



Volume: 04 Issue: 05 | 2023 ISSN: 2660-454X

<https://cajitmf.centralasianstudies.org>

## Methodological Bases for the Assessment of Tourist and Recreational Services

<sup>1</sup> **Zumrad Usmanova**

Received 16<sup>th</sup> Mar 2023,

Accepted 19<sup>th</sup> Apr 2023,

Online 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023

1 uszumrad@mail.ru

**Abstract:** A number of authors [1-4] describe the concept of tourist and recreational resources as a combination of various components and factors of natural and anthropogenic origin that create favourable conditions for recreational activities. Tourist resources are part of an extensive group of recreational resources. They can be defined as a set of elements of the natural environment, as well as objects and phenomena created by man, suitable for the production of tourist and excursion services and meeting the diverse needs of tourists. The category of tourist resources is quite complex and ambiguous. As a resource, such phenomena as the beauty of landscapes, landscape diversity, exotic nature and spiritual culture of the country can be considered. The intangibility of many types of tourist resources creates significant difficulties in their assessment by the organizers of recreation; in most cases, such an assessment itself is based on the subjective opinion of the tourists themselves or experts involved in the analysis of the tourist potential of the territory.

When analysing the prerequisites and conditions for the development of recreational and tourist activities, one of the most important issues is the assessment of the location and quality of recreational and tourist resources. The introduction of the concepts of "recreational" and "tourist resources" into the arsenal of science was far from simple and caused (however, and continues to cause) controversy among different authors. When discussing the problems of organizing resorts and recreational activities, the terms "medical and resort factors", "objects of tourism and excursions", "conditions for recreational activities" were first used. For the first time, the concept of natural recreational resources as natural and natural-technical geosystems that have comfortable properties for tourist and recreational activities and can be used for some time to organize recreation and health improvement of a certain contingent of people was clearly formulated in economic geography. In this case, the main resource criteria, technical feasibility, necessity and expediency of use, as well as a certain level of knowledge were used. The ratio of the concepts of "recreational conditions" and "recreational resources", thus, is determined by the degree of

their study and development, primarily by the organizers of recreation. Recreational conditions are “components and properties of the natural environment that contribute to recreational activities, but are not its material basis. Natural conditions, qualitatively and quantitatively assessed by the organizers of recreation and recognized as sufficient for the placement of tourist and recreational institutions, become resources [2, p. 33].

When analysing tourism resources, an important task is to determine the spatial and temporal parameters correlated with the number of people using them, seasonal fluctuations in their use. The territorial structure of tourist resources implies the degree of their qualitative and quantitative differentiation in the provision of the territory with them, their diversity and attractiveness in general and from place to place, their territorial concentration and the presence of territorial combinations in a certain space. The latter is determined by the fact that each sub-sector of the tourism economy is associated not with one, but with many natural and socio-cultural complexes or objects that act as elementary resources. Thus, there is a need to identify a combination of resources, a set of components of natural and cultural landscapes, which determines the possibility of organizing certain sets of types of tourism activities. Functional combinations of resources associated with specific types of sub-sectors of the tourism economy have a certain territorial integrity and can be considered as a special monofunctional type of territorial combination. Each combination of tourism resources includes two groups of elementary resources. The first is determined by the structure of types of tourism activities, representing the direct resources used by tourists and which are the purpose of their travel. This includes natural and cultural attractions, climatic conditions, relief features, wildlife of the area. The second group represents the resources necessary for the normal functioning of the tourism industry, indirectly used by tourists through it. This is, first of all, social infrastructure, labor and land resources. The formation of functional combinations of tourist resources is based on the principles of complementarity and complexity. The high quality of combinations can be achieved only if all the elementary resources included in the combinations have sufficient parameters and properties for the development of one or another type of tourism. The principle of complexity determines the effectiveness of the use of a territorial combination of tourist resources in the absence of contradictions with other types of their use, including other sectors of the economy. Taking into account the established tradition of separate application in the theory of the concepts of "tourism", "recreation", "tourist resources", "recreational resources", in order to remove the seeming contradiction, it is advisable, in our opinion, to use the integral concept of "tourist-recreational" resources [3].

Recreational potential assessment is a complex research process that reflects the relationship between the “subject” and the “object”, that is, between a person and the elements of his natural environment as a whole, as well as a reflection of the relationship between interacting objects [4]. The proposed assessment procedure consists of several mandatory steps:

- Identification of the object of assessment - natural elements, their components and properties.
- Identification of the subject of assessment, from the position of which the assessment is conducted.
- Formulation of evaluation criteria, which are determined by the scale, the purpose of the study and the properties of the subject;
- Development of parameters for rating scales;
- Obtaining partial and integral estimates.

Recreational and tourist potential is the total ability of the available material, labor, natural and other resources of the region to ensure maximum satisfaction of recreational and tourist needs. Needs in a particular market are expressed as demand. The potential should be considered as a set of means, possibilities that exist in an explicit and hidden form [5].

Assessment of the actual state of the recreational and tourist potential of the region is of great importance for increasing the competitiveness of its services in the market [2].

The method of expert assessments seems to be very promising for the assessment of recreational and tourist resources. The so-called attractiveness of the recreational resources of the territory serves as a criterion for the effectiveness of the functioning and development of the recreational and tourist system. The tourist attractiveness of the territory includes many aspects - natural and cultural attractions, ethnographic features, originality, the dissimilarity of the area to those where tourists live, as well as the convenience of finding and moving. The latter implies a developed social and transport infrastructure capable of providing the necessary level of comfort for vacationers, a stable and safe economic, political and criminogenic environment. From the whole variety of factors (features), experts (specialists in tourism, architecture, sociology, archeology, transport, etc.) are invited to evaluate 17, united in five subgroups: A) natural (beauty of the area, climate); B) social; C) historical; D) recreational and commercial facilities; E) infrastructure, food and accommodation. Each of the factors by experts [Gearing S.E., Swart W.W., Var T. Planning for tourism development Quantitative Approaches. N.Y., Praeger Publishers, 1976 is assigned a weight (Table 1.1). To find the relative weights of attractiveness factors, a technique consisting of six stages was used. In the first five stages, an assessment of the factors of each of the five groups is given. At the latter, an assessment is made of the relative importance of groups of factors A, B, C, D, E in relation to each other. As a result of the evaluation of factors using this method, weight coefficients  $w = 1, 2, \dots, 17$  were obtained, which determine their significance when choosing a particular area as a recreational object. To determine the measure of compliance of each area with the considered factors, the experts were given the task of assigning to it (the area) a score between 0 and 1 for each of the factors (0 is the complete absence of this property, and 1 is its highest possible manifestation).

Thus, various qualities of the natural environment are brought to a common denominator, and the summation of points related to individual elements of the environment makes it possible to synthetically evaluate a given spatial unit from the point of view of its tourist attractiveness. In practice, there is a great arbitrariness in the application of the point appraisal method. Thanks to the grouping and qualification of spatial units, this technique, despite a significant amount of subjectivity, makes it possible to determine the differentiated value of individual systems, structures or relationships that exist in the natural environment, presenting material suitable for territorial planning. The scoring system makes it possible to apply objective criteria for identifying tourist attractive areas, for explaining the geography of tourist flows, and, as a result, can be used for the needs of territorial planning.

**Table 1.1 Quantitative assessment of attractiveness factors**

Subgroups of factors	Factors	Weight	Rank
A) natural	natural attractions	0,132	1
	Climate	0,099	4
B) social	Cultural and architectural sights	0,051	9
	Cultural events	0,029	14
	Ethnographic sights	0,026	15
	Fairs and exhibitions	0,011	17
	Attitude towards tourists	0,054	7
C) historical	archaeological sites	0,057	6
	Cult monuments	0,053	8
	Places of historical importance	0,065	5
D)recreational and commercial facilities	Opportunity for sports	0,046	10
	Opportunities to improve the educational level	0,015	16

	(museums, zoos, botanical gardens, etc.)		
	Leisure opportunities	0,032	13
	Entertainment Opportunities	0.045	11
E) infrastructure, food and accommodation	Trade service	0,036	12
	Infrastructure	0,131	2
	Possibilities for food and accommodation	0.125	3

The final stage in the characterization of the natural potential of the territory is an integral indicator - the coefficient of the degree of favourable development of the area, which takes into account the degree of uniqueness of natural and tourist complexes, the current level of tourist development and the degree of favourable environmental situation.

In conclusion, about the sustainable development of the tourism industry, it should be noted that now there is a certain transitional stage, when it is too early to talk about the widespread introduction of its elements, but at the same time, all innovations and planned activities correspond to new criteria. The sustainable development of recreational and tourist activities implies not only respect for the environment, protection of monuments of architecture and art, taking into account national characteristics, but also care for the local population. It is important to assess tourism as a branch of the economy, it is necessary to identify the degree of its stability, the ability to initiate the sustainable development of the entire territory.

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