

ASSESSMENT OF THE PROSPECTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIOUS TOURISM AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL (BASED ON THE MATERIALS OF THE REPUBLIC OF TATARSTAN, RUSSIA)

Vladimir Rubtzov 1
Niyaz Biktimirov 2
Marat Mustafin 3
Mikhail Rozhko 4
Hugo Bautista 5

Kazan Federal University, Kazan, Russia

¹Doctor of geographical Sciences, Professor, Department of service and tourism, Institute of management, Economics and Finance, Kazan (Volga region) Federal University

Email address: vrubtzov.57@mail.ru

Scopus ID 56333300100

ORCID ID 0000-0002-9918-9231

²Candidate of geographical Sciences, associate Professor, Department of service and tourism, Institute of management, Economics and Finance, Kazan (Volga region) Federal University

Email address: Niyaz825@mail.ru

Scopus ID 56104332400

ORCID ID 0000-0001-8582-708X

³Candidate of geographical Sciences, associate Professor, Department of service and tourism, Institute of management, Economics and Finance, Kazan (Volga region) Federal University

Email address: sdk-bink.mmr@mail.ru

Scopus ID 55745790200

ORCID ID 0000-0001-7079-9928

⁴Senior lecturer, Department of service and tourism, Institute of management, Economics and Finance, Kazan (Volga region) Federal University

Email address: romikhail@yandex.ru

Scopus ID 56146414900

ORCID ID 0000-0002-5265-4220

⁵Candidate of biological Sciences, associate Professor, Department of service and tourism, Institute of management, Economics and Finance, Kazan (Volga region) Federal University

Email address: hbautistae@yahoo.com

Scopus ID 57216805628

ORCID ID 0000-0002-7430-706

Abstract: *The paper discusses the main directions of religious tourism development in Tatarstan and Kazan: the sanctuaries, religious organizations and sacred objects of pilgrim tourism of the Republic of Tatarstan and Kazan city. The article also considers the development of religious tourism in the region, considering interethnic and interfaith interaction. In addition to Islam and Christianity, the republic also has many other various religious trends. All this makes Tatarstan attractive for representatives of different religions, as well as for travelers who regard sacred places as a cultural heritage. An attempt is made to consider the religious factor in segmenting the tourist market of Kazan. Accordingly, the paper considers the features of the application of psychographic classifications in relation to the tourism industry. On the example of one of the national-territorial entities of Russia, the prospects for the development of religious tourism at the regional level are estimated.*

Some attention is paid to the current state and prospects for the development of HALAL tourism in Tatarstan.

Keywords: *Religion, religious tourism, Interfaith and Interethnic Relations, religion-oriented trips and pilgrimage, HALAL tourism.*

BACKGROUND

At all stages of the development of human civilization, religion has played a great role, being a product of development and an integral part of culture itself. The existing confessions have gathered all the achievements of world culture. One of the global functions of religion is to preserve the cultural heritage of many peoples and states. The role of the religious factor in society is difficult to overestimate. Despite the development of civilizations, the ethnic and religious composition of many countries and individual territories only continues to become more complex. Scientists from many countries and leading universities of the world continue to search for new connections, possible consequences of interethnic and interfaith relations. These phenomena penetrate a variety of areas and make them more unpredictable. We can give a lot of examples of what is happening today in different parts of the world where ethnic and religious factors have caused the most terrible consequences (Pecheritsa & Sharafanova, 2014). At the same time, it is almost impossible to distinguish religion in public life in its "pure" form. Religion is present everywhere: in culture, education, morality, and, of course, we are now aware of it in politics. Thus, it is intertwined with other forms of social consciousness and manifests itself in various spheres of human life. Religion, forming a subsystem of society, being in a single system with an ethnic group, region, feels, experiences the influence, sometimes takes the blows of other subsystems. Religion itself can have a significant impact on them. The deteriorating economic situation and political forces leads to tensions as inter-ethnic and interfaith relations (Raguzin & Рагузин, 1999). According to Professor S. A. Gorokhov, who is considered as a leading expert in the field of scientific research on religion, the increase in competition among trends within religions eventually leads to the expansion of confessional geospace. In parallel, the opposite effect occurs; inter-religious competition causes the following consequence, namely its compression (Gorokhov, 2017). The region chosen for research has a unique history. In this territory, the religious factor, along with the ethnic factor, has been one of the determining factors for both economic and social development almost throughout its existence as part of various administrative borders (Rubtzov et al., 2015). The division of the main part of the region's population into approximately equal parts, both on ethnic and religious grounds, determines the dominance of the Republic's population by two widespread ethnic groups - Russians and Tatars. This makes it scientifically significant to study the religious aspects of tourism development in this region. The example that the Republic of Tatarstan demonstrates in the field of achieving peace and harmony in inter-confessional relations arouses interest and admiration far beyond the borders of Russia. When the Republic is forced to experience and adapt to the constant quantitative and territorial shifts in the confessional composition of the population, the region is not only satisfied with the current situation, but at the same time makes every effort, by constantly monitoring what is happening, being attentive on the part of regional authorities and maintaining and even further strengthening these relations (Shabalina et al., 2014).

METHODOLOGY

In the work, the methods of analysis and synthesis of scientific literature, published in Russian publications and abroad, were applied. The general approaches were tested during the study.

RESULTS

Without doubt, we can assume that in the Republic of Tatarstan is a religious revival, accompanied by the construction and restoration of a huge number of religious places. Many sanctuaries have been transferred to the ownership of religious organizations. Let us turn to specific data collected, today the number of religious buildings of prayer houses of all faiths in Tatarstan is 1763. Out of this number, 1382 mosques owned by Muslims prevail, 320 Orthodox churches, 61 other prayer houses, and they belong to other faiths. Since 1996, a Lutheran church and a Catholic church began to function in Kazan. There are sacred places that have, in addition to cultural and cognitive value, also historical and scientific value. For example, objects built in the 16th-18th centuries have been preserved in the aisles of the region. By the number of religious organizations, the Republic of Tatarstan became the leader among the regions of the Volga Federal District (<http://www.blagovest-info.ru>). Thus, among the religious directions in the region, Islam and the Russian Orthodox Church are leading in the number of adherents. To popularize the tourism sector in the region, starting in 2016, its own tourism brand was developed, received the name Visit Tatarstan (Eidelman et al., 2018). Thanks to a special tourist resource that arose within the framework of the corresponding project, it became easier to obtain reliable information on the most significant sightseeing. Because of that is possible to release new package tours inside the republic, and promote not well known sacred places (<http://visit-tatarstan.com>).

In Tatarstan, the objects of pilgrimage tourism include: Raifa Monastery; Kul Sharif Mosque; Sviyazhsky reserved zone; Bulgarian Museum-Reserve; Holy Cross Exaltation Church of the Blessed Virgin Monastery; Bilyar. Thus, there are great opportunities in the region for the development of religious tourism. Therefore, Tatarstan is becoming more popular among deep-faith tourists and the leadership of the republic is trying to use the potential. A territorial analysis of the distribution of religious sites in Tatarstan shows that the largest number of churches, mosques and monasteries are in the city of Kazan. Moreover, there are many objects that have not only local, but all-Russian significance. Many objects of interest for the development of religious tourism are also concentrated in Arsk, Yelabuga, Alekseevsk, Zelenodolsk, Laishevsk and Verkhny Uslon municipalities of Tatarstan. In nine more districts, indicators were higher than the national average. The corresponding territories are in the most developed areas of the republic. Objects related to religious tourism in their placement are subject to certain laws. For example, a territorial analysis shows that sanctuaries are located from the valley of large rivers to the outskirts of the republic. You can still see such a pattern, they are mainly found in the eastern part of the republic, which can be explained with historical events: the specific features of the settlement and settlement of the population of the Republic of Tatarstan. For this reason, most of these areas are located near the capital of the republic. Religious sites tours designed for individual groups in the republic are not yet developed. There are combined tours containing sacred places of pilgrimage and religious objects presented in excursion routes. At the same time, some tour operators offering special routes to holy

places, for example, the tour leader “Leader Kazan”. In addition to this tour operator in the field of religious tourism, there are several more companies: the tour operator Kazan-Tour, Tourist Information and Cultural Center, etc.

Professional guides work in several areas. Excursions take place not only in Kazan, but also in the territory of several municipalities of the Republic of Tatarstan. Development of religious tourism of an excursion-educational orientation plays an important role for any territory. In those, factor culture used to be first, but nowadays these excursions lead not only to spiritual enrichment, also to the expansion of the horizons of vacationers. Thus, culture occupies one of the first places in the preferences of modern tourists (Gabdrakhmanov et al., 2016). In the planning and sequence of visits to Islamic tourism places, it is important to consider the time of prayers in mosques. Today, many religious organizations have their own website. Information on the tours that can be carried out can be placed in the corresponding religious online resources organizations. Social networks like Vkontakte, Facebook and Instagram also come to help. For potential tourists from Islamic countries, it is not enough that just in some regions of the country they can find the necessary infrastructures. In general, there should be developed tourism and other cities, especially in Moscow and St. Petersburg. HALAL tourism is a fast-growing segment worldwide of the tourism market, that’s why multidisciplinary approach will be required (Ainin et al., 2020). A rapid increase in the demand for education in the tourism industry is considered by professor at Moscow State University A.Y. Alexandrov.

Modern challenges of awareness of the HALAL tourism market, the ability to work on it, in particular in the field of certification of products, services and facilities, causes the emergence of new educational programs. In this case, much will depend on the competencies of workers, primarily to test the competitive advantages of companies in the HALAL tourism market (Aleksandrova, 2018). The growing demand of Muslim tourists who want to be confident in authenticity of HALAL products, has gained in importance. The attitude of the locals towards the Muslim culture as well as Halal products offer increase or decrease the tourism flow to sacred places. Therefore, in the future it will be necessary to analyze more the positive and negative influence of the development of HALAL tourism on the development of tourism, as well as the determination of the fundamental characteristics of HALAL tourism in Muslim republics (Bunakov et al., 2019). Kazan, as the capital of Tatarstan, has enormous potential inside Russia to implement ambitious plans for the development of a HALAL industry, in particular, HALAL tourism. Today, several tour operators of tourist companies are successfully operating in the million-plus city, first of all sending those who wish to take Hajj and Umrah to Saudi Arabia, as well as to various Muslim countries for pilgrimage tours to familiarize themselves with Muslim, Arab culture, treatment and rehabilitation. Specialized companies appear on the domestic market as well, including the Sayakhat Tour travel agency, which already has 36 different excursions inside the city. An invaluable contribution to the development of the HALAL industry is carried out by the HALAL Standard Committee created by the Centralized Religious Organization - the Spiritual Administration of Muslims (DUM) of the Republic of Tatarstan. Despite the lack of specialized accommodation facilities for Muslims in the region, several rooms and hostels have created special rooms for the HALAL standards (Gabdrakhmanov et al., 2016).

SUMMARY

To identify the motivation of guests of Kazan in 2018, the Department of service and tourism of the Kazan (Volga) Federal University conducted a sociological study. The obtained data, and the generalization of research results by both domestic and foreign experts, made it possible, after processing a huge number of questionnaires of tourists who visited in the summer of the corresponding year, to divide first of all into 4 types: 1. Philistines; 2. Intellectuals; 3. Lovers of 'calm', 'silence'; 4. Hedonists. The basis for such division took over the development of M. Basand and E. Cohen (<http://uchebnikirus.com>). For conducting research in this area at the regional level, in relation to the selected territory, the typology of M. Basand is more suitable. In the course of the study, it became clear that it is better to consider religious tourists in an independent group who, as a rule, are careful when choosing tourist services (Gabdrakhmanov et al., 2016; Tregubova et al., 2018).

After the conducted research, we were convinced that there is a need to develop new religious tours, which are laid not only in large cities, but also in small historical cities and cover individual rural localities in the region. We have relevant experience in developing such tours, which considered possible inter-religious and inter-ethnic contacts and assessed possible difficulties. We believe that the prospects for the development of religious tourism in Tatarstan are related to the development of religious tourism of an excursion and educational orientation.

CONCLUSION

Thus, development of religious tourism in Tatarstan and Kazan it is necessary to: develop and improve infrastructure directly related to the religious tourism industry primarily transport, catering, accommodation, etc.; at the municipal level to improve the development of roadside service of religious shrines on the way to them, perhaps under the recognition of the shrine and that the focus to improve the level of service quality, to conduct a thoughtful pricing policy; apply innovative technologies to organize advertising and information promotion of religious tourism, study the experience of other countries and regions. This work will be useful not only for the development of religious tourism in general, but also for promoting the introduction of people to cultural and spiritual values.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

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Rubtzov Vladimir Anatolevich

1975-1980 studied at Kazan state University in the faculty of applied mathematics and Cybernetics. Qualification: mathematician. Professor of the Department of service and tourism, doctor of geographical Sciences. Research interests: theoretical and methodological problems of social, recreational and economic geography, forecasting, zoning, mathematical methods and modeling of geography, tourism and the hospitality industry, stability, balance of territorial socio-economic systems. Author of more than 300 works.

Biktimirov Niyaz Minnahmatovich

In 1997-2002, he studied at the Kazan state pedagogical University as a teacher of geography and biology. After graduating from the University with honors, he studied in a postgraduate course in "economic geography". In 2016, at Perm state University, he defended his PhD thesis on "Ethnic aspects of geodemographic development of the population of the Republic of Tatarstan in the XXI century". Specializes in demography, demography, migration and regional tourism. Today he is an associate Professor of the Department of service and tourism of KFU. The list of published works is more than 150.

Mustafin Marat Rafaelevich

Mustafin Marat Rafaelevich graduated from Kazan state University in 1979 with a degree in geography. In 1986, he defended his PhD thesis in geographical Sciences at the Institute of geography of the USSR Academy of Sciences in Moscow. Specializes in labor market issues, demography and its national aspects. Associate Professor of the Department of service and tourism of KFU, honored teacher at Kazan University. Author of more than 100 scientific papers.

Rozhko Mikhail Viktorovich

Mikhail Rozhko graduated from Kazan state University in 2008 with a degree in geography. Since 2009, he has been teaching at Kazan University. Currently, he works as a senior lecturer at the Department of service and tourism of KFU. His research interests include regional competitiveness, socio-economic development of regions, demography, cartography, and tourism. Author of more than 60 scientific papers.

Bautista Espinoza Hugo

Hugo Bautista is a PhD in biological sciences with long working experience in international, multicultural environments, in team building, teamwork and team leadership. Nowadays a researcher in the fields of Tourism, Hospitality, and Management. He is docent at the Kazan Federal University (Department of Service and Tourism). He also is teaching foreign language for professional communication in tourism industry.