

ГЕОГРАФІЯ

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TOURIST IMAGE OF SUMY REGION (BASED ON SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH)

A.A. Berestok. ТУРИСТИЧНИЙ ІМІДЖ СУМСЬКОЇ ОБЛАСТІ (ЗА МАТЕРІАЛАМИ СОЦІОЛОГІЧНОГО ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ). У даній статті наведено результати авторського дослідження, проведеного шляхом соціологічного опитування населення областей України на предмет сприйняття Сумської області як регіональної туристичної дестинації. В ході соціологічного дослідження було визначено туристичну привабливість та туристичний імідж Сумщини. Регіон має рекреаційно-туристський потенціал, налічуючи велику кількість історико-культурних пам'яток та об'єктів ПЗФ, площа яких становить близько 176 тис. га. Завдяки розвитку туристичної діяльності в регіоні є можливість підняти рівень конкурентоспроможності та підвищити ефективність функціонування Сумщини.

Застосовуючи методіку суспільно-географічного дослідження розвитку туризму в регіоні, отримано інформацію про стан регіонального ринку, а саме щодо оцінки ресурсного та інфраструктурного потенціалу області, оцінки рівня розвитку туризму та окремих його складових, оцінки сприйняття населенням різних областей країни ідеї розвитку туризму як однієї з прогресивних галузей економіки, особливо в кризовий період, а також оцінка жителями України туристичних можливостей Сумської області.

Ключові слова: туристична привабливість, туристичний імідж, Сумська область, соціологічне опитування, суспільно-географічне дослідження

A.A. Berestok. ТУРИСТИЧЕСКИЙ ИМИДЖ СУМСКОЙ ОБЛАСТИ (ПО МАТЕРИАЛАМ СОЦИОЛОГИЧЕСКОГО ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ). В данной статье приведены результаты авторского исследования, проведенного путем социологического опроса населения областей Украины на предмет восприятия Сумской области как региональной туристической дестинации. В ходе социологического исследования было определено туристическую привлекательность и туристический имидж Сумщины. Регион имеет рекреационно-туристский потенциал, насчитывая большое количество историко-культурных памятников и объектов ПЗФ, площадь которых составляет около 176 тыс. га. Благодаря развитию туристической деятельности в регионе есть возможность поднять уровень конкурентоспособности и повысить эффективность функционирования Сумщины.

Применяя методіку общественно-географического исследования развития туризма в регионе, получена информация о состоянии регионального рынка, а именно по оценке ресурсного и инфраструктурного потенциала области, оценки уровня развития туризма и отдельных его составляющих, оценки восприятия населением разных областей страны идеи развития туризма как одной из прогрессивных отраслей экономики, особенно в кризисный период, а также оценка жителями Украины туристических возможностей Сумской области.

Ключевые слова: туристическая привлекательность, туристический имидж, Сумская область, социологический опрос, общественно-географическое исследование.

Actuality. Tourism has a high socio-economic and political potential able to increase the efficient functioning of the state and, in particular, a separate region.

The problem of the region's tourist image formation as a source of competitiveness has currently become one of the most pressing issues in the development of Sumy region because tourism image is an important factor that affects the choice of tourist destinations.

The notion of "image" is a socio-psychological phenomenon of individual, group or mass consciousness in the culture of public relations. It functions as an image-idea, in which external and internal characteristics of the perceived object are connected in a complex interaction. By its nature the image is a psychical image, which shows the relationship of man to an object that is perceived. It is therefore necessary to research and analyze the attitude of Ukraine's population as potential tourists to the development of tourism in Sumy region.

According to the Department of Statistics in the Sumy region, there are almost 1.5 thousand monuments of history, 780 monuments of archeology, 373 architectural monuments. Moreover, about 176 thousand hectares are the total area of Nature Reserve Fund of the region[15]. Consequently, we can say that the region has tourist-recreational potential and tourism development contributes to the dynamic increase in revenues to the state budget and contributes to employment of population, development of the transport infrastructure, etc.

Analysis of recent research and publications.

Research methods in geography of tourism, including the survey method, were described by a Ukrainian geographer O.I. Shabliy, Polish researcher A. Kowalczyk, etc.

Research of tourist and recreational resources potential of regions of Ukraine is presented in numerous publications by Professor O. O. Beydyk [1]. Many authors explore single tourist regions (areas) of Ukraine: V. F. Kyfiak [9], N. N. Blaga [2], M. D. Dolishniy [5], A. P. Dudkina [6, 7], V. I. Matsola

[11], S. P. Kuzyk [19, 20], V. S. Hrytsevych [12], M. N. Pokolodna [16], and others. Research of tourist–recreational resources of Sumy region was set forth in the works of T. L. Andrienko [8], V. D. Popov [17], T. G. Leontieva [10] and others.

Despite the wide range of research, the problem of tourism industry development in Sumy region requires further study, because this region is inferior to other regions of Ukraine by level of tourism competitiveness.

The formulation of article purposes. Setting objectives. The main goal of the article is to research the tourist attraction of Sumy region using the method of sociological survey. To properly research the tourism industry we need more information about the development of tourism in the region, and the author has chosen a method of sociological analysis, which appears as the form of an interdisciplinary method of the field research.

Sociological analysis – is one method of research in which the researcher receives information directly from the people who live in the territory which he explores, by using sociological techniques – questionnaires, interviews, surveys, etc.

The main objectives to achieve this goal are:

- a comprehensive analysis of the poll results;
- assessment of tourist attractiveness of the region;
- determination of tourist image of Sumy region.

Exposition of basic material. Tourism is a sector of the economy, the development of which leads to a rise in the level of social sphere, improvement of the transport infrastructure conditions, increase in cash receipts to the state budget and so on.

In Sumy region, as a whole in Ukraine, there is a large number of natural and historical–cultural tourist objects, but they are not used in tourism in full. For the development of tourism it is essential to develop a strategy of regional economic policy, namely the Development Strategy of territorial recreation systems [14].

TRS should be understood as a combination of recreational–tourist potential of the territory with infrastructure and human resources, whose activity are aimed at the use of this potential [13].

For effective operation and development of territorial recreation system of Sumy region it is necessary to understand: how the residents of other regions of the country perceive the region as tourist–attractive; what tourist facilities are the most interesting to potential visitors; and what are the shortcomings in tourism activities in the region, that is to determine tourist image of Sumy region.

One method of obtaining such information on the status of the regional market of tourism services is the method of sociological survey, which includes

the immediate collection of primary sociological information [22]. Using the methodology of socio–geographical research of tourism development in the region, resource and infrastructure potential of the region can be assessed, the level of tourism development as a whole and its individual components can be evaluated as well as tourism opportunities of Sumy region.

Analysis of the sociological poll of the residents of different regions of Ukraine was carried out by statistical methods and shows the following: the structure of respondents by sex is dominated by women (63.1%). As for the age group of respondents, most of them were aged 18 to 25 years, with secondary and higher education, and the average level of income of residents is less than 2000 UAH. This factor can be explained by the fact that large shares of the social groups are students.

According to the survey, it has been determined that 89.1% of those polled go on a journey. Of these, the majority (70%) prefers domestic tourism, that is rest in the territory of Ukraine, and the remaining 30% go abroad for tourism.

Most people prefer cognitive, health and sports tourism types. Percentage distribution can be seen in Figure 1.

Frequency of the respondents' holiday looks as follows: 34.9% people go on vacation 2 times a year or more, 42.5% – once a year, 9.7% – once in 2 years, and 13% can go on journey once in 2–5 years or less.

The survey has shown that the predominant share of respondents (88.7%) travel by their own. The rest use the services of travel agencies, which they seek on the advice of friends, rarely find them online or use the services of local travel agencies.

The above characteristic makes it possible to understand how residents of Ukraine in general relate to tourism and what types of tourism they prefer.

Only 28% of residents who participated in the survey, visited the Sumy region, of which about 20% came with the aim of tourism (Fig. 2).

Sumsky, Akhtyrsky, Konotopsky, Trostyanetsky and Putivlsky are most visited districts in region. 70% of the respondents did not visit any area with the purpose of tourism. About 6% of respondents who have traveled to Sumy do not know the names of the area where they were. This shows that the territory is not properly advertised.

Burinskiy, Velikopisarevsky, Serebryno–Dudskyi districts are the least visited. About 1% of respondents visited them.

There is a large number of natural, historical and cultural tourism resources. The most famous tourist objects of natural origin are:

- Apple–tree–colony, a 200–year–old botanical

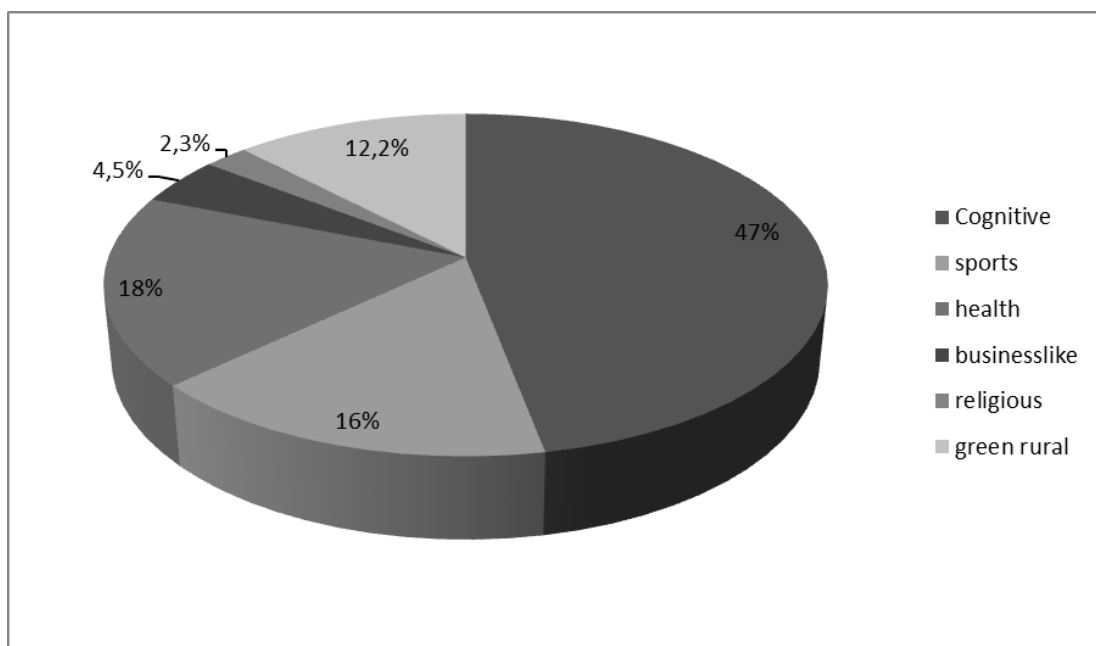


Fig. 1. Distribution of tourism, which respondents prefer (the results of the survey)

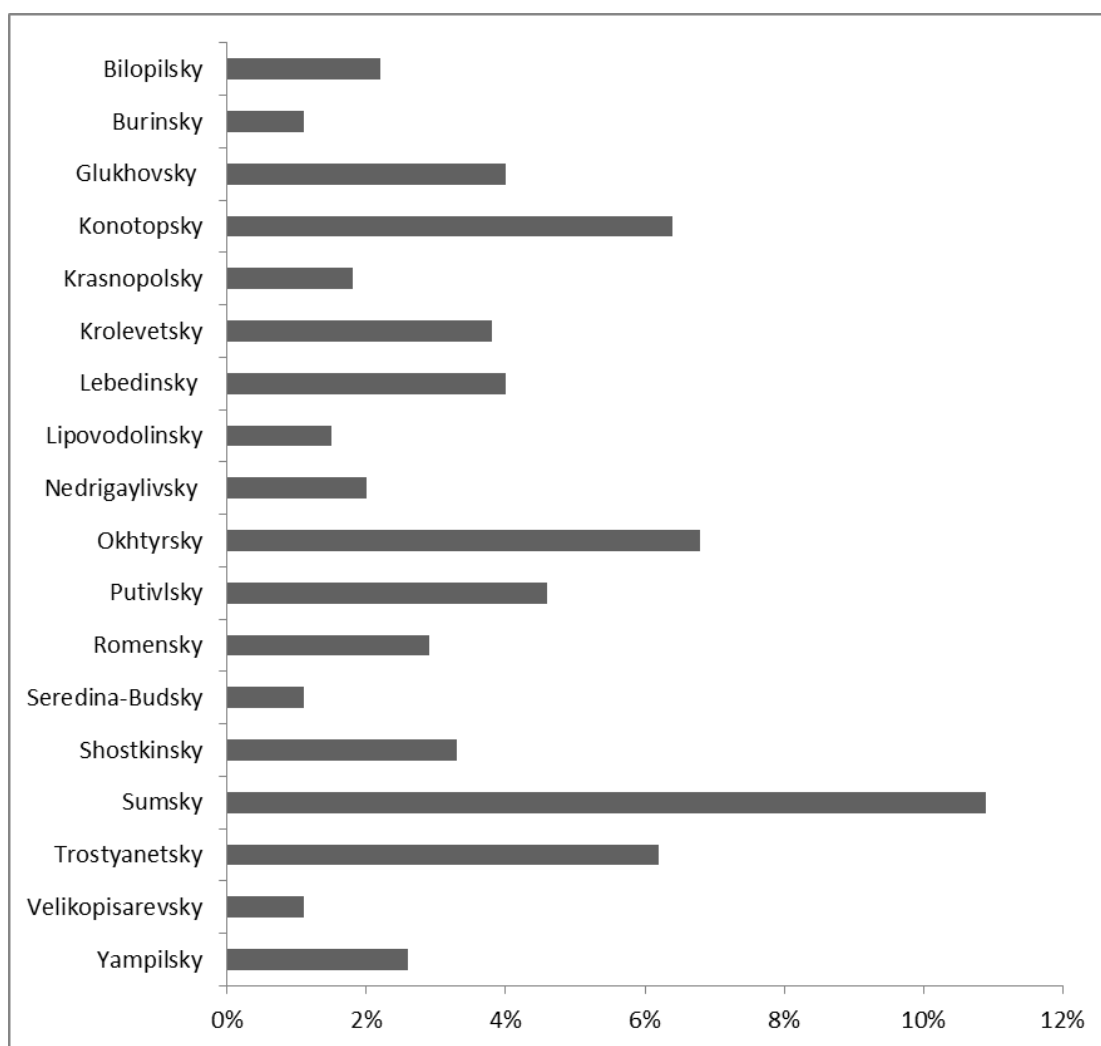


Fig. 2. Proportion of districts of the Sumy region, which respondents visited for the purpose of tourism (the results of the survey)

natural monument of national importance. It is located in Krolevets and covers an area of approximately (near) 0.10 hectares.

– Hetmanskij National Park created on April 27, 2009 for the conservation and restoration of typical and unique natural complexes of left-bank forest-steppe. It is located in the southeastern part of Sumy region in three administrative districts: Velikopisarevka, Trostyanets and Akhtyrka [4].

– A landscape dendropark of Neskuchne tract in Trostyanets. It covers an area of 253 hectares, which is an oak array with three lakes. Natural landscapes complement grotto of Nymphs (built in 1809) and architectural monument to the estate owner (built in 1911) [3].

– Nature Reserve Mychaylivska tsilyna is a steppe massif located in Lebedinsky district, its total area is 202.48 hectares.

– Hydrological natural monuments "Chernecky springs" near Hlukhiv and "Seven Sources" in the village Shalyhyne.

State historical and cultural reserves are known in the Putyvl town and "Posullya". They arrange walking and bus tours to familiarize visitors with the historical and cultural monuments of Sumy region.

Famous monuments of history and architecture in the Sumy region are the recreation complex "Round Yard" (monument of architecture of XVIII century), the estate of Prince Golitsyn in a classical style with elements of baroque built in 1762 in Trostyanets, the house of Kondratyev–Sukhanov–Sumovskiyh XVIII–XIX century in Sumy, John Kharitonenko's palace in village of Kyianytsia built in 1866 and Romenska fortress of XVII – XVIII century in Romny town.

During the poll it has also been revealed that the majority of respondents know of:

- Churches of this area (Spaso–Preobrazhensky and St. Voskresensky cathedrals in Sumy, Sofroniyivskyy monastery in the Nova Sloboda village, Movchanskyy monastery in Putyvl, St. Pokrovsky Cathedral in Okhtyrka and others);

- Museums of Sumy region (Museum of Partisan Glory "Spadshchansky forest" in Putyvl district, the "Museum of Banking in Sumy region and the history of money" located in Sumy Regional Art Museum by Nicanor Onatsky, "Museum of Konotop battle", "Chekhov's House–museum" and others);

- Memorials of the area (mammoth's monument in the Kulishivka village, Sumy gazebo and monument "Bag", Sugar monument (Sumy), a monument to the first tram in Konotop, a monument to the pig (Romny), and monuments to the famous Ukrainian figures: writer Taras Shevchenko, Ukrainian and Russian actor Mikhail Shchepkin, Petro Kalnyshchyskyi (ataman of Zaporizhzhya Sich), composers

Dmitry Bortniansky and Maksym Berezovsky and others).

According to the respondents the most attractive places of Sumy region are towns Sumy, Glukhiv, Konotop, Trostyanets, Romny, Putyvl, Krolevets and Romney and tourist attractions located on their territory and the rivers Seim, Vorskla, Psel, Sula, Desna, Kleven and Romenka.

Speaking about tourism infrastructure of Sumy region (facilities of accommodation and catering, transport infrastructure, communication, etc.) – 64.6% of those polled assessed it as a well-developed, 2.4% – very well developed and 33% – poorly developed.

According to the Central Statistical Office in the Sumy region for 2014, 41 hotels and similar accommodations worked in the region that served 45.1 thousand visitors [15]. At the national level in 2014, the share of hotel companies in the region was 1.5%.

As regards transport infrastructure in the region, there are roads of state and local levels, as well as an international highway E 101 97.6 km long [18].

During the survey it has been determined that the roads of Sumy region are in inadequate technical conditions. This position is indicated as one of the main disadvantages of tourism development in the region.

The main problems in tourism activities according to respondents are:

- insufficient funding of tourism, lack of investment in the tourism industry;
- undeveloped infrastructure;
- neglected recreational facilities;
- unskilled workers in the service sector establishments of tourists;
- lack of marketing policy;
- low awareness of tourism opportunities of the region;
- lack of advertising tourism and recreational resources of the region in different information sources.

Sumy region has prospects to become a competitive tourist region, and to improve the development of tourism certain measures must be implemented:

- improving tourism development strategy, taking into account the principles of sustainable development;
- Financial support from the state and attraction of investors;
- Implementation of tourism budget for young people (construction of hostels, art cafes, themed cafes, complexes of entertainments and tourism, camping arrangement, etc.);

- Improving transport infrastructure and tourism in general;
- Improving material and technical provision of the tourism industry;
- support of historical and cultural heritage of the region;
- training of workers in the field of tourism;
- Improving the service culture, its quality, increasing diversity of tourist services;
- Involving residents of Sumy region to the tourism projects;
- developing new and promising types of tourism.

The tourist image problems in the region are related to development and implementation of effective brand strategy for positioning the region for domestic and foreign tourism markets.

It is necessary to determine the image model of the region in accordance with the values, positive associations and expectations of potential tourists, also to develop and to implement standards of tourism industry at the regional level.

The primary means of Sumy region's formation of tourist image is communicative information that reflects important aspects and characteristics of the region in the perception of the target audience. This is one of the biggest challenges of tourism development in Sumy region.

The attractiveness of the region can be achieved through:

- development of promotional clips, promo actions tourism;
- creation of tourist idea and image, brand and logo tourist destinations for the associations of the region in population (existence of mysterious myths, legends, tales that attract tourists);
- creation of a powerful advertising campaign, increased information availability of tourist places for residents from other regions on the Internet, media and the guides;
- festivals, fairs, cultural events – music, sports, festive meetings, etc;
- creation of cognitive trails.

According to the respondents, we can say that one of the main types of tourism in the region is cognitive tourism because Sumy region is associated with many historical events and it has many historical and cultural attractions.

Water tourism develops, too. It is possible to go rafting and canoeing on the main rivers of the region: the Seim, Vorskla, Psel, Sula, Desna.

One of the perspective types of tourism is green rural tourism, it was noted by 87.3% of respondents. The remaining 12.7% of residents from other regions of Ukraine have negative attitude to the development of green tourism in Sumy. Rural tourism has just started to develop but there are farms, which attract tourists and provide the following services: hunting, fishing, biking and horseback riding, the opportunity to taste the Ukrainian dishes cooked with organic products. Such manors of green tourism as "Pivnichnyj lis" in the village Zholdak, "Vakulyna bayka" in the village Bezdryk, "Hrunivka sich" in the village Barylivka, "Olexandria" in Shostka, "Hutir lisovyj" in the village Novomutyn, "Kvitkovyj raj" in the village Krenydivka and others are most popular in the region.

Nearly 50% of the respondents described Sumy region as a region with average attractiveness for tourists, 32.1% consider it attractive, 20.1% – not attractive.

Conclusions and recommendations for further research. As a result of a sociological survey among residents of different regions of Ukraine about their perception of Sumy region as a tourist region, it has been found out that the most visited districts for the purpose of tourism are Sumy, Akhtyrka, Konotop, Trostyanets and Putivl. A large share of natural, historical and cultural tourist attractions have been indicated in these areas. The natural monument Apple-tree-colony, Hetmanskyj National Park, Mychaylivska tsilyna, Neskuchne tract and others are most attractive natural objects, according to the respondents.

The survey identified a number of issues in tourism development in the region, the main of which is the low tourism infrastructure quality and insufficient awareness of tourism opportunities of the region. However, Sumy region has prospects for being a competitive region in the tourist market of Ukraine.

One of the tasks is to increase a tourist image of Sumy among the local population and residents from other areas. It is necessary to develop new areas of tourism and increase information availability of tourist attractions.

Applying methods of social and geographical research, other components of the territorial recreational system of Sumy region could be studied (social, economic and others).

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