

Graduation Qualifying Thesis:

“Family Tourism as a Prospective Trend of the Sociocultural Development of the Caucasian Mineral Waters Region”

Author of the Thesis:

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Topicality of the research:

Nowadays tourism development is vital to both the state and society. Being an integral part of human activity, it gives impetus to searching and developing new facets directed at improving a personality and his or her resident area. Family tourism can make a great contribution to this sphere. Family tourism is a prospective development trend of the social leisure activities. The Caucasian Mineral Waters region is an area with a huge tourist potential, which has been accumulated here during the region’s historical development. Today, heritage tourism, nature and educational tourism, recreational tourism are well-developed in the region. But family tourism hasn’t reached a high development level in the area. However, its rise could be an active catalyst of the personality and region’s sociocultural development.

Objective of the research consists in working out a project of the family tourist club as a prospective trend of the sociocultural development of the Caucasian Mineral Waters region.

Tasks:

- to consider the notion “family tourism” and identify its sociocultural significance;
- to identify organisation peculiarities of family tourism in Russia and abroad;
- to analyse Russian tour operators’ activities in the family tourism sphere;
- to evaluate tourist opportunities of the Caucasian Mineral Waters region in organising family tourism;
- to determine the necessary prerequisites for establishing family tourist clubs in the Caucasian Mineral Waters region;
- to work out a project of the family tourist club ‘Happy Family’ as a prospective trend of the sociocultural development of the Caucasian Mineral Waters region.

Theoretical and practical significance of the research consists in the opportunity of using its main points and conclusions for expanding views about the place and role of family tourism in the transforming society. The developed project of the family tourist club can be used as a finished product.

Results of the research:

In the practical chapter of the research we have developed the project of the family tourist club “Happy Family”. The classes in the family tourist club are

conducted according to several programmes and include two stages. The first stage is preparatory and the second one is practical. Training programmes differ in subjects, difficulty level and include theoretical and practical classes. The preparatory stage comprises the programmes directed at acquainting with and mastering techniques in the chosen family tourism areas. The novices of the club learn to take their bearings in any locality, take short hikes accompanied by instructors, get used to eating food in the field conditions. Children gain team spirit and stamina. The second practical stage is intended for the well-trained members of the family tourist club. The experienced participants of the club are given the opportunity of showing their skills as tour guides, musicians, athletes, photographers. Therefore, family tourist clubs contribute to realizing three main functions: educational, developmental, disciplinary.

Recommendations:

According to the travel companies data we have successfully studied the supplies of the modern tourist market of the Caucasian Mineral Waters region including traditional and absolutely new options. The statistics show that the region's residents prefer destinations outside the Caucasian Mineral Waters region. These are Tsey, Digoria (North Ossetia) – 42%, Elista (Kalmykia) – 24%, Grozny, Ingushetia, Dagestan – 14%. However, the sociological survey which was held to identify the potential consumers' tourist requirements showed that the local economically active population are ready to consume new types of tourism in the Caucasian Mineral Waters region. Economically active people prefer family tourism which is not well-developed in the region, though they consider it to be vital, necessary and prospective. The new and prospective idea for our region is the creation of family tourist clubs. This idea is proved by the results of the sociological survey which was conducted to identify the local married couples' requirements of the organised family tourism.