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Shatkovskiy K.Y.

UKRAINIAN-RUSSIAN CONSUMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS ECO-FRIENDLY TOURISM IN FEODOSIYA

Дана робота мала на меті дослідити Українсько-Російських туристів щодо їх відношення до курорту Феодосія (Автономна Республіка Крим, Україна), як до еко-дестинації. Дослідження також мало на меті дослідити мотивації туристів, їх поведінку на курорті, та комплексне сприйняття Феодосії як еко-дестинації. Крім того, в ході роботи було висвітлено основні тенденції розвитку туризму, особливо його трансформації, зміни у мотиваціях та поведінки туристів в усьому світі.

Целью данной работы было исследовать отношение Украинско-Российских туристов касательно курорта Феодосия (Автономная Республика Крым, Украина), как эко-дестинации. Исследование также затронуло темы мотивации туристов, их поведения на курорте и комплексное восприятие Феодосии как эко-направления. Кроме того, в ходе работы было установлено основные тенденции развития туризма, особенно его трансформации, перемены в мотивациях и поведении туристов во всем мире.

Purpose – The main purpose of present research is to investigate Ukrainian-Russian consumer attitudes towards eco-vacations in resort of

Feodosiya, Autonomous Republic of Crimea (further ARC), Ukraine and on the basis of the findings to present a solid background concerning implications for Feodosiya tourism stakeholders. The findings aimed to investigate motivations, behavior at the destination, the environmental concern and overall Ukrainian-Russian consumers' perceptions of Feodosiya in regard to eco vacations.

Design/methodology/approach – the research is based on quantitative approach of data collection and descriptive analysis. Thereby, 116 surveys and questionnaires were conducted spreading among the Ukrainian-Russian tourists coming to Feodosiya in summer 2011. Also 108 online questionnaires were sent via Facebook to the potential consumers being away from the resort. The findings are analyzed within descriptive cross-sectional analysis on the basis of statistical data presented in figures, tables and diagrams.

Findings – the primary research shows an insight of consumer's attitudes towards emerging tourism segment of eco, responsible, 4L tourism and its various combinations held in the developing destination such as Feodosiya, also taking into account its summer sea resort orientation. The findings allowed the researcher to answer the research questions appeared from intensive literature review and to conduct recommendations for local tourism and hospitality establishments in order to satisfy the emerging demand of eco tourism in Feodosiya.

Practical implications – the results allow to identify main motivations and needs of contemporary tourists visiting Feodosiya in summer time, along with identification of emerging consumer demand which is being unsatisfied in complex even being not realized as a certain tourism activity in the region. Furthermore, present investigation exhibits an example of a particular destination which has a complex background for developing alternative types of tourism, also while still being labeled as sun, sand and sea destination.

Originality/value – the results enable tourism practitioners and stakeholders in Feodosiya to provide corresponding supply-chain of emerging demand for eco tourism in the region which was not considered before given research was conducted.

Keywords – *Eco, responsible, cultural, sustainable, nature, adventure, active, 4L tourism, Feodosiya, the Crimea.*

Introduction. Since the last decade, the tourism industry has been rapidly approving a more environmentally friendly and sustainable attitude, shifting towards the ideal articulated by the World Tourism Organization [№1, WTO, 1998 cited in Ibrahim, E., Gill., J., [2005, p.1]: “tourism that meets the needs of the present tourists, and host regions, while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to the management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems”.

Evidently, the change inside the tourism industry encompasses all the systems in the industry. Notably, the shift away from traditional, mass, or packaged tourism has obliged destinations to adopt alternative strategies that

will define and develop new opportunities that are attractive, economically beneficial and sustainable [№1, Ibrahim and Gill, 2005]. As in fact, emerging segment of more environmentally sensitive consumers is looking for multi-dimensional experiences in the form of related natural, historic, cultural resources as well as considering the influence on local overall environment [№2, Pizam and Mansfeld, 2002].

Emerging Forms of Eco Tourism

Theorists mutually proclaim a new segment of tourists demonstrating sensitivity to the environment and to corresponding natural, historic, cultural awareness of a chosen destination, along with consideration in which way tourism develops and impacts on local territories and living people [№3, Franch and Martini, 2010]. However, a lack of evidence was found in any measurable results of whether indeed consumers have already become associate themselves as “new alternative tourists” searching for new experiences.

Furthermore, certain ambiguities exist in identifying the sense of that kind of tourism among academics, tourism professionals and overall society. For instance, Fennell, [№4, 2002] defines 85 keywords sharing the term ecotourism, while Franch and Martini, [№3, 2010] conclude, that the concrete meaning of a term is still unclear, especially when concerning to tourist destination. In the work of Herbig and O'Hara, (№5, 1997) ecotourism is described generally as a type of travel to “experience natural environments or settings”. The most fruitful definition of the term ecotourism or eco travel, for the author's viewpoint is that description, which contains the aspect of “tourist consciousness” towards not only the environment in natural sense, but the overall surroundings of a destination in its all manifestations. Nonetheless, several researchers as Schillinger (№6, 1995) point out that ecotourism is something archaic but fashionably decorated, as it is nothing more than expensive travel for the sophisticated tourists.

Not surprisingly, Totaro and Simenone, (№7, 2003) suggest tourism to take a global approach towards the recovery of all existing tourism resources, while defining more overlapping concept of “environmental tourism” instead of ecotourism, as for the researchers' stand point environmental tourism is derived from the aspect of continuous development. Furthermore, academics state that their concept of environmental tourism has to overcome the former theories of eco, green, rural, naturalistic or durable tourism. On the contrary, Kerstetter and Houb, (№8, 2003) suggest not to focus much on the definition of ecotourism or its similar forms. Moreover, researchers clarify that ecotourism and in its various manifestations is the emerging notion of interest for tourism professionals, as it is treated as a *sustainable alternative* to mass tourism, which sharing the opinion of most of the theorists has negative impacts on the environment.

Nevertheless, Franch and Martini, (№3, 2010) combining fundamental dimensions of eco and responsible tourism have suggested the appearing segment of demand as “4L tourism” (landscape, leisure, learning, limit) described as an attentive to the landscape and natural resources, with the great

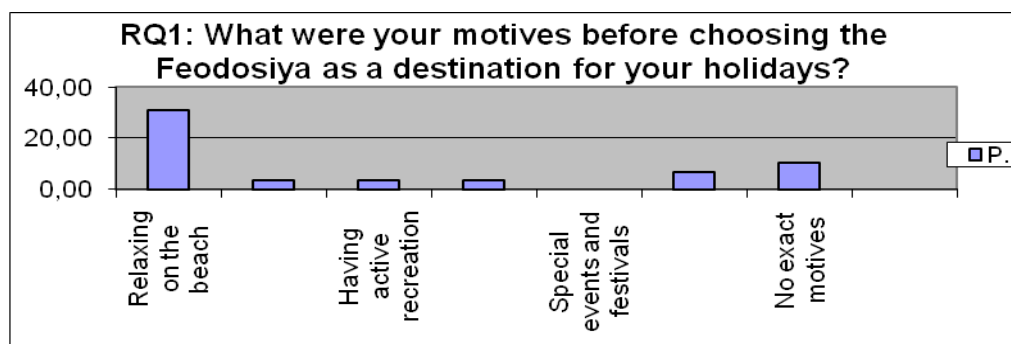
significance of cultural landscape in the form of historical-cultural and architectural heritage, but still remaining as the form of leisure tourism with the corresponding enhanced environmental care from the both demand and supply side. (№3, Franch and Martini, 2010).

Feodosiya Eco Background

Noteworthy, the largest part of scholars claim that eco related tourism is usually associated with developing countries (№3, Franch and Martini, (2010). Importantly, academics explain that the developing countries remain at the starting phase of the tourism life cycle and hence, the overall lack of tourism infrastructure would pilot them to develop ecotourism first using the most unique characteristics of its attractions (№3, Franch and Martini, 2010). However, the research made by Abdulganiyev, (№9, 2009) in the field of examining the perspectives of rural tourism in Crimea has shown the saturated stance of Crimean coastline resorts owing to mass tourism, regardless the statement of the “initial phase of tourism life cycle” in developing countries. Nevertheless, such findings facilitate to conduct a new investigation in the area of eco related tourism in the resort of Feodosiya.

Various examinations have shown that the Crimea and Feodosiya region has been habitually been and remains oriented on beach tourism with either organized or non-organized visitors predominantly, coming from CIS countries. For many decades the spa and health resorts located in coastal areas have been dominants in national tourism sector. Nonetheless, scholars state that the emerging trends of 3L tourism (landscape, leisure and lore) are gradually more substitute the traditional mass tourism.

Findings and the Analysis



Defining Ukrainian-Russian tourists' motivations towards visiting Feodosiya

The study has unveiled 28% of both groups of respondents intend to discover new settings of the destination as visiting main attractions, trying local cuisine etc, 24% have only beach motives, 14% want to spend their time with friends and 12% are eager to be engaged with active sports as horse riding,

scuba diving or trekking, while the rest choose another motives, or combine the mentioned above.

In order to picture the most related aspects of motivation to the chosen topic area of eco travel or similar activities, it is necessary to combine the answers which incorporate the characteristics of either ecotourism or emerging 4L tourism. Thus, the motives to discover settings of the destination and to engage with adventure activities match given criteria and applies to the research area. In fact, 40% of respondents both coming to the destination or potential consumers have the multiple motives dealing with *eco travel*.

In order to avoid possible bias and also to define more accurately consumer's motivations to travel, the researcher decided to examine the future plans for recreation of the both groups of respondents.

Thereby, 46% of the respondents have the plans to *combine active recreation with sightseeing considering the environmental care*, 25% of consumers remain as *mass tourists* even in their nearest plans, 21% will go for *adventure activities*, 7% will choose *spa* resorts, and none of the tourists will try *ecotourism*. The most important, finding was the 0% of respondents planning to be engaged with *Ecotourism*. However, present fact may not necessarily mean they will not do so in reality. According to Kerstetter and Houb, (№8, 2003) ecotourism has various manifestations and it's highly recommended not to argue much on its definitions.

At that moment, if within consumers' future motivations we combine the answers "*will engage with active sports, sightseeing and eco care*" with "*adventure tourism*", the reader can notice the similarity of present notions, which definitely applies to the aspects of ecotourism or the currently emerged 4L tourism. In fact, 67% of all the respondents claim they are eager to spend their next holiday in the manner of 4L tourism, if referring to the academic definition of such phenomena.

At last, author have examined consumers' preferences towards their choice of future accommodation in Feodosiya, in order to gain more accurate picture of their motives to travel, also to come to more practical question from the two listed above.

As Kornilova and Razin, (№10, 2002) claim the enhanced interest in eco travel from the tourists' side in Crimea has already caused the motivation to be accommodated in the lodge, made from local materials and harmoniously inputted in local environment. However, as the primary research has shown, In total 39% of consumers will rent an apartment in the resort, by 23% of respondents will choose eco villa, the same percentage is for hotel room and 14% will stay somewhere else. Evidently, given findings are not to be considered separately, as they simply supplement other motivations and needs, mentioned in present section.

Identifying Ukrainian-Russian tourists' behavior in Feodosiya

Through the questionnaire distributed to the Firsts group, all the respondents (100%) have noticed that they *visit mainly beach and possibly bars and disco clubs*, 59% claimed they try *local cuisine and wines*, 28% buy *local*

souvenirs and handicrafts, the same 28% go for *active sports*, another 28% visit *museums, art galleries and other attractions*

The most significant is the finding which clearly states, that 21% of the First group respondents *visit museums, art galleries, other attractions, along with trying active sports, local cuisine and wines* while having their vacation in Feodosiya. However, 24% of the respondents claim they predominantly visit beach, also bars and disco clubs and do not match to do anything else.

In this regard, it becomes obligatory to make correlations between the detached group of people, who choose the combination of activities, which match the requirements of the 4L tourism and their motivations to choose particularly Feodosiya, or motivations in general, whether it also reflects the demand of 4L tourism.

As the results of questionnaires shows those 21% of respondents from the First group questioned at the beach of Feodosiya, who combines the sightseeing with adventure activities while tasting local dishes and wines (10% from them also buy local handicrafts but ignore other important for this comparison aspects) that the half of that visitors (10%) before coming to Feodosiya mentioned *trying adventure activities, and discovering new settings of the destination* as their motives to visit this place. Interestingly, another 7% had the motives to relax on the beach or to go out with friends, but nothing about to be engaged with multiple activities at the destination, as they have done when being at the place. The rest 3% matches to go for adventure activities, which more or less reflect their behavior at the destination.

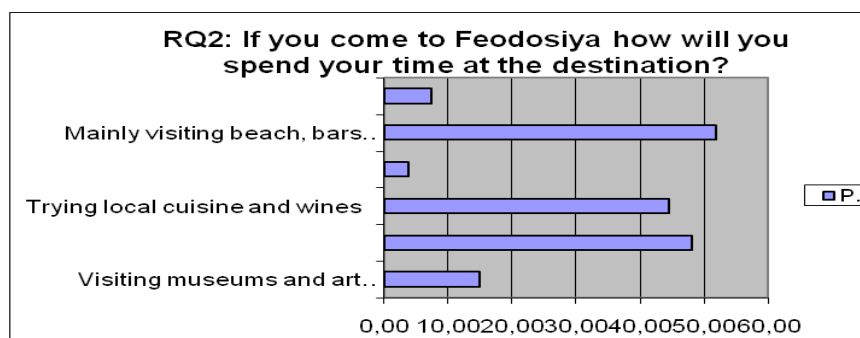
For the researcher standpoint, present fact testifies the theory's validity that the pull factors may determine and become as the driver for tourists' behavior within destinations' attractiveness. Present finding appears to be in the opposite of what Richards, (№11, 2001) says when underlining that tourists are not pulled by personal motivation towards the places but are pushed in accordance to their internal needs.

Interestingly, all the respondents from this group (21%) have perceived destination in accordance to their behavior there –*the resort which combines the nature, landscape, adventure activities and historical heritage*. Similarly, all the respondents (21%) stated they to link active sports with sightseeing with the consideration of environment for next holidays.

However, only 4% of this group stressed that they will choose eco villa as the accommodation for their next visit to Feodosiya, whereas, most of the group (10%) will stay in rental apartment and others will either book a room in the hotel, or will choose another place to stay in. Given findings are surprising as the 10% of respondents who claim they will stay in rental apartment has the monthly income more than 2000 USD.

From the Second group of respondents the average picture remains the same, as 52% visit predominantly beach, bars and clubs, 48% engage with adventure activities, 44% try local cuisine and wines, only 15% visit museums, art galleries and attractions, only 4% buy local souvenirs and handicrafts and at last, 7% state they will simply not come to Feodosiya, which actually does not

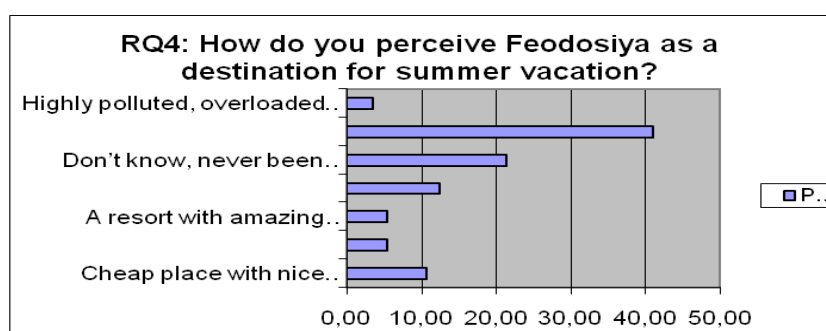
explain their behavior, though excludes them from the potential tourists, however still describes their motives or preferences which should be taken into account by local tourism stakeholders.



Examining Ukrainian-Russian visitors' environmental concern while visiting Feodosiya

The research has unveiled the average environmental awareness for the both groups, dealing with their estimation of such components: aspect of Learning, the importance of limited access to preservations, taking care of personal garbage etc while being at the destination, which statistically mean that **69%** of all the responses were either very important or important.

In total from all the respondents, 41% claim Feodosiya to be *a place which combines nature, landscape, cultural, historical monuments and active sport facilities*, 21% state they *don't have an impression or never visited the resort*, 13% say it *did not impress them in all senses*, 11% label it as *the cheap destination and nice beaches*, 7% in total think it is a destination with *amazing cultural and historical background with incorporated facilities for active tourism*, at last 4% think it's a *wasted and overloaded resort*.



Identifying Ukrainian-Russian consumers' attitudes towards eco-friendly vacations in Feodosiya

On the basis of the results, researcher considers the 41% of all the respondents as those, who respond to the 4L tourism criteria. According to Franch and Martini, (№3, 2010) 4L tourism often defines the motivations of individuals which the destinations translates into attractions with incoherent unique identity and environmental care.

Conclusions. The research has shown the Ukrainian-Russian consumers' attitudes towards eco-friendly vacations in Feodosiya with the healthy proportion of consumers' intending to spend their vacation in eco manner, in Feodosiya in particular. However, the fact that none of the respondent noticed the ecotourism as the activity to engage in, the researcher claims that the ambiguous definition has caused the present fact, as the examination has shown a healthy doze of the respondents have chosen activities which clearly match the criteria of eco or 4L tourism. Hereby, the term "ecotourism" is disregarded, although does not exclude the activity itself, if referring to the findings of present research, were none of respondents have chosen ecotourism for the next vacation plans, though as it was mentioned 41% of the respondents from the First group are willing to spend their holiday in the manner described by Franch and Martini (2010) as emerging segment of 4L tourism.

Recommendations for the industry

1. Feodosiya tourism stakeholders have to pay precise attention to the segment of 4L tourism emerging at the destination. The conditions of tourist resources of the destination are to be stewarded since eco tourists are demanded consumers which are looking for many-sided advanced entertainment.

2. Local tourist business and Tourism Council have to consider destination's weak sides mentioned by some range of respondents and to conduct strategic activities in order to develop the lagging characteristics.

3. Tourism stakeholders also should take an advantage of the research's findings, which has illustrated consumers' motivations to visit Feodosiya along with their final perceptions of it. Given facts should be considered when establishing marketing strategy.

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