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METHODOLOGY AND CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING THE DEGREE OF CLUSTER FORMATION OF YOUTH TOURIST DESTINATIONS

Sh.B. Navruz-zoda¹

ABSTRACT

In the article, the level of travel clusteriness of youth destinations is determined by the evaluation scale of the model "TRIS-EFQM", which is used to assess the quality of business abroad. Additionally, the stages of the algorithm (methodology) for the assessment (calculation) of the indicator, which represents the level of "travel clusteriness of youth destinations" are determined, and each of them is described stage by stage.

Keywords: clusteriness, young tourist, algorithm, attractive, travel worthy, TRIS-EFQM, value chain.

Introduction

Youth tourism emerges with the tourist mobility of international students, au pairs, interns and volunteers abroad, overseas teachers, immersive language learners, backpackers, flashpackers, digital nomads and a lot in between. According to the World Youth Student & Educational (WYSE) Travel Confederation, 23 percent of international tourists are young people under the age of 30. In addition, about \$ 330 billion in tourism revenue was generated from the youth tourism market in 2019 (WYSE, 2020a)[13]. As of 2020, there has been a sharp decline in the youth tourism market, as in all tourism markets due to the pandemic. On the other hand, it is predicted that young people will take the lead in the travel movements [1]. This is because young, single and experienced tourists are more likely to adapt to pandemic conditions and participate in travel mobility easily [3].

The WYSE researches indicate that businesses offering experiential products such as camping activities, educational trips, language learning travels and voluntary tourism have a relatively optimistic attitude towards the pandemic [13]. Since these types of tourism are not seasonal, the demand for youth tourism can be maintained throughout the year. Moreover, some businesses point out that the pandemic could have a positive impact on youth tourism. So, volunteering and camping activities may increase accordingly. In this regard, young tourists are expected to be less affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The more travel worthy are places visited by young people the more stable will be the flow of young tourists. As a result of organizing youth tourism in a cluster way, there will be an opportunity to dramatically increase the flow of young tourists to these destinations. Therefore, the clustering of attractions serves as an important stage in the rapid development of youth tourism, while determining the travel clusteriness of places visited by young people.

Literature review

As in all market segments of tourism, youth tourism has also been affected by the coronavirus pandemic. Although there are some social studies that examine youth-related issues during the pandemic process [2,4] only a few studies focusing on youth tourism are available. For instance, Richards & Morrill [10] examined youth tourism businesses while the pandemic was continuing. According to these studies,

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youth tourism businesses have faced a variety of challenges. For example, it is quite problematic to arrange social distance or reduce the capacity in hostel buildings where 4-12 people stay in a room or where social interaction areas occupy a large place.

Scientists have studied the organizational structure of the cluster. M.A Morozov proposes to include tourist resources, tourism infrastructure, industry personnel, touroperators, educational institutions, sources of information about the region, state and local support mechanisms in the structure of tourism clusters [7, 130 p]. According to the essence of the cluster in the field of tourism, the idea of "local production system by region and industry" [12, 6 p] is the "**regional affiliation**" that forms the clusters and the connection of service entities within the cluster "**added value chain**".

The literature highlights the importance of the cluster approach as a means of increasing the competitiveness of tourist areas, and developed a cluster model of tourist areas [6, 109 6]. The components of this model serve as the basis for the formation of tourism clusters. The model of clustering of tourist areas, developed by A. Malakauskaite, V. Navickas, focuses on tourist destinations as a means of forming the core of the cluster [11, 57 6].

Research methodology

Using logical analysis method in the study two main criteria for the formation of clusters "regionally affiliation" and "linked by an added value chain" have been identified. By applying grouping method, the etalon and real level of travel clusteriness of youth destinations were separated. An assessment scale of the TRIS-EFQM model, which is used to assess the quality of business abroad, was used in formation of indicators for assessing travel clusteriness on real descriptive criteria and determining their quantity. The use of the above methods allowed to substantiate the scientific results and effectiveness of the article, scientifically support the conclusions and recommendations.

Analysis and results.

One of the important conditions for the development of youth tourism in the cluster approach is the transformation of youth destinations into youth tourism clusters. In order to develop regional youth tourism clusters, it will be necessary to determine the travel clusteriness of attractions. By the term "clusteriness" we mean availability of possibility of cluster formation and by the term "travel clusteriness" we mean the ability of youth destinations to create associations in order to diversify and improve the quality of tourist services in cooperation with tourist organizations.

In order to develop competitive youth tourism clusters, it is necessary to evaluate the attractions, entertainment venues and attractive tourist areas that are the objects of the youth tourism cluster. In order to accelerate the development of youth tourism, it will be possible to determine the level of their travel worthy and quality degree by assessing the attractions of the region. To achieve this goal, we have developed a "Criteria for assessing the travel clusteriness of youth destinations and the procedure for their qualitative classification". According to this, it is recommended to assess the travel clusteriness of youth destinations on the basis of the following 10 criteria.

In determining the travel clusteriness of youth destinations, we used a comparative method of scientific research. We distinguish the following **five stages** of the algorithm (methodology) for the assessment (calculation) of the indicator, which represents the level of "Travel clusteriness of youth destinations":

1. Formation of the level of "Etalon travel clusteriness of youth destinations".

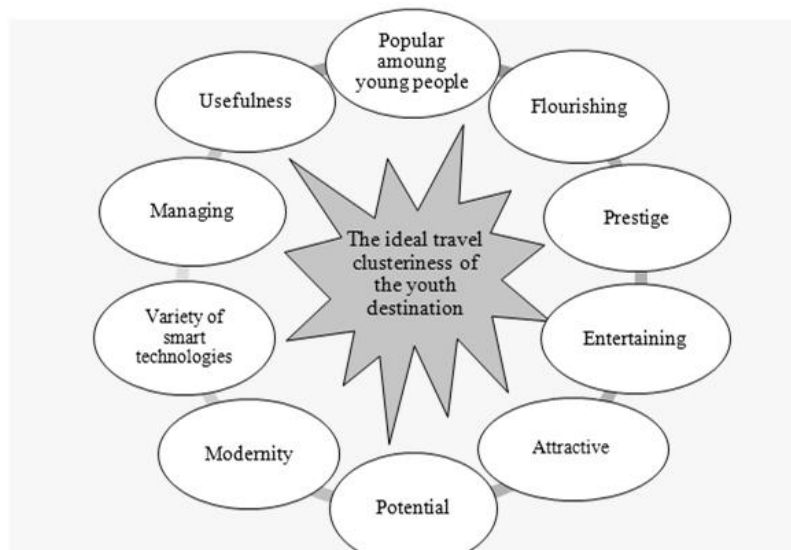
2. Develop criteria for determining the level of travel clusteriness of youth destinations.
3. Formulation of indicators for assessing the travel clusteriness of youth destinations on real descriptive criteria and determining their quantity.
4. Expressing in points the attitude of experts to the indicators of assessing the level of travel clusteriness of youth destinations.
5. Determining the level of real travel clusteriness of a youth destination by comparing it with the reference value of the total sum of expert assessments.

We will look in more detail at each stage of determining the level of travel clusteriness of youth destinations.

First stage. *Formation of the level of "Etalon travel clusteriness of youth destinations".* In our opinion the level of ideal travel clusteriness of youth destinations is reflected in the harmonious unity of the following 10 qualities of this place (1-figure)

The etalon level of travel clusteriness of youth destinations can be imagined as follows: the popularity of attractions among young people; flourished; prestige among young people; entertaining; having a career in attractiveness; scientific potential; modernity; having smart technologies; usefulness of destinations and the possibilities of managing them. If such qualities are present in youth destinations, there is an opportunity of developing youth tourism clusters based on them. However, in reality, each attraction may be defined at a certain level below than the level of ideal travel clusteriness due to the lack of certain qualities and facing some specific problems.

Disneyland, an entertaining theme park that was one of the first started its career in California, United States, can be considered as etalon youth destination in terms of travel clusteriness. Because Disneyland is the most visited park in the world compared to other theme parks, 726 million visits since the park opened (as of December 2018) [5]. The expected number of visits on the opening day of the park was 28,000 tourists instead of 11,000. In the first 2.5 months, the park was visited by 1 million people. After that, the park will receive 18 million visitors each year [8].



1-figure. Etalon travel clusteriness qualities of youth destinations [Author's production]

Second stage. *Develop criteria for determining the level of travel clusteriness of youth destinations.* In this regard, we have developed the following 10 measurement criteria that allow us to qualitatively assess the attractions arising from the level of "etalon travel clusteriness":

1) *comprehensive coverage of information about youth destinations* (availability of catalogs, booklets, fossils and other information about them, as well as the opportunity for guides to tell young tourists about the object for a few minutes);

2) *development of youth destinations infrastructure* (the state of repair, restoration and beautification of attractions and the smoothness of access roads to them);

3) *prestige of youth destinations* (the public image of the attractions visited by young people, their popularity);

4) *an entertaining feature of youth destinations* (youth destinations should be suitable for enthusiastic young people who are tired of the daily routine and come to have fun, have extreme features, including the availability of theme parks, fun sports, as well as a variety of entertainment services)

5) *the attractiveness of youth destinations* (the greater the number of services offered and the more affordable the facilities, the more attractive it will be for young people)

6) *the scientific potential of youth destinations* (to what extent the attraction can benefit young people, its educational value, the ability to increase their worldview through this trip, to gain new knowledge, to make new acquaintances);

7) *type of objects of youth destinations* (theme park, camp, sports venue, language learning center, mountain, beach, sea, etc.);

8) *modernity of youth destinations* (intellectualization, seeking for adventure and the discovery of the unknown are some of the characteristics of modernity);

9) *variety of smart technologies in youth destinations* (today's youth can't imagine their lives without internet, so they use internet and smart technologies while traveling. Even they organize their travel using these technologies);

10) *the usefulness of youth destinations and opportunities of managing them* (benefits in terms of the utility status of youth attractions can be in useless, harmless; profitable and highly profitable levels and they can be divided into 3 categories according to their management capabilities: not available; available; unsystematic; systematic).

The combination of these criteria serves as a unit of measurement to determine the level of "travel clusteriness" that represents the level of clusteriness currently achieved by young people visiting destinations. The combination of the proposed criteria serves as a unit of measurement to determine the current level of "Real Travel Clusteriness" of the attractions achieved.

Third stage. *Formation of indicators for assessing travel clusteriness on real descriptive criteria and determining their quantity in the scoring system.* For each of the criteria listed above, we composed partial indicators of 5 quality levels that characterize the travel clusteriness of youth destinations and we recommend evaluate them with an appropriate scoring system.

In this case, we used the rating scale of the model "TRIS-EFQM", which allows to determine the level of quality of events, used to assess the quality of business abroad [9]. According to this model of quality stage evaluation, each criterion is determined at 5 quality levels with a score of 10 points.

In order to determine the level of real travel clusteriness of youth destinations, we considered it expedient to establish a scale of evaluation of each of our 10 developed criteria on the following scores on the individual indicators as a unit of measurement:

- 0-1 points – a very low level of travel clusteriness by each criterion;
- 2-4 points – low level of travel clusteriness by each criterion;
- 5-6 points – average level of travel clusteriness by each criterion;
- 7-8 points – standard level of travel clusteriness by each criterion;
- 9-10 points – high level of travel clusteriness by each criterion;

Fourth stage. *Expressing in points the attitude of experts to the indicators for assessing the level of travel clusteriness of youth tourism destinations.* Expert assessment of attractions on the basis of points, using the "Methodology for determining the level of travel clusteriness of youth destinations" developed by the author, taking into account the real situation, a guide of the attraction or an expert who knows the place well according to the general criteria and specifics described above will be released, and the total sum of the expert assessment will be calculated.

Fifth stage. *Determining the level of real travel clusteriness of youth destinations by comparing the expert assessment with the etalon value of the total sum.* In comparison with the etalon value of the total sum of expert assessments, the level of real travel clusteriness achieved by youth destinations is selected. In order to develop youth tourism clusters, the levels of travel clusteriness which characterize attractions are determined to correspond to one of the following 4 quality levels:

- ❖ From 0 points to 40 points - "Entertainment venue".
- ❖ From 41 points to 70 points - "Notable youth destination".
- ❖ From 71 points to 85 points - "Attractive travel area".
- ❖ From 86 points to 100 points - "Cluster worthy destination".

The quality level of travel clusteriness "Entertainment venue" is characterized by having an entertaining feature for travelers, but the lack of conditions for young people to travel individually as well as having an underdeveloped tourism infrastructure.

According to "Notable youth destination" quality youth destinations efforts will be made to transform low-attractive places of entertainment from the point of view of young tourists into attractive destinations, taking into account their needs by creating appropriate conditions for travel and developing the initial tourist infrastructure.

Measures will be taken to create "attractive travel destinations" based on increasing the region's economic potential, the further development of tourism infrastructure, increase information about them, as well as increase the travel worthy quality of the average attractive place "Notable youth destination".

Efforts should be made to create “competitive tourism clusters” based on “tourism destination (territory)” which is highly attractive in terms of quality of “Cluster worthy destination”. These are, if the first is “territory” and the second is “value”.

If the territorial aspect of youth tourism clusters is reflected in the efforts to transform youth destinations into attractive destinations and raise them to the level of attractive youth tourist destinations, on the basis of which competitive youth clusters are formed, the “value” of such clusters is integrated links between youth tourism facilities. In return for the installation of integrated links, attractive youth destinations are expected to form a technological chain of tourist services complex for young tourists in tourism destinations.

Conclusion

The TRIS-EFQM rating scale used to assess the quality of business abroad, which allows to determine the quality levels of events in the formation of evaluation indicators on the criteria that characterize the realization of travel clusteriness, it is a convenient opportunity and effective mechanism for the use of travel clusters in the further development of youth tourism in conditions of new Uzbekistan. The practical application of this model will improve travel clusteriness through a realistic evaluation mechanism. As a result, the number of visits to our country will increase not only by older tourists, but also by young tourists.

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