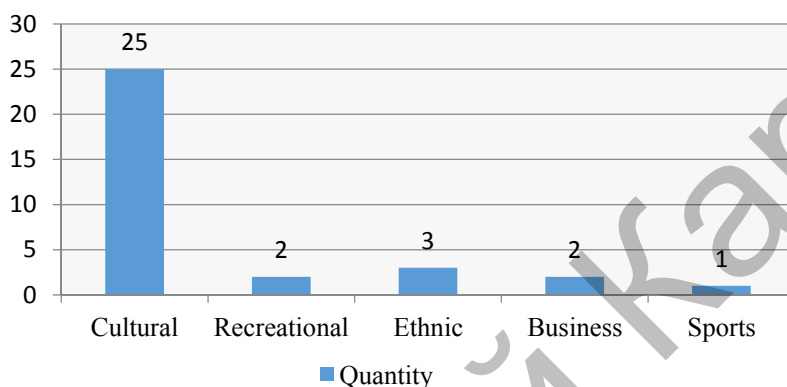


Figure 5. Travel purpose of the respondents

The cultural-cognitive form of tourism turned out to be predominant, ubiquitous along with other types. This shows the unique recreational potential of the Czech Republic, where different consumer services can be simultaneously given. Two respondents took a tour to Karlovy Vary for the purpose of treatment, and after the course of treatment they went to Prague for cultural tourist tracks. Three other respondents answered that they came to relatives which live in Prague. So one family came to the wedding of their niece who received Czech citizenship after her graduation, but that was not a single reason for their trip. Among the respondents who came to the city for business trip were Czech and a young family from Germany that combined business trip with shopping.

An important factor is what motivates the holidaymakers of their choice. We tried to find out what a fundamental criterion was used in choosing a place for pleasure in the Czech Republic. For simplicity of the survey, the respondents were offered several options to one question, which was the main travel reason to the Czech Republic: security, popularity, price, close to home, culture and history, friends' recommendations. Respondents were asked to evaluate the criteria on a 5-score scale, where 5 score corresponds to «yes, important», 4 — «pay attention,» 3 — «indifferent», 2 «unimportant», 1 — «did not take this factor into account when choosing a visiting place.» In the course of this survey, the respondents answered many questions, answered for a long time, as if they did not know themselves what attracted in this country most (Table 2).

Table 2

Motivations to travel in the Czech Republic

Criteria	A number of questions				
	5 scores	4 scores	3 scores	2 scores	1 score
High safety measure	21	3	1	—	—
Popular tourist spot	5	5	5	8	2
Prices	12	6	3	3	1
Close to home	5	4	—	10	—
Culture and history	12	8	—	5	—
Friends' recommendations	4	13	3	3	2

Note. Made by authors.

The most important criterion for visiting tourists was the criterion of «safety», even for amateurs of extreme leisure, however, but they prefer completely different places for tourism. The criteria «price» and «cultural and historical heritage» came out to equal positions. As for the price of a 10 days tour to Prague for a tourist from Kazakhstan is about 220,000 tenge, including visa registration, flight and accommodation. Similar tour to Germany is about 240,000 tenge, but services and entertainment in Munich are several times more expensive than in the Czech Republic, a tour to Vienna for the same number of days — 310,000 tenge, tour to Amsterdam — 400,000 tenge, tour to Paris 290,000 tenge (Fig. 6).

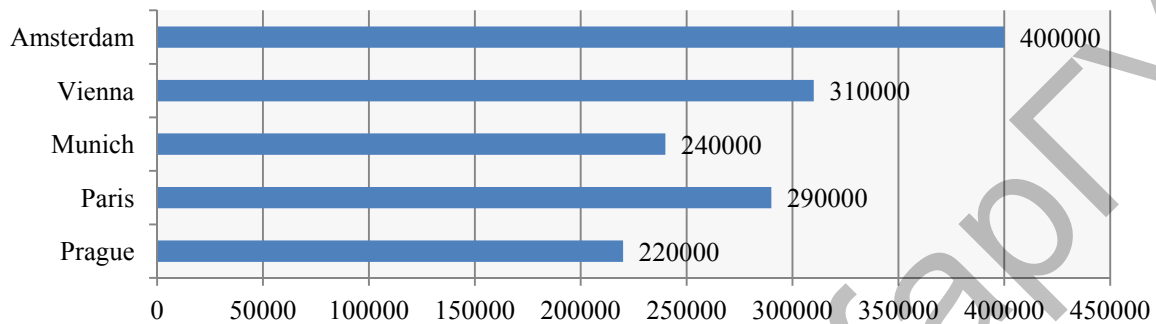


Figure 6. Cost of tours to popular tourist cities in Europe (tenge)

The criterion of «on neighborhood» is out of question, because the majority of respondents from the CIS, and European culture is found to be attractive for people from these countries. As you know, the Czech Republic is a member of the Schengen group, the rules of the Schengen visa apply and the Czech visa holders are entitled to unimpeded movement across the borders of all Schengen countries.

When you get a Schengen visa to the Czech Republic, you should remember that you can enter the country only if you follow all the conditions, the Schengen agreement: it is necessary to confirm the main purposes of the trip, as well as the conditions for foreign citizens in the country and the availability of sufficient funds for living on its territory.

According to the results of the study, the following conclusions can be made about the use of the tourism potential of the Czech Republic:

Firstly, the Czech Republic, as a tourist country, is a single integrated system interconnected by transport networks; Each part (tourist city) exists both separately and together; Each landmark, the region with its economic potential has its own history and will be of interest to any tourist, depending on his/her preferences, and in combination with other cities it broadens the image of the country and shows its true life and people's history.

Secondly, a thoughtful strategy in the entertainment industry is a big advantage and covers the whole range of tourist services; high quality of life, high rates of development of the country provide stability on the political map of the world in external relations between countries; Western model of development, and as a basis, compliance with all international standards, both in social and economic spheres, stipulate a high level of service, and as a consequence of a high degree of attractiveness [4].

Thus, a wide range of services, the full use of recreational resources, historical heritage, proper investment and an approach to tourism industry development make the Czech Republic diverse. What important is the attitude of the Czech people to tourist resources. Regular restoration work and careful attitude to resources as to a precious stone can help to preserve them in their original form.

The conducted study shows that the main criteria for choosing a visiting country are security. In addition to security, respondents also noted that the Czech Republic is attractive for its history and culture. If to comparing our states, we can note the following. Kazakhstan has a great uniqueness — it originated at the junction of the Eastern and Slavic cultures, went a long way to its independence and managed to maintain its territorial integrity in peace and harmony among the people living in it, and the ancestors were able to convey the traditions and culture of the Kazakh people to the present. Every Kazakhstani today can be proud of the historical heritage of his country. Considering the above, one can affirmatively state that in our country, as in other developed countries of the world, including the Czech Republic, there are all the necessary conditions for the developing a tourist cluster in accordance with world standards. Developing this economic sector, there is an opportunity to become an even more developed and attractive state in the world.

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Г.Н. Чистякова, Ж. Хусты, А.Р. Жунусова

Чех Республикасының жағрафиялық ерекшеліктері мен туризмнің дамуы

Мақалада әлемнің көптеген елдерінде жетекші және ең серпінді салаларының бірі болып табылатын туризм саласы Чехия елінде дамуы қарастырылды. Зерттеудің негізгі мақсаты Чех Республикасының туристік сегментті қанағаттандыратын сұранысты және елдің туристік әлеуетін пайдалану ерекшеліктерді айқындау болып табылады. Рандомды әдісті қолдана отырып, авторлар демалуға аттанатын туристер елді таңдауда қандай мақсатты көздейді, келген елдегі қызмет көрсету сапасын қалай бағалайды, қандай көрсеткіштерді қалайды. Екі елдің туристік әлеуетін салыстыра келе, авторлар Қазақстан көп бірегей табиғи және тарихи компоненттері, халықаралық стандарттарға сәйкес туристік кластерді дамыту үшін барлық қажетті жағдайлар жасалған ба соны зерттеді. Экономиканың осы секторын дамыту әлемдегі озық және тартымды елдер бірі ретінде жан-жақты танылуға мүмкіндік береді.

Кілт сөздер: Чех Республикасы, Қазақстан Республикасы, туристік кластер, туризм, ғылыми зерттеу, ЮНЕСКО, демалыс, шенген визасы, ойын-сауық, курорттың және денсаулық туризм кездейсоқ әдісі, мәдени туризм, бизнес туризмі, спорт (белсенді) туризмі, діни туризм, жағажайлық туризм.

Г.Н. Чистякова, Ж. Хусты, А.Р. Жунусова

Географические особенности и развитие туризма в Чешской Республике

В статье рассматриваются особенности развития туризма на примере Чехии. Туризм является одной из ведущих и наиболее динамичных отраслей экономики многих стран мира и признан экономическим феноменом столетия. Основной целью исследования явилось выявление спроса, удовлетворяющего туристский сегмент Чехии, и особенностей использования туристского потенциала страны. Применяя рандомный метод, авторы выяснили предпочтения у отдыхающих туристов: какие критерии они учитывали при выборе страны для отдыха, какие цели преследовали и как оценивают сервис в данной стране. Сравнивая туристский потенциал двух стран, авторы считают, что Казахстан, имея большую уникальность природной и исторической составляющей, имеет все необходимые условия для развития туристского кластера в соответствии с мировыми стандартами. Развитие этого сектора экономики дает возможность стать еще более развитым и привлекательным государством в мире.

Ключевые слова: Республика Чехия, Республика Казахстан, туристский кластер, туризм, рандомный метод исследования, ЮНЕСКО, отдых, шенгенская виза, индустрия развлечений, курортно-оздоровительный туризм, культурно-познавательный туризм, деловой туризм, спортивный (активный) туризм, религиозный туризм, пляжный туризм.

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