Evaluating Tourist Expenditure and Satisfaction with the Health Resort Complexes of Russia

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Abstract: The paper presents the materials of a study concerning satisfaction and expenditures of the tourists accommodated at health resorts as compared with other categories of tourists staying at the resorts of Krasnodar Territory. Based on the polling of 3327 people, including 688 patients accommodated at health resorts, it is concluded that their level of satisfaction and their total expenditure level are higher; therefore, attracting them to Russian resorts looks quite promising.

Key words: Russian health resort complexes - Tourist satisfaction - Tourist expenditures

INTRODUCTION

It is known that in the structure of Russian tourism inbound and outbound trips are predominant [1]. Among inbound Russian tourists the trips to Moscow, Saint-Petersburg and Southern sea resorts traditionally enjoy the highest popularity. According to the data of the Russian Public Opinion Research Center in 2012 45% of the tourists made entertaining and educational trips to the regions of Russia and 40% stayed at the resorts in Krasnodar Territory [2]. The above statements account for relevancy of a research concerning tourist satisfaction with the services of national resorts. As soon as medical tourism remains traditionally popular in Russia [1], the examination of the health resort patients’ opinion on the service received is of particular interest.

While dealing with the concept of “satisfaction” the professional literature uses two principal approaches to evaluate the degree of tourist satisfaction [3]. They are an approach from the perspective of negative confirmation theory and a result-based approach [4]. In the first case satisfaction is deemed to be the tourist’s opinion on positive or negative confirmation of his expectations about his trip, in the second case it is regarded as the evaluation of various attributes of a destination by a tourist [5], with general satisfaction being calculated as a sum of the above evaluations [6]. In our research we have used the second approach, as was demonstrated earlier [7].

The study of tourist expenditure appears worthy of particular consideration, as soon as it directly defines the profit from tourism [8] and its structure and amount influence the results of business and financial performance both of the separate facilities and a resort as a whole.

Although in 2012 Russian tourists spent abroad more than 43 million dollars, which ranked them fifth in the world in this respect [9, p. 13], there exist only sporadic publications about the amount of the expenditures within the country [10]. The information about expenditures for a trip to a health resort is unavailable as well.

Therefore, the goal of the present research was to determine the satisfaction of patients with the service in health resorts and evaluate the level of their expenditures for a trip as compared to other tourists accommodated at federal resorts of Krasnodar Territory.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Selective interviews of the tourists who stayed at federal resorts of Krasnodar Territory (Sochi, Anapa, Gelendzhik) were conducted in three stages during the summer period of 2010-2012. Totally 3327 people were polled, including 688 patients of the health resorts. The research was conducted by interviewing with the help of a special questionnaire at the bus stations, railway stations and in the airports of the resort cities, which allowed collecting data on complete

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tourist expenditures and get a general idea on the quality of a holiday spent. The questionnaire comprised the questions which characterize socio-demographic condition of the tourists, regions of their residence, goal of the trip, type of accommodation, estimate of the satisfaction with the received services, amounts and types of recreational expenditures. The results were statistically processed with the help of the software package SPSS, v. 21 (IBM SPSS Inc.).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study of socio-demographic and behavioral characteristics of the respondents accommodated in different facilities at the resorts of Krasnodar Territory revealed their substantial difference.

It can be assumed that higher cost of staying at a health resort is incidental to longer duration of rest/treatment and higher cost of an overnight accommodation (patient day) as compared to other accommodation facilities due to medical service expenditures. While the first hypothesis proved to be true, the second one was not adequately confirmed. Daily expenditures of the tourists accommodated at health resorts (Table 1) turned out to be even 25% lower, than in hotels, which coincides with the data of official statistics and our earlier publications and makes the discussion about further cost reduction of health resort treatment counterproductive.

The analysis of specific expenditure items shows that the tourists accommodated at health resorts had higher total accommodation cost (due to longer duration of their stay), higher transportation expenditures and substantially lower additional expenditures on site.

The tourists accommodated at health resorts spent less for additional food (restaurants, products, alcohol) than the other tourists and somewhat more for the medical, entertainment and sports services, which is probably related to the realization of the principal goal of their trip. At the same time, these tourists could have had higher expenditures at a resort, as soon as among them the percent of people who have spent the entire budget planned for the trip was substantially lower than in other groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of accommodation</th>
<th>Whole budget</th>
<th>Less than a half</th>
<th>More than a half</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health resort</td>
<td>46,20</td>
<td>24,80</td>
<td>29,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel</td>
<td>49,30</td>
<td>24,60</td>
<td>26,10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private housing</td>
<td>54,40</td>
<td>21,00</td>
<td>24,60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacation retreat</td>
<td>52,70</td>
<td>24,00</td>
<td>23,30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The survey of total tourist satisfaction showed that it was highest in case of medical trips, which may be regarded as the fact that additionally emphasizes the promising outlook of attracting this target group to resorts.

The evaluation of the tourists’ expenditure level also revealed that the tourists accommodated at health resorts are the most financially significant segment, which may serve as one more reason for development of medical tourism at resorts.

REFERENCES


